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The role of women in Jane Austen’s novels
mavzusida yozgan

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MUNDARIJA

CHAPTER I. Characteristics of Romantic period in English literature

Nineteenth century English Literature is remarkable both for high artistic achievement and for variety. The greatest literary movement of its earlier period was that of romanticism. It was born in the atmosphere of the violent economic and political turmoil that marked the last decades of the XVIII th and the first decades of the XIX th century. The outburst of political activity brought on by the Great French Revolution of 1789. The bitter wars with Napoleon's France that ravaged Europe for almost 25 years were the dominant political forces at work. The hardships of industrial and agrarian revolution whose joint effect was a gradual change of all aspects of social life in England made the situation rife with class hatred.

Great distress was caused by large landowners enclosing millions of acres of land for their own purposes and these dispossessing labourers who were reduced either to slaving on the fields of their masters or to migrating in search of the means to support themselves by working 12 – 14 hours a day for wages notoriously below subsistence level.

Meanwhile "the rights of labour were not yet recognized, there were no trade unions… Elections were carried by open bribery… the Church was intolerant, the Universities narrow and prejudiced." (Baos R.P Social Background of English Literary. Boston, 1937, p. 199)

Unemployed became worse than ever after soldiers came home only to find that " the labouring people were almost all become paupers" (The Autobiography of William Cobbet. London, 1947, p. 140)

This was the way the situation was summed up by William Cobbet, a democratic writer and publisher renowned for his support of people's rights. After a journey across England he wrote with the simple eloquence so characteristic of him: "Here are all the means of national power and if individual plenty and happiness…every object seemed to pronounce an eulogium on the industry, skill and perseverance of the people" Meanwhile the wealthy ruling classes were frightened by what they called the excesses of French Revolution and by the growing spirit of discontent at

home. They were ever ready to see rebellion on any attempt of the workers to better their lot. They invariably voted for a conservative government at home and supported all its blundering attempts to suppress revolt: “The leaders of reaction reigned supreme…filled with dread of the revolution they seemed to think that the only function of government was the maintenance of order and the suppression of rebellion” (Hearnshaw. T.J Conservatism in England. London 1933, p. 177)

This, briefly, was the backround of the English romantic movement.

On the other hand, romantic writers were violently stirred by the suffering of which they were the daily unwilling witnesses. They were anxious to find a way of redressing the cruel social wrongs and hoped to do so by their writings, by word or deed. A feature that all romantics had in common was a belief in literature being a sort of mission to be carried out in the teeth of all difficulties with the view of bringing aid or, presumably salvation to mankind.

In using the term “romantic” no effort is made here to treat all the romantics of England as belonging to the same literary school. Romanticism is here regarded as a very complex and certainly far from unified endeavour to give a new answer to the problems of revolution and reaction of past history and present – day politics, of materialistic philosophy dominant in the age of Enlightenment and the idealistic trends in early XIX century European thought. It is in the nature of answer given to all these urgent questions that the romantics differ from each other. And it is precisely that difference, no less than the points of likeness between them, that should be given serious consideration.

As distinct from the romantic writers of Germany or of France, their English contemporaries did not call themselves romanticists, and some of them were at pains to disprove public opinion calling them so. Nevertheless they all made part of a movement eloquent of the spirit of the age, with its ingrained sense of incessant historical change, of the independence of man and the Universe, of the world as ruled by semi- intelligible powers surpassing individual will.

The first English poet to be fully aware of the dilemmas of the age of great bourgeois revolutions was William Blake. His poetry has been discussed in the

first volume of the present series (An Anthology of English Literature, XVIII) where he chronologically belongs, but as a forerunner of romanticism in the XIX century he must also be mentioned here. Blake's violent revulsion from rationalism his belief, his idealistic and mystic conception of humanity and its mysterious ways were then quite original. Similar ideas were later taken up by many poets who did not know of his work, as in his own life – time he published but one of his books of poetry. In his portrayal of a gigantic world in the Cain of Byron and Heaven and Earth the Shelley of Prometheus Unbound.

Among the romantic poets of the younger generation Byron had a distinct feeling of the movement of History, of unceasing development, of huge forces shaping human lives.

Byron romanticism was coloured by grief at sight of the corrupting and debasing influence of reaction and absolute power and hopes of future regeneration.

Another great rebel among the romantics was Byron's friend Shelley. His denunciations of the ruthlessness of employers and the condition of the English working class, as for instance in *Queen Mab,* have an almost modern ring.

Shelley's younger contemporary John Keats, whose poetry was a powerful embodiment of the romantic idea of freedom, love and beauty as opposed to the vulgarity and prosiness of bourgeois civilization.

Like Shelley, Keats lived in a poetic world of his own imagination, but though he hated tyranny and oppression, both of Church and Government, he seldom let his politics interfere with his poetry. His ambition was to influence men solely by the power of beauty, not by a direct appeal to their views.

"I find there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good for the world, Keats wrote in one of his letters, there is but one way for me – the way lies through application, study and thought." (The Letter of John Keats. M.B.Forman, London, 1948)

At the same time along with the high flowering of romantic poetry and prose the older traditions of realism were never discontinued. With George Crabbe in poetry,

with Funny Burney, Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen in prose, realism steadfastly stood its ground.

With the lady – novelists mentioned above literature moved in more fashionable circles. Of these the art of Jane Austen is the most consummate and therefore representative. Through the very narrow social milieu (land – owners, gentry, country, clergy) that constitutes the theme of her novels, Jane Austen succeeded in bringing home the essence of the social relationships of her time. With unfailing accuracy does she draw a small world possessed by a yearning for money and high social standing, and deprived of either wish or capacity for using other criteria in their judgement over men and women but those of fortune and rank.

With a touch at once delicate and sure Austen introduces a vast variety of characters whose mentality is more or less distorted by false moral and social standards. Her irony and humor are omniscient and ever at the service of her keen critical insight, of her shrewd utterly unsentimental comprehension of the motives underlying the actions and feelings of a vain, selfish and mercenary society. It is the few persons who are comparatively unscathed by these shallow and ugly motives that Austen makes her heroines. Almost none of them are those who like Emma Woodhouse or Anne Eliott have to pass through a moral ordeal before they find that the only thing that really matters in the true worth of man and woman, his or her gift for disinterested affection, loyalty and generosity.

Jane Austen's ethics are high and strict but they are never obtruded upon the reader. Her methods are mostly indirect. The authorial voice by objective presentation of dialogue, inner monologue, as well as of the characters' actions and reactions. The "inimitable Jane" is warmly admired and much studied in twentieth century England and America.

Although Austen stands aloof from the romantic trends of her own time and mocks some of their more obvious and salient characteristics, although she is follower of XVIII century realistic traditions, yet her artistic detachment and her dispassionate survey of her contemporaries could only have been born out of the same critical and humanitarian spirit and the same historicism that gave birth to the romantic

movement.A sort of reduced and imitative romanticism is to be detected in the work of Chartists. The movement in economic condition and after the English bourgeoisie wisely decided to avoid revolution by conceding the most urgent demands of the Chartists.

Chartism has important literary results in the development of popular poetry. Not only did the Chartists revive the revolutionary poems of Byron and Shelley (whose *Song to the Men of England* became a Chartist marching - song) but within a short time a new poetry sprang up voicing the aspiration of those who had as yet not succeeded in marking themselves heard. Besides a considerable amount of anonymous songs and poems, there were poets of distinction among the organized fighters for workers' rights. Of these Gerald Massey, Thomas Cooper, William James Linton and especially Ernest Jones probably ranked highest. A militant spirit of resistance, sarcasm and irony, pathos and rhetorics, strong rhythms and sonorous rhymes go together to give the Chartist poetry a peculiar vigour.

The Chartists' passionate concern for the cause of the suffering English people inspired poets who were not in any direct way associated with Chartism. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's much anthologized *Cry of Children*, Thomas Hood's no less famous *Song of the Shirt* and *The Bridge of Sighs* plead for human kindness and altruism, for sympathy with the hardship of the poor.

The greatest realist of England Charles Dickens certainly learned much from romantic writers. In his early essays the influence of the London essays of Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt can easily be traced, though Dickens is more true to the typical detail, to spoil fact, to objective observation of the habits and customs of the poor inhabitants of Europe's richest capital.

In each of his earlier novels written in the thirties Dickens devoted his efforts to striking at some obvious social evil and helping to remove it. In the *Pickwick Papers*, e.g., he laughed to scorn the clumsy comedy of Parliamentary elections, of the English court of law and the iniquities of London's prisons (a subject he was later to take up on a much wider scale in Bleak House). In *Oliver Twist* he treated

the burning issues of the day – the horrors of workhouses and of crime; in "Nicholas Nickleby" – the conditions of Yorkshire boarding schools, etc.

Dickens's greatest masterpieces, the sad and wise novels of the 'fifties, differed from his earlier ventures in scope and structure.

In "Little Dorrit" and in "Bleak House" the novelist's satire rises above the particular and incidental and transformed into a sweeping indictment of the whole system, of the very foundations English society rests upon.

Dickens is not remarkable for circumstantial motivation of his heroes' actions. But he expels in the art of catching their more obvious social characteristics and giving them an infinite variety of individual shapes and forms that were joyously acclaimed as recognizable and memorable types. To the end of his days Dickens liked no literary compliments better than that or the other reader's admission he or she had known somebody who was the spit of one of the novelist's characters.

Through grotesque and comical exaggeration the fundamental realism of Dickens's viewpoint was everywhere apparent. The authors own attitude stands clearly revealed. He hates every species of oppression and injustice, every vestige of fraudulent misrepresentation and hypocrisy, every sight of man's cruelty to man, and loves all who suffer and still do not lose heart and keep and doing their best by all around them. Dickens's love of humanity and his penetrative portrayal of what is best and noblest about it, no less than of its foibles, his persistent championship of the inherent goodness of common man ever opposed to the stiffness and class egoism of higher classes make him a central figure in the democratic literature of England.

Dickens's closest follower and admirer was Elizabeth Gaskell. In his turn he was delighted with her books and published them in the literary magazines that he directed. *Mary Barton*, a simple and artless story of the misery and stout resistance of English Chartist workers appealed to Dickens both for its strict veracity and for its sentimental and idealistic sermon of love as the only remedy in a society endangered by the cancer of economic egoism and cynical indifference. Quite

different in style and treatment is the gay comedy of provincial life in the country – town of Cranford. Gaskell's humour is delicate, sensitive, and gently ridicules the petty snobbery and prejudices of superannuated middle – class ladies. Her latest books deal with serious problems of domestic life and are fine studies of the mentality of women.

Mrs, Gaskell is also the author of a subtle biography of three lady – writers of her own time, the sisters Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Bronte, all of whom died of consumption when still young. Anne was the least remarkable of the three; Charlotte won the greatest recognition, but it was Emily whose talent both for poetry and prose was the most powerful and original. Her only novel *Wuthering Heights* was published posthumously and is an extraordinary blend of Byronic romantic individualism and realistic motivation. The tragedy of two lovers torn asunder by difference in pecuniary and social standing and complicated by ambition and vanity is drawn against a perfectly real world of sordid poverty and greed. The withering influence of trampled love distorts the characters both of hero and heroine, turning the one into a demonic sadist and the other into a capricious spoiled woman. The drama of love and death gains in intensity by being rendered through the eyes of a casual observer and a minor character, - an old servant, only indirectly participating in the events she narrates. The bleak colouring of the story is heightened by the natural background – vast moors, wind – blown hills and stone – grey skies. A note of mysticism also rings in the novel, indicative of Emily Bronte's religious feeling and her interest in the irrational aspects of life.

Emily died at the age of thirty, and Charlotte survived her but for a few years. Her art had more obvious ties with ordinary life and easier reached the audience – and a wider one, at that. The most popular by far was Jane Eyre, the story of a poor governess who by sheer force of personality won a decisive victory in the fierce battle she had to fight for love and happiness. The dark Byronic nature of Jane's "demon lover", the gruesome mystery of his house, the final catastrophe are all depicted in the stark melodramatic tones peculiar to the late 18th century Gothic novel. But borrowed romantic and preromantic motifs are developed along with

entirely original is not essential, as money and high connections and leaving out and crushing all that is fundamental – true moral worth, loyalty and intellect.

Charlotte Bronte was in some ways a disciple of Dickens's greatest rival, William Makepeace Thackeray. He set out courageously to teach English a harsh lesson in self – appraisal. He let them see themselves with several critical eyes, and not through the rose – coloured glasses of complacency. A parallel has often been drawn between Dickens and Thackeray, sometimes to the advantage of the one, sometimes of the other. They are, indeed, very different in outlook and artistic method, in education and background.

The essential thing they have in common, however, is their fundamental honesty in carrying out what they conceive to be their moral obligation towards their follow – men. They both saw themselves as in duty bound to tell their readers the unpalatable truth about the social wrongs writing the body of society, about its narrow and shallow standards, about the hypocritical greed and ruthlessness of the higher classes. Thackeray mostly used the weapon of sharp irony; in describing the vices of the very high he hardly ever had recourse to Dickens's grotesque exaggeration, to his humorous presentation of variously coloured and comically individualized figures. Thackeray was an excellent caricaturist (he illustrated some of his own works), but his caricatures are less particularized and more generalized than Dickens's. The latter was obviously quite judicious in rejecting Thackeray's offer to supply pictures to the *Pickwick Papers* – their ways were too different.

This was distinctly felt by both writers. Thackeray thought that Dickens was too much given to melodrama and pathos, that his characters were too often angels or devils, with very few links between them. Thackeray's literary apprenticeship was as long and painstaking as Dickens's had been short and brilliant.

Of Thackeray's earlier work the most important was, probably, a collection of sketches entitled *The Book of Snobs* .He derived the word "snob" from students slang and it is through him that it acquired first a national and then an international significance. Thackeray's definition of it was that " a snob is one of who meanly looks up to things mean". A snob fawns upon his social superiors and is

contemptuously haughty to inferiors. A snob, finally, is one who has no criteria to judge of others but the degree of their wealth and rank. Having classified the snobs of England according to their profession and social standing, having made it clear that at court, church, shops, universities and in the walks of art snobs were ever essentially the same, Thackeray was ready to write his greatest work *Vanity Fair* . The title was an allusion, quite familiar in those days, to the city of London which had been described as Vanity Fair in the famous 17th century religious allegory of John Bunyan (The Pilgrim's Progress, 1678). By referring thus to the heart of England Thackeray also played on the inevitable association with the book of the Bible called Ecclesiastes whose memorable and often reiterated words are: All is vanity, sayeth the Preacher.

Positivist ways of thinking left a profound impression on the work of George Eliot. A lady of great learning, she was deeply read in European philosophy and in the latest critical writings. She early stood up against orthodox religiosity. She admired and translated Feuerbach, was friendly with Herbert Spencer and other scholars and scientists of his group. On the one hand, positive philosophy was of some use in giving theoretical support to Eliot's notions both of society and of its ideas; on the other hand, it narrowed her vision and scope and frequently led to the writer's incorporating her doctrines in novels, generally to the latters' detriment.

George Eliot was a social novelist and one who took her duties to her readers seriously. She lacked Dickens's sense of the dramatic contrast between rich and poor, she was rather inclined to accept them in a positivist spirit, as something that should be taken for granted and only subjected to cautions reform. There is no defiance, no open rebellion in her books. And yet their true and honest tale of the drab monotony and injustice of life, of the daily crime of indifference of man to man is in its way enough to make her readers realize a great many things they had previously left unnoticed.

The greatest contributor to the literature whose principal purpose was to divert and amuse the reader was Arthur Conan Doyle. His stories of the adventures of the

master detective Sherlock Holmes fascinated England, and the name of the hero became a household word.

Meanwhile the more serious literary work of the period was affected by modern schools of thought. The ideas of positive philosophy also found their way into poetry where, however, they curiously and variously combined with elements of the romantic tradition, never quite extinct in the England until the close of the century. In this sense the art of Tennyson can be called transitional, in its endeavour to blend romantic soaring above the commonplace and a romantic treatment of the commonplace – with problems strictly belonging to the epoch and necessarily touched with its prose. In his first poetical ventures Tennyson expels in word – painting, in melody and euphony. His themes are frequently borrowed from an idealized past (comprising medieval England and classical antiquity) and from present – day scenes. In his poem The Princess, for example, a fantastic setting is used to inculcate modern ideas of female emancipation and learning.

Tennyson is at his best in lyrical poetry, ever fresh with spontaneous feeling, with admiration and understanding of everything that is lovely in the life of nature and the heart. Unfortunately, Tennyson early began to entertain the belief that his was task of teaching his own generation, and those to follow, a new outlook, a new lesson of morality, and the didactic purpose he set to himself, mostly rather specifically Victorian, took a great deal away from the immediate charm of his lyrical impulse. Thus, the beautiful lyrics collected in *In Memoriam* are rather heavily overlaid with platitudes of modern moral philosophy. In the poem of *Maud* there is an abrupt, poetically and logically uncalled for transition from a violent curse of the modern Money – God, from glorification of true love as the only thing untainted in a world of vulgar material interests – on to jubilant praise of war and conquest in the final section of the poem.

In Tennyson's Idylls of the King the romance of the Middle Ages centered upon the legendary King Arthur and his Round Table is packed till bursting point with purely modern moralizing, with intellect problems peculiarly midnineteenth century. It has been aptly remarked by one of the contemporary reviewers that to

associate these with the life of a rude age produces the same effect as to combine a man's head, a horse's neck, a woman's body, and a fish's tail. King Arthur is less of a true knight than a modern gentleman whose wildest deeds of daring are done on the Exchange and whose most deadly quarrels are settled in the Court of Queen's Bench.

Tennyson's importance for the poetry of his age was, for most of later 19th and 20th century critics, eclipsed by that of Browning. Endowed with a robust intellect and a solid education he was abreast of the advanced liberal thought of his time. His interest in moral and political problems, in the freedom of peoples and individuals, in passions and ideas characteristic of past and present lent a bright open –eyed vitality as well as a breadth to his artistic vision that Tennyson manifestly lacks. While certainly not a rebel from the main body of Victorian beliefs Browning questioned enough of their assumptions to hold an individualistic attitude that proved his intellectual courage.

The beginning of the crisis of Victorianism, of the decay of the English countryside is reflected in the bleakly pessimistic novels of Thomas Hardy. The narrow village – world he depicts acts as a sort of microcosm through which an insight is obtained into the deepening gloom of the century's last decades. Hardy's first book of indisputable artistic worth is The Return of the Native, where, like Eliot in Middlemarch, he introduces a kind of collective hero in Egdon Heath, a small out of the way place inhabited by poor wood – cutters and poorer farmers. According to Hardy, it is precisely among common villagers devoting themselves to a severe struggle for existence that genuine and spontaneous passions still live, as distinct from the artificial sophistications that pass for feeling among city ladies and gentlemen. It is in these God – forsaken villages, Hardy claims, that dramas of truly Sophoclean grandeur are enacted.

In the novel Hardy wrote in his later years (*Tess of the d'Ubervilles* and *Jude and the Obscure*) his favourite characters fight a losing battle against the cruel social law that is ever ready to do down those who by birth and education do not belong to the privileged classes. The inhumanity of society causes the tragic death of

Hardy's most attractive heroine Tess; Jude is thoroughly beaten in his quest for inner freedom, for knowledge, for unconventional love. "Happiness" Hardy sadly remarked, "is but an episode in the general drama of pain." In his novel Hardy also displayed some affinities with the scientific thought of his time – ideas of evolution, of biological necessity and struggle for existence go together with somewhat mystical notions of fate blindly ruling the destiny of men and women and of taking the shape of tragic irony.

Hardy's poetry has certain parallels with that of James Thomas, a philosophical poet in violent revolt against Victorian moral and religious assumptions. His symbolic poem *The City of Dreadful Night* is ghastly vision contemporary London and the "life – in – death" existence of its inhabitants.

A similar, though essentially different conflict between theoretical indifference to all moral purpose in the art and practical preoccupation with moral problems is obvious in all the writings of Robert Louis Stevenson. His art has curious affinities with very nearly all of the most important aspects of contemporary literature. To begin with, it has tangible associations with the aesthetic schools whose "art for art" precepts Stevenson often repeats; he is next closely associated with the novel of adventure that flourished in the last decades of the century, the difference being that with Stevenson narrative is also psychological, written in a style that is a model of purity, simplicity and descriptive felicity; this brings Stevenson into close contact with the psychological novel, dominated by the influence of French translations of Dostoevsky's books. Stevenson, finally, is the bearer of romantic traditions in English literature. His poetry was stimulated by Coleridge's and Wordsworth's interpretation of folklore, by the latter's exploration of a child's mentality; some of his novels are historical, after the manner of Scott (*Kidnapped*). Stevenson's poetry for children is highly imaginative in his way of perfectly identifying himself with little readers, with their range of interest and vision. Stevenson's later novels are dramatic and they considerably gain in depth and subtlety. His is a transitional and mixed art that has all the charm of profound sincerity, of anxious searching for truth and beauty.

The refinement of the aesthetic school, no less than the pessimistic tendencies of later 19th century social thought, were criticized as decadent and effete by poets like William Henley and Rudyard Kipling. The latter alternately adopted a naturalistic and imitative pseudo – romantic technique. An enthusiastic supporter of the British Empire whose mission, Kipling believed, was to be a saviour of all nations, Kipling glorified simple men of action, builders of the Empire, sacrificing health, wealth and their very lives for what they felt to be their patriotic duty. They form the subject matter of Kipling's poetry (as in *Barrack Room Ballads* or *The Seven Seas*) and of his purpose (as in *Soldiers Three*). As Kipling mostly describes common men – soldiers, sailors, mechanics and petty colonial servants – his descriptions of their self – sacrifice and heroic endeavour generally do not strike us as false. It is only when Kipling lauds the great men of the Empire and the White Man's burden that he departs from truth and art simultaneously.

Kipling's novel *The Light That Failed* is the story of a painter who discovers his vocation in painting scenes of war, colonial war, in all its naked ugliness and cruelty and yet conveying the feeling that all suffering is worth while for the sake of Britain's greatness.

Kipling is at his best in works for children where reactionary politics interfere least with his narrative and descriptive art. He was also a great master of the short story, of striking description, particularly of Indian scenary.

Jane Austen (b. 1775- d. 1817)

As Jane Austen's life began, the global power that was Great Britain, under the rule of King George III was in the midst of a growing conflict with its American colonies which would result in the American Revolutionary War. This military conflict would be the first of three wars Great Britain would participate in during Austen's short life. A decade after the North American colonies gained independence, the British Empire in the wake of the French Revolution would enter the Napoleonic Wars, and by 1812 was once again clashing with its former protectorate the United States. During this period of foreign upheaval the domestic English society in which Jane Austen was born into, women were not usually given the educational opportunities offered to men and marriage was the only viable option for economic security and being part of the social norm. Ironically, while most of Austen's works centered on the business of providing husbands for daughters, she never married leading to speculation on her sexuality and social graces.

In the 18th century English society in which Jane Austen lived, the male members of a family were given educational opportunities that were not always afforded to the ladies of the household. Fortunately for Austen, she was born into a family that valued education to both sons and daughters, and she was encouraged by her family to produce literature. Born in Hampshire England in the parish of Steventon, she was the daughter of Reverend George and Cassandra Leigh Austen. She came into the world on December 16, 1775 and was the sixth child in a family of five boys and two girls. Reverend Austen was a refined and successful clergyman who fostered education in his family so Jane and her siblings received most of their schooling at home. Reading and play acting were favorite past times of the children, so Jane began her writings at an early age, and at times used them for family entertainment. Some of her earliest writings were Eleanor and Marianne

and Lady Susan both written in 1795. In 1796 she wrote First Impressions. From 1797 to 1798 Austen wrote three novels; *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudicemd Narthanger Abbey. Sense and Sensibility* was published in 1811 and it is the story of two sisters and their romantic adventures. *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1813 and tells the tale of the five Bennett sisters and their search for husbands. *Northanger Abbey* was published in 1818 and was a satire of the popular gothic romances of the era.

In 1801, the Austen family moved to Bath and in 1805 Reverend Austen died. The family left Bath for Clifton in 1806 and then to Castle Square, Southampton in 1807. In 1809, they settled at Chawton Hampshire in a home owned by Jane's brother Edward. By 1811, after a period of unproductiveness, Jane quickly created three new novels; *Mansfield Park* in 1811, *Emma* in 1814 and *Persuasion* in 1815, all of which deal with romantic entanglements of strongly characterized heroines. Although Jane Austen wrote of romance and idealistic love she never married. She was engage briefly to Harris Bigg Wither a long time friend, but she withdrew from the offer the following day. She was considered an attractive and intelligent woman so these were not deterrents to marriage. Jane lived with her mother, her sister Cassandra and a friend Martha Lloyd in Hampshire England until Jane moved to Winchester in May of 1817 because of ill health. Diagnosed with Addison's disease, a tubercular disease of the kidneys, Austen was only forty one years old when she died in her sisters arms in the early hours of July 18, 1817. Austen was buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Jane Austen is now thought of as one of the greatest English authors and considered by many as the first great woman novelist. Austen wrote of the provincial life times in which she lived and had sufficient knowledge of the middle class, gentry and aristocracy, and these surroundings became the places and characters of her novels. The plots of her works focus on misunderstood feelings, human weakness and social obligations. Her novels are still being republished with most of them gaining present day acceptance and have been made into motion picture and television productions. The characters of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth

Bennett *of Pride and Prejudice;* Eleanor and Marianne Dashwood of *Sense and Sensibility,* and Emma Woodhouse and Mr. Knightly of *Emma* have become the romantic counterparts of today's "chick flicks".

Overall, the pretty, clever Jane Austen, author of six books, four which were published before her death, was a woman of true intellectual talent and passion for her time. She left an indelible imprint on a literary world that did not accept her talents during her lifetime. Although she was not recognized for her work during her life because of her writing style, her character development, and because she was female, Austen is remembered for rising above the social restrictions that were placed on women during the late 18th and early 19th century producing literature that inspires and influences readers today.

The romantic world created by Jane Austen in her novels as well as her very own life as portrayed realistically in the film *Becoming Jane* offers us insights into the lives of women in early 19th Century Victorian England. The female protagonists and their family's concern with marriage in all of Austen's novels mirrors the abject condition of economic dependence suffered by women during this era. As the line in the movie goes, love is desirable but money absolutely indispensible. Women are dominated by a patriarchal order that sees women as a sex object to be fought over by men or as a domestic creature relegated to the household.

Socio-economic changes brought about by the industrial revolution and the ascendance of capitalist social relations, however, helped bring about changes in the conditions of women. In *Becoming Jane,* we see how Jane Austen began to practice writing for literary production, something rarely heard of women in Austen's time. Women began "to expect more from life than the privilege of breeding children and running the household."

The economic requirements of national industrialization meant that women and even children became more and more incorporated to the national labor force. The profit motive of the emergent industrialists and capitalist merchants meant giving more roles for women in England's economic life. Jane Austen's prominence in the literary world is also reflective of this gradual change in women's standing. As

other women did labor that only men did previously, so did Jane Austen write novels.

Women... played an important role in charities, churches, local politics, and the arts, especially music. With great difficulty, some forced themselves upon the universities (they were allowed to attend lectures and take examinations, but not degrees), and from the late 1870s women's colleges were founded at Oxford, Cambridge, and London. The professions remained barred to women, but a few succeeded in practising as doctors. The upper levels of nursing and running hotels seemed, however, the nearest most women could get to a professional career. [2]

Jane Austen is considered one of the more entertaining of novelists of all ages. Her novels, from *Sense and Sensibility* to *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* have all become bestsellers both during her lifetime as well as in her death. Despite this, it is interesting to note that her first novel *Sense and Sensibility* was published without Austen's name on it. The manuscript submitted to the publishing house only mentioned the words "A Lady" to describe the author. Like George Eliot, who had to use the name of a male to publish her works, Austen also had, at first, had to hide the fact that a woman can write as good as a man. According to Somerset Maugham,

Austen was 'careful that her occupation should not be suspected by servants, or visitors, or any person beyond her family party. She wrote upon small sheets of paper which could easily be put away, or covered with a piece of blotting paper. There was between the front door and the offices, a swing door which creaked when it was opened; but she objected to having this little inconvenience remedied, because it gave her notice when anyone was coming.

It was only her novels' increasing fame that led to society's opening up to her talent as writer. But still, this was not yet the so-called liberation of women that we know of today. Even as Austen was slowly recognized as a writer and a woman at the same time, the subjects of her writing was still constrained by the strong patriarchal system of her time. Even as Austen lived during the time of Napoleon and the French Revolution, her position in society as a woman prevented her from

dealing with these historical events in any of her works. In Austen's days, only men talk about history and politics as "few women even read the newspapers."

[Austen 's] observation was searching and her sentiment edifying, but it was her humor that gave point to her observation and a prim liveliness to her sentiment. Her range was narrow. She wrote very much the same sort of story in all her books, and there is no great variety in her characters. They are very much the same persons, seen from somewhat different point of view. She had common sense in a high degree, and no one knew better than she her limitations. Her experience of life was confined to a small circle of provincial society, and that is what she was content to deal with.

What appeared in Austen's fiction was therefore not really a clear reflection of the social condition in the realist mode but more of a refraction that infused the literary reproduction of social reality with Austen's personal and the people's unconscious desires. For Soledad Reyes, the creation of an ideal world in romance "subverted the reality it could not reflect. For example, woman was given a more privileged position in love and marriage; in real life she was an object to be sold for a price. "It is thus no surprise that all of Jane Austen's novels simply end in happy marriages. For Reyes, through the use of the convention of the happy ending

the text was able to resolve what appeared to be problematic in life. The freedom that was restored as the narrative ended was a condition that was non-existent in real life, where the usurper still occupied the throne, the king was dying, the villain roamed freely, and the lovers were still pining for each other.

Nowhere is this dynamic more clearly expressed than in the contrast between Austen's life as realistically portrayed in the film *Becoming Jane* and the plots that permeated Austen's literary productions. In contrast to Austen's remaining a spinster until her death in real life, all of her women protagonists live happily ever after in the vein of the European medieval romances. Compared to women in Jane Austen's milieu, women in the contemporary era are relatively freer. Women today have more options where women in Austen's time are relegated to domestic life and the breeding of children. This is especially true in the advanced capitalist

centers of North America, Europe, and Japan where movements and struggles for the advancement of women's democratic rights and gender equality have made some headway. But even there, women still suffer from the commodification of women where the body of woman is seen only as a sex object that is used to market capitalist enterprises.

The situation of women in Third World countries such as the Philippines is worse. Here, women suffer from the triple oppressions of class, nationality, and gender. If majority of women in the Global North only contends with issues of being second class citizens by virtue of gender or being marginalized because of class, women in the Third World also has to contend with the stark reality of being in the periphery of a world order centered in the industrialized monopoly capitalist countries.

The rape of the country's natural and human resources by foreign corporations is the reason for the exploitative conditions suffered by the Filipina. Majority of the 10 million Filipinos who work outside of the country are Filipinas. There they are subjected to all forms of abuse as domestic helpers, poorly paid factory workers, or prostituted victims. Back at home, more than 59 million Filipinos live on less than $2 a day.Thus, women are likewise forced to be employed provided mostly by foreign-based multinational corporations who invest in the country. And these jobs are not desirable as they seem, as Rolando Tolentino points out:

In the sexual division of labor, heavy industries (such as mining, petroleum refining, and machinery and equipment manufacturing) generally use male labor while light industries (such as food processing and the manufacture of textiles, garments, footwear, tobacco and pharmaceuticals) are mostly female labor. Women's body parts are idealized, "synergizing" nimble fingers, 20/20 eyesight, and hardy bodies in performance of multinational work. In short, women are preferred for all the stereotypical reasons: lower labor costs, traditional feminine skills, manual dexterity, more productivity, greater tolerance of and better performance in repetitive and monotonous tasks, reliability, patience, low expectations and lack of employment alternatives, a willingness to put up with dead-end jobs, and higher voluntary quitting rates.

A collection of resources about the great British writer **Jane Austen** (1775-1817). Her novels center on the lives of young women in middle class Regency England, and every novel ends with a happy marriage or two. But don't expect simple love stories in all of Jane Austen's works. As an unmarried woman of very modest financial means, Jane Austen understood the hopes and fears of women who had to rely on marriage and family connections to provide them with a home and means to live. Miss Austen was fortunate in having the support of her family and a successful literary career, but she knew how easy it would be to become a tedious Miss Bates, a pitiable Jane Fairfax, or a sickly and forgotten Mrs Smith.

The enormous popularity of Jane Austen's novels has led to many movie and television adaptions of her novels, beginning with Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson in the 1940 version of Pride *and Prejudice,* continuing to the nearly legendary

wet shirt of Colin Firth as Mr Darcy in the 1995 BBC mini-series, and now including Bollywood musicals and zombies. In recent years, there has been an explosion of popular novels based on Jane Austen and her woTime Period and Culture.

Since one of Austen's favorite themes was satire on the time period in which she lived, it is important to have an understanding of some of the customs, achievements, social expectations, and manners of the Regency period. The Regency period lasted from 1811 until 1820, the time during which Jane Austen's novels were published, and so it is the period assigned to her writings. This period directly preceded the Victorian period, and it is similar in many ways, but it does have some unique characteristics that should not be ignored.

The British Empire had lost the United States, but was not quite ready to accept this loss. The result was the War of 1812, a war which resulted in yet another British defeat and no significant gains for either side. Alongside the pressure of Napoleon rising to power, the monarchy felt the pressure of trying to keep the people under control. Any attempt at giving the citizens of England more freedom was generally viewed as treason.

The subject of Jane Austen's stance on politics revealed through her literature is hotly debated and is the topic of several books. The general consensus, however, is that Austen commented on society rather than the government. Her books probably provided an entertaining escape for the people of the era.

Society

Regency era society was marked by extreme excess in the upper classes and a wide gap between rich and poor. Austen's works tend to ignore the lower classes and focus almost totally on the upper-middle to upper classes.

Women had a difficult role in society; they were almost totally dependent on men. Women could not honorably work, except perhaps as governesses, tutors, and writers. As we see in *Pride and Prejudice and Sense and Sensibility,* women could not inherit property either. For financial security, the only option was to marry, and to marry well. In fact, this expectation is addressed in the famous opening sentence *of Pride and Prejudice:* "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of good fortune must be in want of a wife." Austen is speaking ironically, of course. What she is saying is that a woman must be in want of a single man with a good fortune. In the novel, Mrs. Bennet, a mother of five girls, has no business so important as to get all of her daughters married, and she worries and frets over this matter constantly. Austen feels that women *do* have a choice, however; her heroines often reject those suitors who could support them financially but for whom they have no love.

With little else to do, women delighted in gossip, fashion, social gatherings, and especially balls. Jane Austen herself loved to dance and socialize, and such occasions feature prominently in her books. The dances performed were lively and bouncy English country dances. Along with dancing came many social expectations. Men could ask women to dance, but women had only the power to refuse. If a woman did refuse, she was to make it seem as though she had no intention of dancing with anyone, so as not to offend the particular man who had asked her. If there were more women than men present at a ball, as we see in *Pride and Prejudice,* it was polite for the men to dance as much as possible with different

women, so the women would not have to sit out for very long. It was also acceptable, in such a situation, for women to dance together. Conversation was expected during dancing.

One of the most prominent features of the time period was the propriety expected between members of the opposite sex. This was the beginning of the social restrictions that were one of the defining characteristics of the Victorian period, which directly followed the Regency period. A young unmarried women should not be alone with a man without a chaperone; likewise, women were never to travel unescorted. Extended correspondence between two members of the opposite sex was seen as a sure sign of engagement. This explains why many of the letters in Austen's works go unanswered. It would be improper for an unmarried man and woman to write many letters back and forth. A double standard was in place, however, when it came to purity and chastity; a woman who was discovered to have had an extramarital affair was shunned and considered unmarriageable. If the woman was already married, infidelity was grounds for divorce. However, in the men's case, an affair was overlooked and hardly even a blot on his reputation. Jane Austen's writings are quite proper for the time period; no explicit love scenes, not even a kiss, are included in her novels. However, a few incidents occur, such as elopement and affairs, but they are never more than hinted at, and the reader must be very alert to note that these events take place.

Jane's novels must be looked at through the lens of the times, or behavior of their characters may not make sense to the modern reader. It is not enough to read her stories as mere romances; to truly appreciate the satire and caricature, one must know what Jane is making light of from the era.

Jane Austen (16 December 1775 – 18 July 1817) was an English novelist 1whose works of romantic fiction, set among the landed gentry, earned her a place as one of the most widely read writers in English literature. Her realismand biting social commentary have gained her historical importance among scholars and critics.[1]

Austen lived her entire life as part of a close-knit family located on the lower fringes of the English landed gentry. She was educated primarily by her father and

older brothers as well as through her own reading. The steadfast support of her family was critical to her development as a professional writer. Her artistic apprenticeship lasted from her teenage years into her thirties. During this period, she experimented with various literary forms, including the epistolary novel which she then abandoned, and wrote and extensively revised three major novels and began a fourth. From 1811 until 1816, with the release of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice*(1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1816), she achieved success as a published writer. She wrote two additional novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, both published posthumously in 1818, and began a third, which was eventually titled *Sanditon,* but died before completing it.

Austen's works critique the novels of sensibility of the second half of the 18th century and are part of the transition to 19th-century realism. Her plots, though fundamentally comic, highlight the dependence of women on marriage to secure social standing and economic security. Her work brought her little personal fame and only a few positive reviews during her lifetime, but the publication in 1869 of her nephew's *A Memoir of Jane Austen*introduced her to a wider public, and by the 1940s she had become widely accepted in academia as a great English writer. The second half of the 20th century saw a proliferation of Austen scholarship and the emergence of a Janeite fan culture.

Biographical information concerning Jane Austen is "famously scarce", according to one biographer. Only some personal and family letters remain (by one estimate only 160 out of Austen's 3,000 letters are extant), and her sister Cassandra (to whom most of the letters were originally addressed) burned "the greater part" of the ones she kept and censored those she did not destroy. Other letters were destroyed by the heirs of Admiral Francis Austen, Jane's brother. Most of the biographical material produced for fifty years after Austen's death was written by her relatives and reflects the family's biases in favour of "good quiet Aunt Jane". Scholars have unearthed little information since.

Life and career

Family

Austen's parents, George Austen (1731–1805), and his wife Cassandra (1739–1827), were members of substantial gentry families. George was descended from a family of woollen manufacturers, which had risen through the professions to the lower ranks of the landed gentry. Cassandra was a member of the prominent Leigh family. They married on 26 April 1764 at Walcot Church inBath. From 1765 until 1801, that is, for much of Jane's life, George Austen served as the rectorof the Anglican parishes at Steventon, Hampshire, and a nearby village. From 1773 until 1796, he supplemented this income by farming and by teaching three or four boys at a time who boarded at his home.

Austen's immediate family was large: six brothers — James (1765–1819), George (1766–1838),Edward (1768–1852), Henry Thomas (1771–1850), Francis William (Frank) (1774–1865), Charles John (1779–1852) — and one sister, Cassandra Elizabeth (Steventon, Hampshire, 9 January 1773 – 1845), who, like Jane, died unmarried.

Cassandra was Austen's closest friend and confidante throughout her life.[16]

Of her brothers, Austen felt closest to Henry, who became a banker and, after his bank failed, an Anglican clergyman. Henry was also his sister's literary agent. A memorial plaque on her brother’s former home at 10 Henrietta Street, was unveiled on 29 April 1999 by actressAmanda Root, accompanied by Jane Austen’s donkey cart from Chawton. It was while staying here that Jane Austen wrote most of her best letters. His large circle of friends and acquaintances in London included bankers, merchants, publishers, painters, and actors: he provided Austen with a view of social worlds not normally visible from a small parish in rural Hampshire.

George was sent to live with a local family at a young age because, as Austen biographer Le Faye describes it, he was "mentally abnormal and subject to fits".[19] He may also have been deaf and mute.[19] Charles and Frank served in the

navy, both rising to the rank of admiral. Edward was adopted by his fourth cousin, Thomas Knight, inheriting Knight's estate and taking his name in 1812.

Early life and education

Austen was born on 16 December 1775 at Steventon rectory and publicly christened on 5 April 1776. After a few months at home, her mother placed Austen with Elizabeth Littlewood, a woman living nearby, who nursed and raised Austen for a year or eighteen months. In 1783, according to family tradition, Jane and Cassandra were sent to Oxford to be educated by Mrs. Ann Cawley and they moved with her to Southamptonlater in the year. Both girls caught typhus and Jane nearly died.[24] Austen was subsequently educated at home, until leaving for boarding school with her sister Cassandra early in 1785. The school curriculum probably included some French, spelling, needlework, dancing and music and, perhaps, drama. By December 1786, Jane and Cassandra had returned home because the Austens could not afford to send both of their daughters to school.

Austen acquired the remainder of her education by reading books, guided by her father and her brothers James and Henry. George Austen apparently gave his daughters unfettered access to his large and varied library, was tolerant of Austen's sometimes risqué experiments in writing, and provided both sisters with expensive paper and other materials for their writing and drawing. According to Park Honan, a biographer of Austen, life in the Austen home was lived in "an open, amused, easy intellectual atmosphere" where the ideas of those with whom the Austens might disagree politically or socially were considered and discussed. After returning from school in 1786, Austen "never again lived anywhere beyond the bounds of her immediate family environment".

Private theatricals were also a part of Austen's education. From when she was seven until she was thirteen, the family and close friends staged a series of plays, including Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775) and David Garrick's *Bon Ton*. While the details are unknown, Austen would certainly have joined in these activities, as a spectator at first and as a participant when she was older.[30] Most of

the plays were comedies, which suggests one way in which Austen's comedic and satirical gifts were cultivated.

In 1788, her portrait may have been commissioned by her great uncle, Francis Austen.

Juvenilia

Perhaps as early as 1787, Austen began to write poems, stories, and plays for her own and her family's amusement. Austen later compiled "fair copies" of 29 of these early works into three bound notebooks, now referred to as the *Juvenilia*, containing pieces originally written between 1787 and 1793. There is manuscript evidence that Austen continued to work on these pieces as late as the period 1809–1811, and that her niece and nephew, Anna and James Edward Austen, made further additions as late as 1814. Among these works are a satirical novel in letters titled *Love and Freindship* [*sic*], in which she mocked popularnovels of sensibility, and *The History of England*, a manuscript of 34 pages accompanied by 13 watercolour miniatures by her sister Cassandra.

Austen's *History* parodied popular historical writing, particularly Oliver Goldsmith's*History of England* (1764). Austen wrote, for example: "Henry the 4th ascended the throne of England much to his own satisfaction in the year 1399, after having prevailed on his cousin & predecessor Richard the 2nd, to resign it to him, & to retire for the rest of his Life to Pomfret Castle, where he happened to be murdered." Austen's *Juvenilia* are often, according to scholar Richard Jenkyns, "boisterous" and "anarchic"; he compares them to the work of 18th-century novelist Laurence Sterne and the 20th century comedy group Monty Python.[38]

Adulthood

As Austen grew into adulthood, she continued to live at her parents' home, carrying out those activities normal for women of her age and social standing: she practised the fortepiano, assisted her sister and mother with supervising servants, and attended female relatives during childbirth and older relatives on their deathbeds. She sent short pieces of writing to her newborn nieces Fanny Catherine

and Jane Anna Elizabeth. Austen was particularly proud of her accomplishments as a seamstress. She also attended church regularly, socialized frequently with friends and neighbours, and read novels — often of her own composition — aloud with her family in the evenings. Socializing with the neighbours often meant dancing, either impromptu in someone's home after supper or at the balls held regularly at theassembly rooms in the town hall. Her brother Henry later said that "Jane was fond of dancing, and excelled in it".

In 1793, Austen began and then abandoned a short play, later entitled *Sir Charles Grandison or the happy Man, a comedy in 6 acts*, which she returned to and completed around 1800. This was a short parody of various school textbook abridgments of Austen's favourite contemporary novel, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), by Samuel Richardson. Honan speculates that at some point not long after writing *Love and Freindship* [*sic*] in 1789, Austen decided to "write for profit, to make stories her central effort", that is, to become a professional writer. Beginning in about 1793, she began to write longer, more sophisticated works.

Between 1793 and 1795, Austen wrote *Lady Susan*, a short epistolary novel, usually described as her most ambitious and sophisticated early work. It is unlike any of Austen's other works. Austen biographer Claire Tomalin describes the heroine of the novella as a sexual predator who uses her intelligence and charm to manipulate, betray, and abuse her victims, whether lovers, friends or family. Tomalin writes: "Told in letters, it is as neatly plotted as a play, and as cynical in tone as any of the most outrageous of the Restoration dramatists who may have provided some of her inspiration ... It stands alone in Austen's work as a study of an adult woman whose intelligence and force of character are greater than those of anyone she encounters."

Early novels

After finishing *Lady Susan*, Austen attempted her first full-length novel — *Elinor and Marianne*. Her sister Cassandra later remembered that it was read to the family

"before 1796" and was told through a series of letters. Without surviving original manuscripts, there is no way to know how much of the original draft survived in the novel published in 1811 as *Sense and Sensibility*.

When Austen was twenty, Tom Lefroy, a nephew of neighbours, visited Steventon from December 1795 to January 1796. He had just finished a university degree and was moving to London to train as a barrister. Lefroy and Austen would have been introduced at a ball or other neighbourhood social gathering, and it is clear from Austen's letters to Cassandra that they spent considerable time together: "I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down together." The Lefroy family intervened and sent him away at the end of January. Marriage was impractical, as both Lefroy and Austen must have known. Neither had any money, and he was dependent on a great-uncle in Ireland to finance his education and establish his legal career. If Tom Lefroy later visited Hampshire, he was carefully kept away from the Austens, and Jane Austen never saw him again.

Austen began work on a second novel, *First Impressions*, in 1796. She completed the initial draft in August 1797 when she was only 21 (it later became *Pride and Prejudice*); as with all of her novels, Austen read the work aloud to her family as she was working on it and it became an "established favourite". At this time, her father made the first attempt to publish one of her novels. In November 1797, George Austen wrote to Thomas Cadell, an established publisher in London, to ask if he would consider publishing "a Manuscript Novel, comprised in three Vols. about the length of Miss Burney's Evelina" (*First Impressions*) at the author's financial risk. Cadell quickly returned Mr. Austen's letter, marked "Declined by Return of Post". Austen may not have known of her father's efforts. Following the completion of *First Impressions,* Austen returned to *Elinor and Marianne* and from November 1797 until mid-1798, revised it heavily; she eliminated the epistolary format in favour of third-person narration and produced something close to *Sense and Sensibility*.

During the middle of 1798, after finishing revisions of *Elinor and Marianne*, Austen began writing a third novel with the working title *Susan* — later *Northanger Abbey* — a satire on the popular Gothic novel. Austen completed her work about a year later. In early 1803, Henry Austen offered *Susan* to Benjamin Crosby, a London publisher, who paid £10 for the copyright. Crosby promised early publication and went so far as to advertise the book publicly as being "in the press", but did nothing more. The manuscript remained in Crosby's hands, unpublished, until Austen repurchased the copyright from him in 1816.

Bath and Southampton

In December 1800, Mr Austen unexpectedly announced his decision to retire from the ministry, leave Steventon, and move the family to Bath. While retirement and travel were good for the elder Austens, Jane Austen was shocked to be told she was moving from the only home she had ever known. An indication of Austen's state of mind is her lack of productivity as a writer during the time she lived at Bath. She was able to make some revisions to *Susan*, and she began and then abandoned a new novel, *The Watsons*, but there was nothing like the productivity of the years 1795–1799. Tomalin suggests this reflects a deep depression disabling her as a writer, but Honan disagrees, arguing Austen wrote or revised her manuscripts throughout her creative life, except for a few months after her father died.

In December 1802, Austen received her only proposal of marriage. She and her sister visited Alethea and Catherine Bigg, old friends who lived near Basingstoke. Their younger brother, Harris Bigg-Wither, had recently finished his education at Oxford and was also at home. Bigg-Wither proposed and Austen accepted. As described by Caroline Austen, Jane's niece, and Reginald Bigg-Wither, a descendant, Harris was not attractive — he was a large, plain-looking man who spoke little, stuttered when he did speak, was aggressive in conversation, and almost completely tactless. However, Austen had known him since both were young and the marriage offered many practical advantages to Austen and her

family. He was the heir to extensive family estates located in the area where the sisters had grown up. With these resources, Austen could provide her parents a comfortable old age, give Cassandra a permanent home and, perhaps, assist her brothers in their careers. By the next morning, Austen realised she had made a mistake and withdrew her acceptance. No contemporary letters or diaries describe how Austen felt about this proposal. In 1814, Austen wrote a letter to her niece, Fanny Knight, who had asked for advice about a serious relationship, telling her that "having written so much on one side of the question, I shall now turn around & entreat you not to commit yourself farther, & not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection".

In 1804, while living in Bath, Austen started but did not complete a new novel, *The Watsons*. The story centres on an invalid clergyman with little money and his four unmarried daughters. Sutherland describes the novel as "a study in the harsh economic realities of dependent women's lives". Honan suggests, and Tomalin agrees, that Austen chose to stop work on the novel after her father died on 21 January 1805 and her personal circumstances resembled those of her characters too closely for her comfort.

Mr Austen's final illness had struck suddenly, leaving him, as Austen reported to her brother Francis, "quite insensible of his own state", and he died quickly. Jane, Cassandra, and their mother were left in a precarious financial situation. Edward, James, Henry, and Francis Austen pledged to make annual contributions to support their mother and sisters. For the next four years, the family's living arrangements reflected their financial insecurity. They lived part of the time in rented quarters in Bath and then, beginning in 1806, in Southampton, where they shared a house with Frank Austen and his new wife. A large part of this time they spent visiting various branches of the family.

On 5 April 1809, about three months before the family's move to Chawton, Austen wrote an angry letter to Richard Crosby, offering him a new manuscript of *Susan* if

that was needed to secure immediate publication of the novel, and otherwise requesting the return of the original so she could find another publisher. Crosby replied he had not agreed to publish the book by any particular time, or at all, and that Austen could repurchase the manuscript for the £10 he had paid her and find another publisher. However, Austen did not have the resources to repurchase the book.

Chawton

Around early 1809, Austen's brother Edward offered his mother and sisters a more settled life — the use of a large cottage in Chawton village that was part of Edward's nearby estate, Chawton House. Jane, Cassandra, and their mother moved into Chawton cottage on 7 July 1809. In Chawton, life was quieter than it had been since the family's move to Bath in 1800. The Austens did not socialise with the neighbouring gentry and entertained only when family visited. Austen's niece Anna described the Austen family's life in Chawton: "It was a very quiet life, according to our ideas, but they were great readers, and besides the housekeeping our aunts occupied themselves in working with the poor and in teaching some girl or boy to read or write." Austen wrote almost daily, but privately, and seems to have been relieved of some household responsibilities to give her more opportunity to write. In this setting, she was able to be productive as a writer once more.

Published author

During her time at Chawton, Jane Austen successfully published four novels, which were generally well-received. Through her brother Henry, the publisher Thomas Egerton agreed to publish *Sense and Sensibility*, which appeared in October 1811. Reviews were favourable and the novel became fashionable among opinion-makers; the edition sold out by mid-1813. Austen's earnings from*Sense and Sensibility* provided her with some financial and psychological independence. Egerton then published *Pride and Prejudice*, a revision of *First Impressions*, in January 1813. He advertised the book widely and it was an immediate success, garnering three favourable reviews and selling well. By

October 1813, Egerton was able to begin selling a second edition. *Mansfield Park* was published by Egerton in May 1814. While *Mansfield Park* was ignored by reviewers, it was a great success with the public. All copies were sold within six months, and Austen's earnings on this novel were larger than for any of her other novels.

Austen learned that the Prince Regent admired her novels and kept a set at each of his residences. In November 1815, the Prince Regent's librarian invited Austen to visit the Prince's London residence and hinted Austen should dedicate the forthcoming *Emma* to the Prince. Though Austen disliked the Prince, she could scarcely refuse the request. She later wrote *Plan of a Novel, according to hints from various quarters (fr)*, a satiric outline of the "perfect novel" based on the librarian's many suggestions for a future Austen novel.

In mid-1815, Austen moved her work from Egerton to John Murray, a better known London publisher, who published *Emma* in December 1815 and a second edition of *Mansfield Park* in February 1816. *Emma* sold well but the new edition of *Mansfield Park* did not, and this failure offset most of the profits Austen earned on *Emma*. These were the last of Austen's novels to be published during her lifetime.

While Murray prepared *Emma* for publication, Austen began to write a new novel she titled *The Elliots*, later published as *Persuasion*. She completed her first draft in July 1816. In addition, shortly after the publication of *Emma*, Henry Austen repurchased the copyright for*Susan* from Crosby. Austen was forced to postpone publishing either of these completed novels by family financial troubles. Henry Austen's bank failed in March 1816, depriving him of all of his assets, leaving him deeply in debt and losing Edward, James, and Frank Austen large sums. Henry and Frank could no longer afford the contributions they had made to support their mother and sisters.

Illness and death

Early in 1816, Jane Austen began to feel unwell. She ignored her illness at first and continued to work and to participate in the usual round of family activities. By the middle of that year, her decline was unmistakable to Austen and to her family, and Austen's physical condition began a long, slow, and irregular deterioration culminating in her death the following year. The majority of Austen biographers rely on Dr. Vincent Cope's tentative 1964 retrospective diagnosis and list her cause of death asAddison's disease. However, her final illness has also been described as Hodgkin's lymphoma. Recent work by Katherine White of Britain's Addison's Disease Self Help Group suggests that Austen probably died of bovine tuberculosis, a disease (now) commonly associated with drinking unpasteurized milk. One contributing factor or cause of her death, discovered by Linda Robinson Walker and described in the Winter 2010 issue of Persuasions on-line, might be Brill–Zinsser disease, a recurrent form of typhus, which she had as a child. Brill–Zinsser disease is to typhus as shingles is to chicken pox; when a victim of typhus endures stress, malnutrition or another infection, typhus can recur as Brill–Zinsser disease.

Austen continued to work in spite of her illness. She became dissatisfied with the ending of *The Elliots* and rewrote the final two chapters, finishing them on 6 August 1816. In January 1817, Austen began work on a new novel she called *The Brothers*, later titled *Sanditon*upon its first publication in 1925, and completed twelve chapters before stopping work in mid-March 1817, probably because her illness prevented her from continuing. Austen made light of her condition to others, describing it as "Bile" and rheumatism, but as her disease progressed she experienced increasing difficulty walking or finding the energy for other activities. By mid-April, Austen was confined to her bed. In May, Cassandra and Henry escorted Jane to Winchester for medical treatment. Austen died in Winchester on 18 July 1817, at the age of 41. Henry, through his clerical connections, arranged for his sister to be buried in the north aisle of the nave of Winchester Cathedral. The epitaph composed by her brother James praises Austen's personal qualities,

expresses hope for her salvation, mentions the "extraordinary endowments of her mind", but does not explicitly mention her achievements as a writer.[87]

Posthumous publication

After Austen's death, Cassandra and Henry Austen arranged with Murray for the publication of *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*as a set in December 1817. Henry Austen contributed a *Biographical Note* which for the first time identified his sister as the author of the novels. Tomalin describes it as "a loving and polished eulogy". Sales were good for a year — only 321 copies remained unsold at the end of 1818 — and then declined. Murray disposed of the remaining copies in 1820, and Austen's novels remained out of print for twelve years. In 1832, publisher Richard Bentley purchased the remaining copyrights to all of Austen's novels and, beginning in either December 1832 or January 1833, published them in five illustrated volumes as part of his *Standard Novels* series. In October 1833, Bentley published the first collected edition of Austen's works. Since then, Austen's novels have been continuously in print.

Reception

Austen's works brought her little personal renown because they were published anonymously. Although her novels quickly became fashionable among opinion-makers, such as Princess Charlotte Augusta, daughter of the Prince Regent, they received only a few published reviews. Most of the reviews were short and on balance favourable, although superficial and cautious. They most often focused on the moral lessons of the novels. Sir Walter Scott, a leading novelist of the day, contributed one of them, anonymously. Using the review as a platform from which to defend the then disreputable genre of the novel, he praised Austen's realism. The other important early review of Austen's works was published by Richard Whately in 1821. He drew favourable comparisons between Austen and such acknowledged greats as Homer and Shakespeare, praising the dramatic qualities of her narrative. Scott and Whately set the tone for almost all subsequent 19th-century Austen criticism.

19th century

Because Austen's novels failed to conform to Romantic and Victorian expectations that "powerful emotion [be] authenticated by an egregious display of sound and colour in the writing",19th-century critics and audiences generally preferred the works of Charles Dickens and George Eliot. Though Austen's novels were republished in Britain beginning in the 1830s and remained steady sellers, they were not bestsellers.

The publication of James Edward Austen-Leigh's *A Memoir of Jane Austen* in 1869 introduced Austen to a wider public as "dear aunt Jane", the respectable maiden aunt. Publication of the *Memoir* spurred the reissue of Austen's novels — the first popular editions were released in 1883 and fancy illustrated editions and collectors' sets quickly followed. Author and critic Leslie Stephen described the popular mania that started to develop for Austen in the 1880s as "Austenolatry". Around the start of the 20th century, members of the literary elite reacted against the popularization of Austen. They referred to themselves as *Janeites* in order to distinguish themselves from the masses who did not properly understand her works. For example, James responded negatively to what he described as "a beguiled infatuation" with Austen, a rising tide of public interest that exceeded Austen's "intrinsic merit and interest".

During the last quarter of the 19th century, the first books of criticism on Austen were published. In fact, after the publication of the *Memoir*, more criticism was published on Austen in two years than had appeared in the previous fifty.

20th century and beyond

Several important works paved the way for Austen's novels to become a focus of academic study. The first important milestone was a 1911 essay by Oxford Shakespearean scholar A. C. Bradley, which is "generally regarded as the starting-point for the serious academic approach to Jane Austen". In it, he established the groupings of Austen's "early" and "late" novels, which are still used by scholars today. The second was R. W. Chapman's 1923 edition of Austen's collected works.

Not only was it the first scholarly edition of Austen's works, it was also the first scholarly edition of any English novelist. The Chapman text has remained the basis for all subsequent published editions of Austen's works. With the publication in 1939 of Mary Lascelles's *Jane Austen and Her Art*, the academic study of Austen took hold.[110] Lascelles's innovative work included an analysis of the books Jane Austen read and the effect of her reading on her work, an extended analysis of Austen's style, and her "narrative art". At the time, concern arose over the fact that academics were taking over Austen criticism and it was becoming increasingly esoteric — a debate that has continued to the beginning of the 21st century.

In a spurt of revisionist views in the 1940s, scholars approached Austen more sceptically and argued that she was a subversive writer. These revisionist views, together with F. R. Leavis's and Ian Watt's pronouncement that Austen was one of the great writers of English fiction, did much to cement Austen's reputation amongst academics. They agreed that she "combined [Henry Fielding's and Samuel Richardson's] qualities of interiority and irony, realism and satire to form an author superior to both". The period since World War II has seen more scholarship on Austen using a diversity of critical approaches, including feminist theory, and perhaps most controversially, postcolonial theory. However, the continuing disconnection between the popular appreciation of Austen, particularly by modern Janeites, and the academic appreciation of Austen has widened considerably. Jane Austen was the favourite novelist of political philosopher Leo Strauss.

Sequels, prequels, and adaptations of almost every sort have been based on the novels of Jane Austen, from soft-core pornography to fantasy. Beginning in the middle of the 19th century, Austen family members published conclusions to her incomplete novels, and by 2000 there were over 100 printed adaptations. The first film adaptation was the 1940 MGM production of *Pride and Prejudice* starringLaurence Olivier and Greer Garson. BBC television dramatisations, which were first produced in the 1970s, attempted to adhere meticulously to Austen's plots, characterisations, and settings. In 1995 a great wave

of Austen adaptations began to appear, with Ang Lee's film of *Sense and Sensibility*, for which screenwriter and star Emma Thompson won an Academy Award, and the BBC's immensely popular TV mini-series *Pride and Prejudice*, starring Jennifer Ehle and Colin Firth.

Books and scripts that use the general storyline of Austen's novels but change or otherwise modernise the story also became popular at the end of the 20th century. For example, *Clueless* (1995), Amy Heckerling's updated version of *Emma*, which takes place in Beverly Hills, became a cultural phenomenon and spawned its own television series. In a 2002 vote to determine whom the UK public considers the greatest British people in history, Austen was ranked number 70 in the list of the "*100 Greatest Britons*". In 2003, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* came second in the BBC's The Big Read, a national poll to find the "Nation's best-loved book."

In 2007, the article *Rejecting Jane* by British author David Lassman, which examined how Austen would fare in the modern day publishing industry, achieved worldwide attention when Austen's work — submitted under a pseudonym — was rejected by numerous publishers.

I Novel

Sense and Sensibility is a novel by Jane Austen, and was her first published work when it appeared in 1811 under the pseudonym "A Lady". A work of romantic fiction, *Sense and Sensibility* is set in southwest Englandbetween 1792 and 1797,[1] and portrays the life and loves of the Dashwood sisters, Elinor and Marianne. The novel follows the young ladies to their new home, a meagre cottage on a distant relative's property, where they experience love, romance and heartbreak. The philosophical resolution of the novel is ambiguous: the reader must decide whether sense and sensibility have truly merged.[2]

Jane Austen wrote the first draft of the novel in the form of a novel-in-letters (epistolary form) sometime around 1795 when she was about 19 years old, and gave it the title, *Elinor and Marianne*. She later changed the form to a narrative

and the title to *Sense and Sensibility*.[3] By changing the title, Austen added "philosophical depth" to what began as a sketch of two characters.[4] The title of the book, and that of her next published novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), may be suggestive of political conflicts of the 1790s.[5]

Austen biographer, Claire Tomalin, argues that *Sense and Sensibility* has a "wobble in its approach," which developed because Austen, in the course of writing the novel, gradually became less certain about whether sense or sensibility should triumph.[6] Austen characterizes Marianne as a sweet lady with attractive qualities: intelligence, musical talent, frankness, and the capacity to love deeply. She also acknowledges that Willoughby, with all his faults, continues to love and, in some measure, appreciate Marianne. For these reasons, some readers find Marianne's ultimate marriage to Colonel Brandon an unsatisfactory ending.[7]

The story is about Elinor and Marianne, two daughters of Mr Dashwood by his second wife. They have a younger sister, Margaret, and an older half-brother named John. When their father dies, the family estate passes to John, and the Dashwood women are left in reduced circumstances. The novel follows the Dashwood sisters to their new home, a cottage on a distant relative's property, where they experience both romance and heartbreak. The contrast between the sisters' characters is eventually resolved as they each find love and lasting happiness. Through the events in the novel, Elinor and Marianne encounter the sense and sensibility of life and love.

II Novel

Pride and Prejudice is a novel by Jane Austen, first published in 1813. The story follows the main character Elizabeth Bennet as she deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality, education, and marriage in the society of the landed gentry of early 19th-century England. Elizabeth is the second of five daughters of a country gentleman living near the fictional town of Meryton in Hertfordshire, near London.

Though the story is set at the turn of the 19th century, it retains a fascination for modern readers, continuing near the top of lists of 'most loved books' such as The Big Read. It has become one of the most popular novels in English literature and receives considerable attention from literary scholars. Modern interest in the book has resulted in a number of dramatic adaptations and an abundance of novels and stories imitating Austen's memorable characters or themes. To date, the book has sold some 20 million copies worldwide.

As Anna Quindlen wrote, "*Pride and Prejudice* is also about that thing that all great novels consider, the search for self. And it is the first great novel to teach us that that search is as surely undertaken in the drawing room makingsmall talk as in the pursuit of a great white whale or the public punishment of adultery."

Many critics take the novel's title as a starting point when analysing the major themes of *Pride and Prejudice*; however, Robert Fox cautions against reading too much into the title because commercial factors may have played a role in its selection. "After the success of *Sense and Sensibility*, nothing would have seemed more natural than to bring out another novel of the same author using again the formula of antithesis and alliteration for the title. It should be pointed out that the qualities of the title are not exclusively assigned to one or the other of the protagonists; both Elizabeth and Darcy display pride and prejudice."

A major theme in much of Austen's work is the importance of environment and upbringing on the development of young people's character and morality. Social standing and wealth are not necessarily advantages in her world, and a further theme common to Jane Austen's work is ineffectual parents. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the failure of Mr and Mrs Bennet as parents is blamed for Lydia's lack of moral judgment; Darcy, on the other hand, has been taught to be principled and scrupulously honourable, but he is also proud and overbearing. Kitty, rescued from Lydia's bad influence and spending more time with her older sisters after they marry, is said to improve greatly in their superior society.

The novel was well received, with three favourable reviews in the first months following publication. Anne Isabella Milbanke, later to be the wife of Lord Byron, called it "the fashionable novel". Noted critic and reviewer George Henry Lewes declared that he "would rather have written Pride and Prejudice, or Tom Jones, than any of the Waverley Novels".

Charlotte Brontë, however, in a letter to Lewes, wrote that *Pride and Prejudice* was a disappointment, "a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but ... no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck."

The poet W.H. Auden wrote of Austen in 1937:

You could not shock her more than she shocks me,
Beside her Joyce seems innocent as grass.
It makes me most uncomfortable to see
An English spinster of the middle class
Describe the amorous effects of 'brass',
Reveal so frankly and with such sobriety
The economic basis of society.

Money

Money plays a key role in the marriage market not just for the young ladies who wish to secure a husband as rich as they can, but also for men who wish to marry a woman of means. An example is Colonel Fitzwilliam and George Wickham who once tries to elope with Miss Darcy. Marrying a woman of a rich family also ensures a linkage to a high family as is visible in the desire of Bingley sisters to get their brother married to Miss Darcy.

Class

Much of the pride and prejudice in the novel exists because of class divisions. Darcy's first impressions on Elizabeth are coloured by his snobbery. He can not bring himself to love Elizabeth or at least acknowledge his love for her even in his

own heart because of his prejudice. His first proposal clearly reflects this attitude: "In vain have I 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." [12] Also, Elizabeth quickly believes Wickham's account of Darcy because of her prejudice against him. Lady Catherine and Bingley sisters belong to the snobbish category. Mr. Bingley shows complete disregard to class.

Pride and Prejudice, like most of Jane Austen's works, employs the narrative technique of free indirect speech. This has been defined as "the free representation of a character's speech, by which one means, not words actually spoken by a character, but the words that typify the character's thoughts, or the way the character would think or speak, if she thought or spoke".[13] By using narrative that adopts the tone and vocabulary of a particular character (in this case, that of Elizabeth), Austen invites the reader to follow events from Elizabeth's viewpoint, sharing her prejudices and misapprehensions. "The learning curve, while undergone by both protagonists, is disclosed to us solely through Elizabeth's point of view and her free indirect speech is essential ... for it is through it that we remain caught, if not stuck, within Elizabeth's misprisions.".[13]

The title "Pride and Prejudice" is very likely taken from a passage in Fanny Burney's popular 1782 novel *Cecilia*, a novel Jane Austen is known to have admired:[14]

> "The whole of this unfortunate business," said Dr. Lyster, "has been the result of PRIDE and PREJUDICE. ... Yet this, however, remember: if to PRIDE and PREJUDICE you owe your miseries, so wonderfully is good and evil balanced, that to PRIDE and PREJUDICE you will also owe their termination..."[15] [Capitalization as in the original.]

III NOVEL

Mansfield Park is a novel by Jane Austen, written at Chawton Cottage between February 1811 and 1813. It was published in May 1814 by Thomas Egerton, who published Jane Austen's two earlier novels, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and*

Prejudice. When the novel reached a second edition in 1816, its publication was taken over by John Murray, who also published its successor, *Emma*.

Mansfield Park is the most controversial of Austen's major novels. Regency critics praised the novel's wholesome morality, but many modern readers find Fanny's timidity and disapproval of the theatricals difficult to sympathise with and reject the idea (made explicit in the final chapter) that she is a better person for the relative privations of her childhood. Jane Austen's own mother thought Fanny "insipid",[2]and many other readers have found her priggish and unlikeable.[3] Other critics point out that she is a complex personality, perceptive yet given to wishful thinking, and that she shows courage and grows in self-esteem during the latter part of the story. Austen biographer Claire Tomalin, who is generally rather critical of Fanny, argues that "it is in rejecting obedience in favour of the higher dictate of remaining true to her own conscience that Fanny rises to her moment of heroism."[4] But Tomalin reflects the ambivalence that many readers feel towards Fanny when she also writes: "More is made of Fanny Price's faith, which gives her the courage to resist what she thinks is wrong; it also makes her intolerant of sinners, whom she is ready to cast aside."

The story contains much social satire, targeted particularly at the two aunts.

It could also be argued that Jane Austen was sublimely indifferent (at least in her novels) to the outside world. Mansfield Park was written at the height of the Napoleonic War, yet the war is barely even mentioned in this or any other of her novels. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing and the country was in turmoil as a result, again barely a mention—her novels contain not a single mention of the steam engine, the growth of the manufacturing cities or even the turnip (which had a much more profound effect on the British economy than any plant with the exception of cotton—also not mentioned). She even manages to omit any mention of the abolition of the slave trade of 1808, four years before she started the novel and the culmination of a huge, controversial public campaign.

Even the game of speculation has been viewed as a symbol, a "metaphor for the game Mary Crawford is playing, with Edmund as stake", according to David Selwyn.[8]

IV Novel

Emma, by Jane Austen, is a novel about youthful hubris and the perils of misconstrued romance. The novel was first published in December 1815. As in her other novels, Austen explores the concerns and difficulties of genteel women living in Georgian-Regency England; she also creates a lively comedy of manners among her characters.

Before she began the novel, Austen wrote, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like."[1] In the very first sentence she introduces the title character as "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich." Emma, however, is also rather spoiled, headstrong, and self-satisfied; she greatly overestimates her own matchmaking abilities; she is blind to the dangers of meddling in other people's lives, and her imagination and perceptions often lead her astray.

Early reviews of Emma were generally favourable, but there were some criticisms about the lack of story. John Murray remarked that it lacked "incident and Romance"; Maria Edgeworth, the author of Belinda, to whom Austen had sent a complimentary copy, wrote: there was no story in it, except that Miss Emma found that the man whom she designed for Harriet's lover was an admirer of her own – & he was affronted at being refused by Emma & Harriet wore the willow – and smooth, thin water-gruel is according to Emma's father's opinion a very good thing & it is very difficult to make a cook understand what you mean by smooth, thin water-gruel!!

Emma Woodhouse is the first Austen heroine with no financial concerns, which, she declares to the naïve Miss Smith, is the reason that she has no inducement to marry. This is a great departure from Austen's other novels, in which the quest for marriage and financial security are often important themes in the stories. Emma's ample financial resources put her in a much more privileged position than the

heroines of Austen's earlier works, such as Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice. Jane Fairfax's prospects, in contrast, are bleak.

In contrast to other Austen heroines Emma seems immune to romantic attraction. Unlike Marianne Dashwood, who is attracted to the wrong man before she settles on the right one, Emma shows no romantic interest in the men she meets. She is genuinely surprised (and somewhat disgusted) when Mr. Elton declares his love for her—much in the way Elizabeth Bennet singularly reacts to the obsequious Mr. Collins. Her fancy for Frank Churchill represents more of a longing for a little drama in her life than a longing for romantic love. Notably too, Emma utterly fails to understand the budding affection between Harriet Smith and Robert Martin; she interprets the prospective match solely in terms of financial settlements and social ambition. It is only after Harriet Smith reveals her interest in Mr. Knightley that Emma realises her own feelings for him.

While Emma differs strikingly from Austen's other heroines in these two respects, she resembles Elizabeth Bennet and Anne Elliot, among others, in another way: she is an intelligent young woman with too little to do and no ability to change her location or everyday routine. Though her family is loving and her economic status secure, Emma's everyday life is dull indeed; she has few companions her own age when the novel begins. Her determined though inept matchmaking may represent a muted protest against the narrow scope of a wealthy woman's life, especially that of a woman who is single and childless.

IV Novel

Northanger Abbey[*pronunciation?*] was the first of Jane Austen's novels to be completed for publication, though she had previously made a start on *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*. According to Cassandra Austen's*Memorandum, Susan* (as it was first called) was written approximately during 1798–99.

Northanger Abbey follows seventeen-year-old Gothic novel aficionado Catherine Morland and family friends Mr. and Mrs. Allen as they visit Bath. It is Catherine's first visit there. She meets new friends, such as Isabella Thorpe, and goes to balls.

Catherine finds herself pursued by Isabella's brother, the rough-mannered, slovenly John Thorpe, and by her real love interest, Henry Tilney. She also becomes friends with Eleanor Tilney, Henry's younger sister. Henry captivates her with his view on novels and his knowledge of history and the world. General Tilney (Henry and Eleanor's father) invites Catherine to visit their estate, Northanger Abbey, she expects to be dark, ancient and full of Gothic horrors and fantastical mystery.

In addition, Catherine Morland realises she is not to rely upon others, such as Isabella, who are negatively influential on her, but to be single-minded and independent. It is only through bad experiences that Catherine really begins to properly mature and grow up.

Several Gothic novels are mentioned in the book, including most importantly *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian* by Ann Radcliffe. Austen also satirizes *Clermont*, a Gothic novel by Regina Maria Roche. This last is included in a list of seven somewhat obscure Gothic works, known as the 'Northanger horrid novels'

Northanger Abbey is fundamentally a parody of Gothic fiction. Austen turns the conventions of eighteenth-century novels on their head, by making her heroine a plain and undistinguished girl from a middle-class family, allowing the heroine to fall in love with the hero before he has a serious thought of her, and exposing the heroine's romantic fears and curiosities as groundless. Austen biographer Claire Tomalinspeculates that Austen may have begun this book, which is more explicitly comic than her other works and contains many literary allusions that her parents and siblings would have enjoyed, as a family entertainment—a piece of lighthearted parody to be read aloud by the fireside

Austen addresses the reader directly in parts, particularly at the end of Chapter 5, where she gives a lengthy opinion of the value of novels, and the contemporary social prejudice against them in favour of drier historical works and newspapers. In discussions featuring Isabella, the Thorpe sisters, Eleanor, and Henry, and by Catherine perusing the library of the General, and her mother's books on

instructions on behaviours, the reader gains further insights into Austen's various perspectives on novels in contrast with other popular literature of the time (especially the Gothic novel). Eleanor even praises history books, and while Catherine points out the obvious fiction of the speeches given to important historical characters through, Eleanor enjoys them for what they are.

The directness with which Austen addresses the reader, especially at the end of the story, gives a unique insight into Austen's thoughts at the time, which is particularly important due to her letters having been burned at her request by her sister upon her death.

VI Novel

Persuasion is Jane Austen's last completed novel. She began it soon after she had finished *Emma,* completing it in August 1816. She died, aged 41, in 1817; *Persuasion* was published in December that year (but dated 1818).

Persuasion is linked to *Northanger Abbey* not only by the fact that the two books were originally bound up in one volume and published together, but also because both stories are set partly in Bath, a fashionable city with which Jane Austen was well acquainted, having lived there from 1801 to 1805.

Besides the theme of persuasion, the novel evokes other topics, such as the Royal Navy, in which two of Jane Austen's brothers ultimately rose to the rank of admiral. As in *Northanger Abbey,* the superficial social life of Bath—well known to Jane Austen, who spent several relatively unhappy and unproductive years there—is portrayed extensively and serves as a setting for the second half of the book. In many respects *Persuasion* marks a break with Austen's previous works, both in the more biting, even irritable satire directed at some of the novel's characters and in the regretful, resigned outlook of its otherwise admirable heroine, Anne Elliot, in the first part of the story. Against this is set the energy and appeal of the Royal Navy, which symbolizes for Anne and the reader the possibility of a more outgoing, engaged, and fulfilling life, and it is this worldview which triumphs for the most part at the end of the novel.

Although readers of *Persuasion* might conclude that Jane Austen intended "persuasion" to be the unifying theme of the story, the book's title is not hers but her brother Henry's, who named it after her untimely death. Certainly the idea of persuasion runs through the book, with vignettes within the story as variations on that theme. But there is no known source that documents what Austen intended to call her novel. On the other hand, the literary scholar Gillian Beer establishes that Jane Austen had profound concerns about the levels and applications of "persuasion" employed in society, especially as it related to the pressures and choices facing the young women of her day. Beer writes that for Austen and her readers persuasion was indeed "fraught with moral dangers";[2] she notes particularly that Austen personally was appalled by what she came to regard as her own misguided advice to her beloved niece Fanny Knight on the very question of whether Fanny ought to accept a particular suitor, even though it would have meant a protracted engagement *Persuasion* is widely appreciated as a moving love story despite what has been called its simple plot, and it exemplifies Austen's signature wit and ironic narrative style.[*citation needed*] While writing *Persuasion*, however, Austen became ill with the disease that would kill her less than two years later. As a result, the novel is both shorter and arguably less polished than *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* since it was not subject to the author's usual careful retrospective revision.

Although the impact of Austen's failing health at the time of writing *Persuasion* cannot be overlooked, the novel is strikingly original in several ways. It is the first of Austen's novels to feature as the central character a woman who, by the standards of the time, is past the first bloom of youth. Austen biographer Claire Tomalin characterizes the book as Austen's "present to herself, to Miss Sharp, to Cassandra, toMartha Lloyd . . . to all women who had lost their chance in life and would never enjoy a second spring."[5]

As in her earlier novels, Austen makes some biting comments about "family" and how one chooses whom to associate with. Mary Musgrove wants to nurse her sister-in-law Louisa but doesn't want to stay home to care for her own injured son

if it means she will miss making the acquaintance of the famous Captain Wentworth. Elizabeth prefers the plebian Mrs. Clay to her own sister, yet avidly seeks the attentions of Lady Dalrymple who is "amongst the nobility of England and Ireland."

Jane Austen ends her last completed novel on a note similar in many respects to *Pride and Prejudice*. The heroine marries for love, with money, moves into a social, emotional, and intellectual sphere worthy of her, and leaves her less admirable connections behind.