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Profielwerkstuk Engels Jane Austen and the women of her time

Manon Schuurkes

Jane Austen

And The Women Of Her Time

What was the place of women in the early 19th century?

contents

Title page 1

Contents 2

Foreword 3

Chapter 1 Introduction 4

Chapter 2 What's going on in the early 19th century? 5

§1 In general 5

§2 How does Jane Austen react to those changes

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and ideas in her books? 6

Chapter 3 Who is Jane Austen? 7

§1 Her childhood and early work 7

§2 Early Adulthood 8

§3 Maturity and death 9

Chapter 4 Jane Austen and the women of her time 12

§1 The education of women 12

§2 Marriage and the alternatives 13

Chapter 5 Jane Austen's books 16

§1 My choice 16

§2 Pride and Prejudice 16

§3 Mansfield Park 20

§4 Persuasion 24

§5 Comparison between the story-lines 27

Chapter 6 How does Jane Austen describe women? 29

§1 The main character of Persuasion: Anne Elliot 29

§2 The female characters of Persuasion 30

Chapter 7 Conclusion 35

Resources 36

Logbook 37

Foreword

I really enjoyed doing this work because I like Jane Austen's books very much and it was fun to learn so much about her and about the place of women in her time. Unfortunately I was a bit of a slow starter, so I had to do a whole lot of work at once, but I didn't even mind that. It really took me a lot of time to read and re-read her books, which is why I haven't discussed all her work, but only a small selection. The description of all the female characters of the book *Persuasion* was especially

interesting. I intended to make descriptions of the characters in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* as well, but that would have been too much work. I am very pleased with this final result and I hope that you (the reader) are pleased with it as well.

Much reading pleasure!
Manon Schuurkes

Chapter 1

Introduction

My main question for this Profile Work is:

What was the place of women in the early nineteenth century and what is Jane Austen's view on the women of her time?

To be able to answer this question, I made the following sub-questions:

- ? What is going on in the early nineteenth century?
- ? Who is Jane Austen?
- ? What was the place of women in the early nineteenth century?
- ? How does Jane Austen describe women and what place do they have in her books?

In the following chapters I will try to answer these questions. I hope this will give a complete image of Jane Austen, her books, and the way women were seen in the early nineteenth century. I will shortly summarize it in the conclusion. I hope that everything will be clear and understandable for whoever reads this work, even if they have never heard of Jane Austen.

Chapter 2

What's Going On In The Early 19th Century?

§1 In general

In the early nineteenth century arts and sciences flourished, and growing trade brought wealth into the country. The people believed at that time that Western Civilization was at a higher level than ever before. People were optimistic and had a lot of self-confidence. It was a time of the Napoleonic Wars and the Industrial Revolution.

In the early 19th century there was a crossroads between two periods- the Age of Reason ends and the romantic period begins. So this is a time where the age of

common sense and wisdom is becoming overruled by living for your emotions and escaping out of the city and into nature. To understand the period Jane Austen lived in, I will give a short description of both the age of reason and the romantic period.

The Age of Reason

The Age of Reason is also called the Neoclassical Period or the Augustan Age. It was called Neoclassical for there was a great revival of the old ancient period. The classics presented the highest ideals in life, art and literature, and to follow them was the best thing you could do. It's also called the Augustan Age, which refers to the Roman emperor Augustus, during whose reign the Roman Empire enjoyed a period of great prosperity. Englishmen of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century found themselves in a similar position; things had never been better and the discussion whether their civilization was not actually superior to the ancient world itself was a widely discussed topic.

Every man, it was thought, had some degree of reason in him, and if only it was used and developed the right way the powers of the human mind were nearly infinite. The best definition of reason in that time was 'a calm, balanced judgment, not hindered by personal emotions'.

There was a flow of scientific discoveries which led to the belief that all phenomena of nature and even religion could be explained in a rational way. If that was possible, it followed that in the end all the major problems of mankind could be solved. A brief glance at the world outside, however, showed that this was too good to be true, because human actions were all too often guided by other things than reason alone.

The romantic period

The stability of the Age of Reason was gradually lost in a period of social change and growing unrest. The Industrial Revolution was turning England from an agricultural nation into an industrial one so large numbers of farm workers were forced to seek employment in the new factories in the towns, which often resulted in long hours and miserable working conditions for those who were lucky enough to find a job there and poverty and wretchedness for those who were not.

The first phase of industrialization brought wealth and prosperity to the country at large, but the enthusiasm with which it was received by some people was not shared by all. There was also a growing feeling that the prosperity of a small group was bought with the poverty of many. The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 was a source of inspiration to those people who felt that the whole structure of society should be changed. The ideals of freedom, equality and the abolition of all class distinctions appealed strongly to young people all over Europe.

§2 How does Jane Austen react to those changes and ideas in her books?

Although Jane Austen wrote in a time when the Romantic Period had already begun, there can't be found any of the outbursts of feelings and flights of the imagination like in the books of other great writers of her time. The French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars and the Industrial Revolution all seem to have passed her by. The moment you open her books you are transported into a quiet and well-ordered world of reason and common sense that is much closer in spirit to the eighteenth century (the age of reason) than to the early nineteenth.

The cause of this can be found in Jane Austen's life. Jane Austen just wrote about the world as she knew it, and her world was a small one. She didn't see much more of England than a few small villages and towns in the south of England. She remained unmarried, which made her life a retired and protected one amidst family and friends. Because of this protected life, and also because of the little education for women, the greater troubles and problems of the world in that time just didn't reach her. But even if they did, it wasn't shocking enough to be concerned about it, for it didn't change her own world. Jane Austen wrote only about the "normal" daily life, and everything that concerned women of her age and class.

The navy though is often mentioned, but the cause of this is very simple and shouldn't be considered as Jane Austen's knowledge of the wars that were going on because she knew very little about that. In the early nineteenth century, men of the same (or higher) rank as Jane Austen hadn't much of a choice about their profession. If they were lucky they were the eldest son, in that way they were heir to their father's title and possessions, so all they did then was manage their estate and money. The other choices were becoming a clergyman, lawyer or go into the navy. Of course they could choose something else as a profession or have a lot of money so they had no need to learn a profession, but these were the most valid, accepted jobs.

Regiments of the navy often settled during several months in a small village, to practice and rest. That is why Jane Austen mentions the navy so often, it was just a part of her world. Officers often participated in the same parties as Jane Austen, and they were in the same circles as she.

Chapter 3

Who Is Jane Austen?

§1 Her childhood and early work

Jane Austen was born December 16th, 1775 at Steventon, Hampshire, England (near Basingstoke). She was the seventh child (out of eight); James (1765-1819),

Edward (1767-1852), Henry (1771-1850), Cassandra Elizabeth (1773-1845), Frank (1774-1865) and Charles (1779-1852) of the Rev. George Austen, 1731-1805 (the local rector, or Church of England clergyman), and his wife Cassandra, 1739-1827 (née Leigh). (See the silhouettes of Jane Austen's father and mother, apparently taken at different ages.) He had a fairly respectable income of about £600 a year, supplemented by tutoring pupils who came to live with him, but was by no means rich (especially with eight children), and (like Mr. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*) couldn't have given his daughters much to marry on.

More than one reader has wondered whether the childhood of the character Catherine Morland in Jane Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey* might not reflect her own childhood, at least in part -- Catherine enjoys "rolling down the green slope at the back of the house" and prefers cricket and baseball to girls' play.

In 1783, Jane and her older sister Cassandra went shortly to Mrs. Cawley (the sister of one of their uncles), who lived first in Oxford and then moved to Southampton, to get some education. They were brought home after an infectious disease broke out in Southampton. In 1785-1786 Jane and Cassandra went to the Abbey boarding school in Reading. (Jane was considered almost too young to benefit from the school, but their mother is reported to have said that "if Cassandra's head had been going to be cut off, Jane would have hers cut off too".) This was Jane Austen's only education outside her family. Within their family, the two girls learned drawing, playing the piano, etc.

Jane Austen did a fair amount of reading, of both the serious and the popular literature of the day (her father had a library of 500 books by 1801, and she wrote that she and her family were "great novel readers, and not ashamed of being so"). However decorous she later chose to be in her own novels, she was very familiar with eighteenth century novels, such as those of Fielding and Richardson, which were much less inhibited than those of the later (near-)Victorian era. She frequently reread Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, and also enjoyed the novels of Fanny Burney (a.k.a. *Madame D'Arblay*). She later got the title for *Pride and Prejudice* from a phrase in Burney's *Cecilia*, and when Burney's *Camilla* came out in 1796, one of the subscribers was "Miss J. Austen, Steventon".

In 1782 and 1784, plays were staged by the Austen family at Steventon rectory, and in 1787-1788 more elaborate productions were put on there under the influence of Jane's sophisticated grown-up cousin Eliza de Feuillide (to whom *Love and Freindship* is dedicated). This throws an interesting light on Jane Austen's apparent disapproval of such amateur theatricals in her novel *Mansfield Park*. Jane Austen wrote her *Juvenilia* from 1787 to 1793; they include many humorous parodies of the literature of the day, such as *Love and Freindship*, and are collected in three manuscript volumes. They were originally written for the amusement of her family, and most of the pieces are dedicated to one or another

of her relatives or family friends.

Earlier versions of the novels eventually published as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey* were all begun and worked on from 1795 to 1799 (at this early period, their working titles were *Elinor* and *Marianne*, *First Impressions*, and *Susan* respectively). *Lady Susan* was also probably written during this period. In 1797, *First Impressions/Pride and Prejudice* was offered to a publisher by Jane Austen's father, but the publisher declined to even look at the manuscript.

§2 Early Adulthood

Jane Austen enjoyed social events, and her early letters tell of dances and parties she attended in Hampshire, and also of visits to London, Bath, Southampton etc., where she attended plays and such. There is a famous statement by one Mrs. Mitford that Jane was the "the prettiest, silliest, most affected, husband-hunting butterfly she ever remembers" (however, Mrs. Mitford seems to have had a personal jealousy against Jane Austen, and it is hard to reconcile this description with the Jane Austen who wrote *The Three Sisters* before she was eighteen). There is little solid evidence of any serious courtships with men. In 1795-6, she had a mutual flirtation with Thomas Lefroy (an Irish relative of Jane Austen's close older friend Mrs. Anne Lefroy). On January 14th and 15th 1796, when she was 20, she wrote (somewhat sarcastically), in a letter to Cassandra:

"Tell Mary that I make over Mr. Heartley and all his estate to her for her sole use and benefit in future, and not only him, but all my other admirers into the bargain wherever she can find them, even the kiss which C. Powlett wanted to give me, as I mean to confine myself in future to Mr. Tom Lefroy, for whom I do not care sixpence. Assure her also, as a last and indisputable proof of Warren's indifference to me, that he actually drew that gentleman's picture for me, and delivered it to me without a sigh.

Friday. -- At length the day is come on which I am to flirt my last with Tom Lefroy, and when you receive this it will be over. My tears flow at the melancholy idea."

However, it was always known that he couldn't afford to marry Jane. (Many years later, after he had become Chief Justice of Ireland, he confessed to his nephew that he had had a "boyish love" for Jane Austen.) A year later, Mrs. Lefroy (who had disapproved of her nephew Tom's conduct towards Jane) tried to fix Jane Austen up with the Rev. Samuel Blackall, a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, but Jane wasn't very interested.

In late 1800 her father, who was nearly 70, suddenly decided to retire to Bath (which would not have been Jane Austen's choice), and the family moved there the next year. During the years in Bath, the family went to the sea-side every summer,

and it was while on one of those holidays that Jane Austen's most mysterious romantic incident occurred. All that is known is what Cassandra told various nieces, years after Jane Austen's death, and nothing was written down until years after that. While the family were staying somewhere on the coast (probably in south Devonshire, west of Lyme), Jane Austen met a young man who seemed to Cassandra to have quite fallen in love with Jane; Cassandra later spoke highly of him, and thought he would have been a successful suitor. According to Cassandra "They parted -- but he made it plain he should seek them out again"; however, shortly afterwards they instead heard of his death. There is no evidence as to how seriously this disappointment affected Jane Austen, but a number of people have wondered whether or not Jane Austen's 1817 novel *Persuasion* might not reflect this experience to some degree, with life transmuted into art; Jane Austen would have been 27 (the age of Anne Elliot, the heroine of *Persuasion*) during 1802-1803, and a crucial scene in *Persuasion* takes place in Lyme.

A more clearly-known incident occurred on December 2nd. 1802, when Jane Austen and Cassandra were staying with the Bigg family at Manydown, near Steventon. Harris Bigg-Wither, who was six years younger than herself, proposed to Jane, and she accepted, though she did not love him. However, the next day she thought better of it, and she and Cassandra showed up unexpectedly at Steventon (where their brother James was now the clergyman), insisting they would be taken out of the neighbourhood to Bath the next day. This was socially embarrassing, but her heart does not seem to have been seriously affected -- Mr. Bigg-Withers, though prosperous, was "big and awkward".

Notoriously, none of Jane Austen's letters to Cassandra from June 1801 to August 1804, in which she probably would have alluded to these incidents, have been preserved. In the end, Jane Austen (like Cassandra), never married.

In 1803 Jane Austen actually sold *Northanger Abbey* (then titled *Susan*) to a publisher, for the far-from-magnificent sum of £10; however, the publisher chose not to publish it (and it did not actually appear in print until fourteen years later). It was probably toward the end of the Bath years that Jane Austen began *The Watsons*, but this novel was abandoned in fragmentary form.

In January 1805 her father died. As would have been the case for the Bennets in *Pride and Prejudice* if Mr. Bennet had died, the income due to the remaining family (Mrs. Austen and her two daughters, the only children still at home) was considerably reduced -- since most of Mr. Austen's income had come from clerical "livings" which lapsed with his death. So they were largely dependent on support from the Austen brothers (and a relatively small amount of money left to Cassandra by her fiancé), summing to a total of about £450 yearly. Later in 1805, Martha Lloyd (sister of James Austen's wife) came to live with Mrs. Austen, Cassandra, and Jane, after her own mother had died.

§3 Maturity and death

In 1806 they moved from Bath, first to Clifton, and then, in autumn 1806, to Southampton. Two years later, Jane remembered (in a letter to Cassandra) with "what happy feelings of Escape!" she had left Bath. Southampton was conveniently near to the navy base of Portsmouth and the naval brothers Frank and Charles. In 1809 Jane Austen, her mother, sister Cassandra, and Martha Lloyd moved to Chawton, near Alton and Winchester, where her brother Edward provided a small house on one of his estates. This was in Hampshire, not far from her childhood home of Steventon. Before leaving Southampton, she corresponded with the dilatory publisher to whom she had sold *Susan* (i.e. *Northanger Abbey*), but without receiving any satisfaction.

She resumed her literary activities soon after returning into Hampshire, and revised *Sense and Sensibility*, which was accepted in late 1810 or early 1811 by a publisher, for publication at her own risk. It appeared anonymously ("By a Lady") in October 1811, and at first only her immediate family knew of her authorship: Fanny Knight's diary for September 28, 1811 records a "Letter from Aunt Cass. to beg we would not mention that Aunt Jane wrote *Sense and Sensibility*"; and one day in 1812 when Jane Austen and Cassandra and their niece Anna were in a "circulating library" at Alton, Anna threw down a copy of *Sense and Sensibility* on offer there, "exclaiming to the great amusement of her Aunts who stood by, ``Oh that must be rubbish, I am sure from the title.'" There were at least two fairly favorable reviews, and the first edition eventually turned a profit of £140 for her.

Encouraged by this success, Jane Austen turned to revising *First Impressions*, a.k.a. *Pride and Prejudice*. She sold it in November 1812, and her "own darling child" (as she called it in a letter) was published in late January 1813. She had already started work on *Mansfield Park* by 1812, and worked on it during 1813. It was during 1813 that knowledge of her authorship started to spread outside her family.

Since she had sold the copyright of *Pride and Prejudice* outright for £110 (presumably in order to receive a convenient payment up front, rather than having to wait for the profits on sales to trickle in), she did not receive anything more when a second edition was published later in 1813. A second edition of *Sense and Sensibility* was also published in October 1813. In May 1814, *Mansfield Park* appeared, and was sold out in six months; she had already started work on *Emma*. Her brother Henry, who then conveniently lived in London, often acted as Jane Austen's go-between with publishers, and on several occasions she stayed with him in London to revise proof-sheets. In October 1813, one of the Prince Regent's physicians was brought in to treat an illness that Henry was suffering from; it was through this connection that Jane Austen was brought into contact with Mr. Clarke. At Steventon she and Cassandra had had a private "dressing room" next to their

bedroom (in the later years, after their brothers had mainly moved out), which she used to write her Juvenilia and early versions of her first three novels in relative privacy. At Chawton, she didn't have any such study, and James Edward tells the story of the famous creaking door, which Jane Austen requested not be fixed, since it gave her warning of any approaching visitors, so that she could hide her manuscript before they came into the room.

In addition to her literary work, she often visited her brothers and their families, and other relatives and friends, and they sometimes came to Southampton or Chawton. She had a reputation for being able to keep young children entertained, and was also attached to her oldest nieces Fanny and Anna.

In a letter of November 6th 1813 (when she was 37 years old) she wrote: "By the bye, as I must leave off being young, I find many Douceurs in being a sort of chaperon [at dances], for I am put on the Sofa near the Fire & can drink as much wine as I like." A few days earlier she had written, "I bought a Concert Ticket and a sprig of flowers for my old age."

in February 1816, but was not a sales success; her losses on the reprint of Mansfield Park ate up most of her initial profits on Emma.

She had started on Persuasion in August 1815, and finished it in August 1816 -- although during 1816 she was becoming increasingly unwell. In early 1816 her brother Henry's business went bankrupt; Edward lost £20,000.

In early 1817 she started work on another novel, Sanditon, but had to give it up in March. On April 27th she made her will (leaving almost everything to Cassandra), and on May 24 she was moved to Winchester for medical treatment. She died there on Friday, July 18th 1817, aged 41. It was not known then what had caused her death, but it seems likely that it was Addison's disease.

She was buried in Winchester Cathedral on July 24th 1817.

This is a map of England which shows old county boundaries. The most important counties, as well in her books as in Jane Austen's own life are marked with a black dot . [plaatje1]

Chapter 4

Jane Austen And The Women Of Her Time

§1 The education of women

In Jane Austen's day, there was no centrally-organized system of state-supported education. There were local charity or church-run day schools, but these were not attended by the children of the "genteel" social levels that Jane Austen writes about. More or less the same is true of apprenticeships, another relatively less "respectable" mode of education. And "Dame Schools" were even less

respectable.

Instead, “genteel” children might be educated at home by their parents, particularly when young, or by live-in governesses or tutors. There might also be lessons with outside “masters” (specialists such as piano teachers, etc.). Some local “Grammar” schools did exist, teaching the educational basics (including Greek and Latin) to higher-class or upwardly mobile boys, but these schools did not admit girls. The type of education depended on the preferences and financial resources of the parents in each family.

Of course, women were not allowed to attend the institutionalised rungs on the educational ladder; “public schools” such as Eton (which Edmund Bertram in Mansfield Park attends), and the universities Oxford and Cambridge. The prime symbol of academic knowledge were the Classical languages Greek and Latin, to which a great deal of time was devoted in “genteel” boys’ education, but which only few women studied.

Since women did not usually have careers as such, and were not “citizens” in the sense of being directly involved in politics, there was little generally-perceived need for such higher education for them, and most writers on the subject of “female education” preferred that women receive a practical (and religious) training for their domestic role – thus Byron once spouted off the remark that women should “read neither poetry nor politics, nothing but books of piety and cookery” (leavened with the conventional “accomplishments” of “music, drawing, dancing”).

As for domestic training , in those days before sewing machines, a relatively large amount of girls’ and women’s time was spent on sewing or needlework (often just abbreviated to ‘work’); this is not incompatible with “gentility” (as long as it is not done for money of course), and even such a high-ranking woman as Lady Bertram, the baronet’s wife in Mansfield Park, occupies herself this way. The sheer amount of sewing done by gentlewomen in those days sometimes takes us moderns aback, but it would probably generally be a mistake to view it either as merely constant joyless toiling, or as young ladies turning out highly embroidered ornamental knickknacks to show off their elegant but meaningless accomplishments. Sewing was something to do (during the long hours at home) that often had a great practical utility (this doesn’t apply to Lady Bertram’s “carpet-work”, of course); and that wasn’t greatly mentally taxing, and could be done sitting down while engaging in light conversation, or listening to a novel being read.

[plaatje2]

For women of the “genteel” classes the goal of non-domestic education was thus often the acquisition of “accomplishments” such as the ability to draw, sing, play music, or speak modern (i.e. non-Classical) languages (generally French and Italian). Though it was not usually stated with such open cynicism, the purpose of

such accomplishments was often only to attract a husband; these skills tended to be neglected after marriage.

All this is not to say, by any means, that all women were ignorant; only that, since there was no requirement for academic education for women, and very little opportunity for women to use such knowledge (so that for women learning is only for “the improvement of her mind”). Therefore it depended very strongly on what kind of instruction each woman’s parents offered her in childhood and on the individual inclinations of the woman herself. Intelligent girls could even have an advantage over boys in being able to more or less choose their own studies, and in not being subject to the rather mixed blessings of a more uniform Classical curriculum.

And in any case, the conventional accomplishments were not totally to be despised. In those days before phonographs and radio, the only music available was that which amateur or professional performers could produce on the spot, so that the ability to play music did have a practical social value. Similarly painting, drawing, and the ability to write a good long informative letter (itself also something of a “female accomplishment”) were valued in the age before photographs and cheap fast transportation.

§ 2 Marriage and the alternatives

In Jane Austen’s time, there was no real way for young women of the “genteel” classes to strike out on their own or be independent. Few professions were open to them, and those few that were (such as being governess) were not highly respected, and did not generally pay well or have very good working conditions. Jane Austen wrote, in a letter of April 30th 1811, about a governess hired by her brother Edward: „By this time I suppose she is hard at it, governing away – poor creature! I pity her, tho’ they are my neices”.

Therefore most “genteel” women could not get money except by marrying for it or inheriting it. And since the eldest son generally inherits the bulk of an estate, as the “heir”, a woman can only really be a heiress if she has no brothers. Only a rather small number of women were what could be called professionals, who through their own efforts earned an income sufficient to make themselves independent, or had a recognized career. Jane Austen herself was not really one of these few women professionals, during the last six years of her life she earned an average of a little more than £100 a year by her novel-writing, but her family’s expenses were four times this amount, and she didn’t meet with other authors or move in literary circles.

And unmarried women also had to live with their families, or with family-approved protectors. It is almost unheard of for a genteel young and never-married female to

live by herself, even if she happened to be a heiress. So queen Victoria had to have her mother living with her in the palace in the late 1830's until she marries Albert (though she and her mother actually were not even on speaking terms during that period). Only in the relatively uncommon case of an orphan heiress who has already inherited (i.e. who has "come of age" and whose father and mother are both dead), can a young never-married female set herself up as the head of a household; and even here she must hire a respectable older lady to be a "companion".

When a young woman leaves her family without their approval, this is always very serious; a symptom of a radical break, such as running away to marry a disapproved husband, or entering into an illicit relationship (as when Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice* leaves the Forsters to run away with Wickham).

Therefore, woman who did not marry could generally only look forward to living with her relatives as a 'dependant' (more or less Jane Austen's situation), so that marriage is pretty much the only way of ever getting out from under the parental roof. Unless, of course, her family could not support her, in which case she could face the unpleasant necessity of going to live with employers as a 'dependant' governess or teacher, or hired "lady's companion". A woman with no relations or employer was in danger of slipping of the scale of gentility altogether. And in general, becoming an "old maid" was not considered a desirable fate. Given all this, some women were willing to marry just because marriage was the only allowed route to financial security, or to escape an uncongenial family situation. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the dilemma is expressed most clearly by the character Charlotte Lucas. She, at the age of 27, marries Mr. Collins. Her brothers are "relieved from their apprehension of Charlotte's dying an old maid". Charlotte Lucas, whose pragmatic views are voiced several times in the novel: „Without thinking highly either of men or matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women off small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want." She is already 27, not especially beautiful (according to both she herself and Mrs. Bennet), and without an especially large "portion" (amount of money given to girls by their father when they marry), and so decides to marry the dull and stupid Mr. Collins „from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment".

In addition to all these reasons why the woman herself might wish to be married, there could also be family pressure on her to be married. In *Pride and Prejudice* this issue is treated comically, since Mrs. Bennet is so silly, and so conspicuously unsupported by her husband, but that such family pressure could be a serious matter is seen from Sir Thomas's rantings to Fanny Price to persuade her to marry Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park*.

In her books Jane Austen makes fun of the more trivial attractions of the married state in case the gentleman has enough money to offer his future wife everything. In *Pride and Prejudice* Mrs. Bennet exclaims, when she hears of the marriage of her daughter with the rich Mr. Darcy: "What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! ... A house in town! ... Ten thousand a year! ... I shall go distracted!"

But Jane Austen expresses her own opinion on all this clearly enough by the fact that only her silliest characters have such sentiments. Mr. Bennet for example (also a character from *Pride and Prejudice*) says: „He is rich, to be sure, and you may have more fine clothes and fine carriages than Jane. But will they make you happy?" However Jane Austen doesn't intend to simply condemn for example Charlotte Lucas (who finds consolation in "her home and her housekeeping, her parish and her poultry, and all their dependent concerns") for marrying Mr. Collins; Charlotte's dilemma is a real one.

[plaatje3]

Chapter 5

Jane Austen's Books

§1 My choice

During her life, Jane Austen has written six books:

- ? *Northanger Abbey*
- ? *Pride and Prejudice*
- ? *Sense and Sensibility*
- ? *Mansfield Park*
- ? *Emma*
- ? *Persuasion*

She also wrote "Juvenilia" (short stories) and she has left two unfinished novels; *Sandition* and *The Watsons*. I chose three of her novels to discuss, because I thought six were too many. The three books I chose are *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. I chose these three books because they have very different story-lines so I can make a good comparison, and because these three books are my favourites. First I will give a description of the different stories, and compare them. Then I will write down how Jane Austen describes the main-character and other female characters in the book *Persuasion* (Chapter 6). For this I chose the book *Persuasion* because it has a lot of different, interesting characters. Much more than in *Mansfield Park*. And in *Pride and Prejudice* were too many

characters, though it had the same diversity in characters as Persuasion. Therefore I chose to make a full description of Persuasion.

§2 Pride and Prejudice

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. This was proved by the excitement that spread through the village of Longbourn when a rich young bachelor named Charles Bingley established himself at Netherfield Park. He was accompanied by his sisters Louisa and Caroline, Louisa's husband Mr. Hurst, and Bingley's friend Fitzwilliam Darcy.

Among those who looked forward to the ball at which Mr. Bingley and his party were to be present, were the Bennet family, consisting of the cynical, reserved Mr. Bennet, his foolish wife whose sole purpose in life was to get her daughters married, and their five girls. They were among the prominent families of Longbourn, but as Mr. Bennet's estate was entailed, for lack of male heirs, on his distant relation the Rev. William Collins, his daughters had but small portions.

At the ball Mr. Darcy turned out to be a strikingly handsome, but arrogant and disagreeable young man, whose attitude suggested that he thought the Longbourn people far below the dignity of his old name and huge fortune. His easy-going, kindly friend Bingley enjoyed every dance, but Darcy confined himself to the ladies of his own party, declining to be introduced to any other girl. When Elizabeth Bennet, overheard Darcy's remark to Bingley that he did not think Elizabeth pretty enough to tempt him, the first seed of prejudice against him was sown into her heart. This did not spoil her natural playfulness, however, and she was pleased to notice that her good-natured, sweet-tempered, timid elder sister Jane and Mr. Bingley felt attracted to each other.

In course of time Mrs Bennet managed to bring about a kind of uncertain relationship between the Bennets and the Bingleys, in the hope that Charles Bingley would eventually propose to Jane. But his sisters turned up their noses at the vulgar Mrs Bennet, ridiculed her empty-headed man-hunting daughters Lydia and Kitty, despised the pedantic Mary and envied Elizabeth's beauty and spirit. Besides, Caroline Bingley had noticed that Darcy, in spite of himself, was beginning to be interested in Elizabeth and, having her eye on him herself, considered Elizabeth a dangerous rival. Jane was the only Bennet girl who found some favour with Miss Bingley and Mrs Hurst.

Jane was invited to visit Netherfield Park, but Jane suddenly became ill, and therefore Elizabeth had to come too, they both stayed for a week. During this stay the four ladies got on together well enough, so that the prospects for a closer relationship seemed favourable. Caroline Binley, who had meanwhile gathered from Darcy's reactions that Elizabeth left him cold, grew more friendly and when the girls parted se even shook hands with Elizabeth, while she was definitely

cordial towards Jane.

A few days after their homecoming the Bennets were visited by the humourless, pompous clergyman William Collins, whose outward piety and humility of manner was a cloak hiding the self-conceit of his rather weak head. Mr. Collins, was the person who, when Mr. Bennet was dead, could turn the girls all out of the house as soon as he pleased. He owed his position as a rector to Darcy's aunt Lady Catherine de Bourgh, a tyrannous old woman who ruthlessly exercised the privileges of her class. Mr. Collins had decided to choose a wife for him and he meant to confer this honour on one of the Bennet girls in order to make amends for his inheriting their father's estate. His reason to marry were, first, that he must set the example of matrimony. Secondly, it would do him a great happiness and thirdly it was an advice and recommendation of the very noble lady de Bourgh. This plan seemed extremely generous and disinterested on his own part, so that he was highly pleased with himself. When he promptly proposed to Elizabeth, however, she convinced him with some difficulty that she could not become his wife. Therefore Mrs. Bennet was really in as most pitiable state, but Mr. Bennet was quite pleased with her rejection. Mr. Collins at once shifted his affection to Elizabeth's best friend Charlotte Lucas, who accepted him for practical reasons (see also C4 §2 Marriage and the alternatives).

About this time Elizabeth made the acquaintance of Mr. Wickham, a good-looking, smooth-spoken, charming army officer who succeeded in winning her sympathy. Wickham told her that his father had faithfully served old Mr. Darcy, Fitzwilliam's father, for many years and that the latter had made provisions in his last will in favour of young Wickham, which Fitzwilliam Darcy had refused to execute on the ground of a legal formality. He also tells that Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lady Anne Darcy were sisters, so she is an aunt to the present Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth, whose head was by now full of Wickham, believed every word he said and felt her antipathy against Darcy growing. Some time later, when Wickham shifted his interest to a richer girl. Elizabeth remained on good terms with him, while her low opinion of Darcy continued as before.

On a Monday, Mrs Bennet had the pleasure of receiving her brother and his wife Gardiner, who came as usual to spend the Christmas at Longbourn. A few days later they left them and Jane went with them to London, where Mr. Bingley also was. There, Jane found out that Miss Bingley wasn't so friendly. Elizabeth already knew that.

During a visit Elizabeth paid to the newly married Collinses in March, with Sir William and his second daughter. They often visited Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and it was also there she met Mr. Darcy again, whom she had now come to hate because a cousin of Darcy's, who greatly admired her, had told her that it was Darcy who had persuaded Bingley to break with Jane.

Elizabeth's astonishment was beyond expression when Fitzwilliam unexpectedly

confessed that he loved her against his will and asked her to marry him, at the same time adding that her family revolted him so strongly that he had to overcome a feeling of degradation. He concluded by saying that he had found his love for her impossible to conquer and that he now expected to be rewarded by her acceptance of his hand and name. Elizabeth, roused to resentment by his language, lost all her composure and indignantly rejected him, accusing him of having spoilt her sister's happiness, flinging his cruel behaviour towards Wickham into his face, and blaming him for not behaving in a "gentlemanlike manner". Darcy hurriedly left for London, leaving Elizabeth a letter which he gave it by himself in which he justified his conduct towards Jane by pleading ignorance as to her love for Bingley, and called Wickham a lying scoundrel who had tried to seduce Darcy's sister Georgiana. Having read the long, convincing letter Elizabeth began to see things in a different light and she grew thoroughly ashamed of herself.

The five weeks, which she had passed in Kent, were nice and she had met Lady Catherine de Bourgh and her ill daughter several times. Now she left them with the second daughter of Sir William. They went to London and there were Kitty and Lydia and of course Jane. All of them went home. Lydia told that the sires have left Meryton and she tells that Wickham didn't marry Mary King.

Father Bennet decides to send Lydia to Brighton where the sires were. Elizabeth didn't think that that was a great idea. The tour of Elizabeth to the Lakes was now the object of her happiest thoughts, but they had a change of plan, because Mr. Gardiner had to work longer than expected. Therefore they went to different places, including Pemberley in Derbyshire, where Mr. Darcy lives. The children of the Gardiner family stayed at Longbourn.

They made a trip to Darcy's home. She was not persuaded to come with them until they had assured her that the owner was absent. Darcy's old housekeeper surprised Elizabeth by the praise she heaped on her master. All at once Darcy himself returned from London and he and Elizabeth were cautiously establishing more friendly terms, when misfortune once more descended upon Elizabeth in the form of a letter which informed her that Lydia had eloped with Wickham. But first Elizabeth was introduced to the sister of Darcy and went to a party from Darcy. There she met Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley again. They weren't nice to each other. Elizabeth went home and they told her that Colonel Forster was following Lydia and Mr. Wickham and they hoped the marriage had already had place. Her father had gone to London with Colonel Forster to try to discover Lydia. Mrs. Bennet became ill because of her "bad nerves" and she doesn't leave her dressing room. In that time aunt Philips came to Longbourn and Lady Lucas was very kind. They had received a letter from Mr. Collins for their father. He paid his sympathy. Mr. Bennet came home and was very depressed, and blamed himself for Lydia's running away.

Darcy also took action on behalf of the Bennets but they do not know this, only Mr.

and Mrs Gardiner. He persuaded Wickham to marry Lydia by paying him a large sum of money and buying him a commission in the regular army. From the hints Lydia gave Elizabeth afterwards, and the letter from her Aunt Gardiner, Elizabeth concluded that Mr. Darcy was the one who saved the family honour. The whole Bennet-family still believed it was Mr. Gardiner who persuaded Wickham to marry. She felt ashamed at seeing her mother treat Darcy disrespectfull. Lydia and Mr. Wickham came to pay a last visit at Longbourn.

Mr. Bingley had meanwhile returned to Netherfield Park and renewed his courtship of Jane, to whom he soon became engaged. Mr. Darcy was also in Netherfield Park, but left again very soon. Elizabeth's feelings towards Darcy had undergone major changes, she felt now almost the opposite of what her feelings were when Darcy had first proposed.

A week after Jane and Bingley's engagement Elizabeth was surprised by a visit from Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who arrogantly tried to extract a promise from her that she would not marry her nephew Darcy. Lady Catherine saw in a connexion between Darcy and Elizabeth a degradation to the whole family, plus she wanted him to marry her own daughter. But Lady Catherine achieved the opposite result, for she roused Elizabeth to stubborn opposition, and denial. Lady Catherine told her nephew of Elizabeth's obstinacy, and wanted to persuade him to never have contact again with Elizabeth, but also with Darcy she achieved the opposite. He saw Elizabeth's obstinacy and refusal to deny anything was going on between her and himself as a sign that he might have more success this time. He lost no time in proposing to Elizabeth once more, this time successfully. He told her that she had taught him a lesson for he first was selfish and overbearing.

That night she opened her heart to Jane and Jane first reacts not very excited and very surprised, but when she is sure of Elizabeth's love for Mr. Darcy she is very happy with the engagement. The other day Mr. Darcy goes to Mr. Bennet to formally ask the hand of his daughter. Off course he said yes, because Darcy is a rich man, but he is also very surprised. Elizabeth has only herself to blame that no one believes her, for when she had her prejudices against Mr. Darcy, she told everybody of her resentment. Elizabeth persuades her father she does like him and she tells the story about what Mr. Darcy had done for Lydia. Thus Mrs. Bennet was to her great satisfaction provided with three sons-in-law, among whom Wickham remained her favourite.

The Collins' had come to Longbourn, because Charlotte was anxious for Lady Catherine. She gets away till the storm was blown over.

Jane and Elizabeth lived only thirty miles of each other. Kitty was most of the time with them and Mary stayed home with her books. Pemberley was now Georgiana's home and they were able to love each other. Lady Catherine's resentment gave way. With the Gardiners, Darcy and Elizabeth were always on the most intimate terms. They really loved them and they were the means of uniting

them, because they went to Derbyshire.

§3 Mansfield Park

“About thirty years ago, Miss Maria Ward, of Huntingdon, with only seven thousand pounds, had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet’s lady, with all comforts and consequences of an handsome house and a large income.”

Her elder sister Miss Ward did not have the same luck, but Mr. Norris also gave her a comfortable home. The childless Norris-marriage couple had lived in a parsonage near Mansfield Park until Mrs Norris becomes a widow soon after the main events start. The marriage of the youngest sister turned out a real disappointment: Frances chose the poor lieutenant Mr. Price. Consequently she was socially separated from her sisters and lived many kilometres away, but fortunately with financial support from the Bertrams.

As an act of charity the false and self-important Mrs Norris suggests adopting the eldest daughter of Mrs Price and the generous, but very principled Sir Thomas gives his consent to give her a place in Mansfield Park.

As the ten-year-old Fanny Price arrives in the huge house, she feels alienated and lonesome. The pretty, confident and older Bertram girls Maria and Julia tease the timid, shy and not very robust Fanny, for instance because of her simple clothes or her slight knowledge. Sir Thomas appears stern to Fanny even though his intentions towards her are kindly. His wife, suffering from "a little ill-health, and a great deal of indolence" 13, is not really interested in the new visitor. She is not unfriendly, but she prefers to lie on her sofa and to care for the her dog Pug, instead of her family.

Mrs Norris never stops being malicious to Fanny and explains to her that she is not on the same social level as Julia and Maria. It seems she only wanted Fanny in Mansfield Park, so she can live her viciousness up towards a helpless person. Tom, the eldest son of Sir Thomas and the heir of Mansfield Park, is superficial and pleasure-seeking. He doesn’t really notice his cousin. Tom’s 15-year old brother Edmund who is destined for the clergy, is the only person who behaves friendly towards the little girl. To make Fanny feel better in the cold new surroundings, he helps her to write a letter to her Brother William. He is a real friend for Fanny and admires and supports her qualities, for instance her natural intelligence. Edward becomes the most important person in her life and during the following years she falls in love with him.

Fanny grows up. By this time she feels better in Mansfield Park, but her timidity never disappears. In society, except with Edmund, she is always the silent observer and she doesn’t have her "coming-out" like her cousins, although she is the right age. The behaviour of the Bertrams towards her has not really changed in

a positive way.

When Fanny is 18 years old, Sir Thomas and Tom Bertram leave Mansfield Park for Antigua to take care of business. Mrs Norris doing her favourite hobby "organizing and meddling in other peoples' affairs" goes "husband-hunting" with Maria and Julia. As a result, the simple-minded, conceited but wealthy Mr. Rusworth is engaged to Maria.

The uneventful and monotonous life at Mansfield Park changes as the new parson's wife Mrs Grant gets a visit from her half sister Mary Crawford, and her brother Henry. Both are wealthy, witty, charming, good-looking and as town-dwellers from London they are especially fascinating for the Bertram-girls who have never left their home. Soon they become very popular at Mansfield Park.

Henry attracts the Bertram sisters and he flirts inconsiderately with both of them. Fanny feels miserable because she notices a growing interest from Edward in Mary. Not-knowing Fanny's love for him, he tells her of his feelings, in the hope of having a friendly listener in Fanny.

After some weeks the younger Bertrams, the Crawfords, Mrs Norris and Fanny attend Sotherton, the grand seat of Mr. Rusworth. During a "sight-seeing tour" of the majestic house they come to an old chapel. Here Mary expresses her feelings of the wretchedness of being a clergyman. Edward and Fanny are dismayed at her irrelevant opinion. Thereupon Edward discloses to the shocked Mary that he is going to be a clergyman. During the next months she goes on to speak disparagingly about the church because she wants Edmund to change his mind. Her extreme aversion towards Edmund's profession can be understood by the fact that she has already regarded him as a possible husband, but she is not willing to marry a clergyman.

After viewing the house, the group takes a walk through the huge garden. Henry who has flirted with Julia before, goes with Maria and Mr. Rusworth. Miss Bertram and Mr. Crawford try successfully to get rid of Mr. Rusworth. Edmund leaves Fanny alone on a bench in the wilderness to walk with Mary. Julia and Mr. Rusworth are angry because of having been left alone. Fanny recognizes Henry's unvirtuous behaviour towards the engaged Maria, and as the lack of appropriate behaviour of Maria towards her fiancé and her sister, who has fallen in love with Henry, too. Shortly afterwards Tom returns without his father, who still has to care for his estates in Antigua, but accompanied by his friend, the aristocratic John Yates. The new visitor introduces the idea of playing theatre in the family. While the others enthusiastically welcome the plan, Fanny and Edmund are dismayed. They know exactly that the absent Sir Thomas would never consent to such an unsuitable enterprise, and try to convince the young people. "It would show great want of feeling on my father's account, absent as he is, and in some degree of constant danger", reminds Edmund.

Nevertheless the majority is not willing to change their mind about the theatre. Mrs

Norris, foreseeing "in it all the comfort of hurry, bustle, and importance" as an opportunity to prove her imagined organisational talent is in favour of it, too. Lady Bertram shows little interest as usual. The Bertrams and Crawfords choose "Lover's Vow" and the love scenes or scenes with many emotions are given to those who already showed the most interest in each other in Sotherton: Maria and Henry play the parts of a mother who is adored by her son.

They continue their flirtation, especially by rehearsing, much more often than is necessary, their common scenes. Henceforth Julia is jealous of her sister and sulks. Edward is forced to take the part of Mary's sweetheart and Fanny is asked to help them play their love scenes as convincingly as possible. Understandably, she feels terrible.

At that moment, when the first full rehearsal has started, Sir Thomas surprises them unexpectedly with his arrival. He is very angry with the theatre, not least because of all rooms his is being used as a stage. Fanny's uncle recognizes that Maria's part in the theatre is very improper in her situation.

Above all he is disappointed about Edward of whom he had expected to be a kind of "advocate of what was fitting". From this point on, his good opinion of Mrs Norris sinks extremely due to her assistance in the theatre. Sir Thomas is only pleased with Fanny who has always refused to take part in the theatre and who looks very healthy and well.

Thereupon Henry Crawford leaves Mansfield Park without making Maria the proposal she had expected. Even though her father offers her to break off the engagement with the feeble witted Mr. Rusworth to find a partner more suitable, she doesn't want to give up her high position in society, that her future-husband offers. Their marriage follows soon. Then Julia leaves with Mr. and Mrs Rusworth for Brighton.

As the only young women in Mansfield Park, Fanny is treated with more respect, especially from Sir Thomas. She turns more self-conscious and open and feels well in this new situation. To please Fanny, the uncle invites her brother William Price (who he always has supported financially) for a few weeks and he even organizes a ball for both of them. Meanwhile, Henry Crawford has returned and makes the decision to make Fanny fall in love with him. He tells his sister about his plan. Mary who is now quite friendly towards Fanny, not least because Sir Thomas' niece is at the moment the only young woman at Mansfield Park, promises to help him. Miss Crawford lends Fanny a necklace that so is able to wear the amber cross, a present from William, at the ball. Miss Price is unpleasantly surprised when she finds out, that Mrs. Crawford's necklace had been a gift from Henry. She has still not forgotten his bad behaviour towards Maria.

Fanny looks beautiful at the ball and Henry's admiration gets more and more obvious. On the one hand she is happy to dance with William and Edmund, but on the other hand, she feels sad about the growing love between Mary and Edmund.

He has already reached the serious decision to make her a proposal, although she has not changed her mind about clergyman. After the ball Henry goes far beyond his plan towards Fanny: He decides to marry her.

His admiration and fascination for "the gentleness, modesty, and sweetness of her character" has grown to real love-like feelings. Henry uses the influence of his uncle, an admiral, to realize William's long-desired promotion to lieutenant. With this piece of news, Mr. Crawford pleases Fanny extremely and he uses the favourable situation to propose to her.

He tells her that "she had created sensations which his heart had never known before, and that everything he had done for William, was to be placed to the account of his excessive and unequalled attachment to her." Immediately she rejects energetically, because she only loves Edmund and still despises her admirer. She has not forgotten his behaviour towards her cousins and doesn't believe in the seriousness of his feelings.

[plaatje3]Sir Thomas and the rest of the family are speechless that the young woman didn't accept this fantastic offer. Consequently the uncle decides to send Fanny back to her family in Portsmouth for a time. She has to experience what a life without prosperity means to be able to appreciate Henry's proposal. Fanny's expectation of a waiting family which is happy about the reunion is soon destroyed. Her mother and father, as well as her little brothers and sisters show no real interest in her. The Prices male only talk about the navy and nautical matters during the whole day. Her former home is dirty and neglected, the family is noisy and without behaviour. Only her sister Susan is kind and friendly to the visitor. She suffers together with Fanny, from all the "faults" in the Price house. Fanny recognizes that "Mansfield Park was home." She wants to go back, but there is no sign of speedy return. Only through letters from Lady Bertram and Mary Crawford, does she receive news from her beloved Mansfield Park. Meanwhile Henry visits Fanny unexpectedly. He has still not given up his intention to win Fanny's heart and his behaviour without reproach really impresses her. She even starts to change her mind about a marriage with Henry Crawford.

Fanny's visit at Portsmouth becomes longer than expected. A letter from Mary Crawford shows again in a shocking way her worldliness. She writes about a serious illness of Tom, but instead of being worried, she realizes a possibility that Edmund, after his brother's death, will be the new rich heir of Mansfield Park and not a clergyman. Consequently, all doubts about him as a husband would be forgotten.

Through further letters Fanny gets to know more about other miseries of the Bertrams: Maria has left Mr. Rusworth for an affair with Henry Crawford (whom she has never stopped to love), and Julia and Yates have eloped together. Because of all these unfortunate events Fanny is needed urgently at Mansfield Park, especially to come to Lady Bertram's aid. Thus Edmund fetches her and also Susan some

days later.

Edmund feels very unhappy about the fact that Mary comes to Henry's defence, instead of attacking his socially intolerable behaviour. She is only angry that Henry has not hidden his "liaison" with Maria more cleverly. Now Edmund recognizes her lack of principles and her weakness of character, and thereupon his feelings for Miss Crawford change soon.

The book ends with a description of everybody's future. Maria's escapade is socially inexcusable for a married woman. Hence her family has to avoid her, the marriage with Mr. Rusworth has broken off at once and also Henry Crawford is not willing to marry her. Her fate is to live together with the nasty Mrs Norris, separated from Mansfield Park with the financial support of Sir Thomas.

Both Crawfords stay together with friends in London. Henry never stops mourning over the missed chance of a marriage with Fanny, and also Mary is not able to "put Edmund sufficiently out of her mind." Julia marries Mr. Yates.

Tom gets healthy and his life is more conscientious and helpful than before. Sir Thomas' "soul-searching" has as a result that he recognizes his past mistakes as a father. He has been too superficial to care about the real feelings of his children.

Susan is happy to stay at Mansfield Park and to care for Lady Bertram.

The most lucky fate, of course, is Fanny's:

Last of all it is clear that she was the only one, who has judged everyone in the right way. Finally she wins Edmund's love. How? "Scarcely had he done regretting Mary Crawford ... , before it began to strike him whether a very different kind of woman (Fanny) might not do just as well - or a great deal better."

They marry, and they live happily near Mansfield Park.

§4 Persuasion

The novel opens in the summer 1814 in Somersetshire. Sir Walter Elliot is a baronet and widower of 14 years (his wife was named Elizabeth), vain, and unwise in his spending to maintain his elevated lifestyle, and now in debt. His oldest daughter Elizabeth is 29, runs the house (Kellynch-hall), is unmarried and past her "bloom", as is Anne 27 y/o. Elizabeth and her father have little affection for Anne, who is like a rejected Cinderella figure. The younger sister, Mary, has married Charles Musgrove. The future male heir of the estate, William Walter Elliot, has snubbed the family and has married a wealthy woman of common origins.

To manage his debts, Sir Walter is persuaded to move out of Kellynch-hall and into more modest quarters in Bath. His deceased wife's close friend Lady Russell has served as an adviser for the daughters and disapproves (as does Anne) of Elizabeth's gold-digging friend Mrs. Penelope Clay, who is a divorcee with two children and seems to be after Sir Walter. The Elliots are further persuaded to lease Kellynch-hall to Admiral and Mrs. (Sophia) Croft, despite Sir Walter's

disparaging view of men who make their fortunes this way. Sophia has two brothers, Mr. Edward Wentworth (curate at Monkford) and Captain Frederick Wentworth. Frederick and Anne had been in love when she was 19 but Lady Russell and her father disapproved of his then limited means and persuaded Anne to break off the relationship. She subsequently turned down a marriage proposal from Charles Musgrove.

Sir Walter, Elizabeth, and Mrs. Clay go to Bath, but Anne, unwanted in Bath, goes to visit her hypochondriacally sister Mary at the Musgroves (Uppercross). She is loving to Mary's children Charles and Walter and is cordially and lovingly received by the affluent Mr. and Mrs. Charles Musgrove, Mary's husband's parents. Their poor cousins, the Hayters, live nearby (Mrs. Hayter is Mrs. Musgrove's sister). The Musgrove's good-for-nothing but now deceased son, Richard, had been aboard the ship Captain Wentworth commanded and he arrives to the praise of the Musgroves. He is now seeking a wife. He and Anne have an awkward brief meeting where he is struck at how much she has altered in appearance. He has not forgiven her hurting him so badly and when dining later with them, is coldly polite to Anne. They discuss his naval career, Richard, and having women aboard ships (which Mrs. Croft did but which he opposes). Anne plays the pianoforte so others can dance, and Frederick inquires of another whether she ever dances anymore.

Cousin Charles Hayter is interested in the Musgrove oldest daughter Henrietta, and becomes jealous at her interest in Wentworth. Wentworth visits with sister Louisa but shows unexpected kindness to Anne in helping her play with young Walter. In the autumn, Mary and Charles, Wentworth, Anne, and the two sisters walk to Winthrop where the Hayters live-- Henrietta reluctantly visits with Charles (she has reservations about his limited means and connections). Wentworth praises decisiveness and reliability to Louisa and learns from her that Anne turned down Charles Musgrove. He seems to be courting Louisa.

In November, they visit Lyme, where Wentworth's wounded and sickly friend Captain Harville lives with his wife. Their mutual friend Captain James Benwick is staying with them. The latter is a sensitive soul and poetry lover, still distraught over the death of his intended, Harville's sister Fanny. Anne finds similar interests in him and consoles him, advising him to read more prose. They encounter William Elliot at the Cobb, who looks on Anne with admiration, though Anne does not recognize him. Anne's bloom seems to return, which Wentworth notices. Louisa foolishly jumps from the steps on the Cobb and misses Wentworth, sustaining a head injury. She is taken to the Harvilles and nursed by Mrs. Harville and Mary. Mary stays behind while Anne, Henrietta, and the distraught Wentworth ride back to Uppercross to inform Louisa's parents.

Louisa is improving and Anne sadly leaves the Musgroves to visit with Lady Russell at Kellynch-lodge. They visit with the Crofts at Kellynch-hall. The Crofts

comment on all the mirrors her father had employed and which they have removed. Captain Benwick is said to want to visit Anne but never comes. Lady Russell takes Anne to Bath to join her father, et al at Camden-place. William Elliot has inexplicably taken a very substantial renewed interest in Anne's family, which puzzles Anne but pleases Lady Russell. He explains away his neglect, but Anne remains suspicious and has reservation about his character and behaviours. Sir Walter goes to great efforts trying to re-establish a connection to his noble cousin, dowager Lady Dalrymple and her daughter Miss Carteret.

Anne makes contact with her much admired former governess Mrs. Smith, now widowed, impoverished, and in ill-health. Anne's father criticizes her for pursuing this connection especially when she declines an invitation to Lady Darymple's to keep an engagement with her. Lady Russell advocates matching up Anne with the recently widowed William Elliot, but Anne discourages this.

Anne learns from Mary and the Crofts that Louisa and Captain Benwick have become engaged (with Wentworth harbouring no harmed feelings) and that Henrietta is engaged to Charles Hayter. Anne has an embarrassing encounter with Wentworth in Bath-- and he is snubbed by Elizabeth. At a concert, Wentworth indicates indirectly he could never have loved Louisa. Anne glows and her eyes are bright. He seemed to be returning to her at last. William moves in on Anne and expresses tender sentiments, provoking jealousy in Wentworth.

After Anne assures her she will not marry William, Mrs. Smith divulges all she knows about his unsavoury character, cold-bloodedness, and motivations. He married solely for money, he intentionally and coldly rejected Anne's family to prevent any effort to match him with Elizabeth. He was a close friend of Mrs. Smith's husband, Charles, at a time when her husband was the wealthier, and got to know Anne's name through Mrs. Smith at this time. He had contempt for the baronetcy and said he would sell it if he had the chance. She shows Anne a letter from the 23 y/o William to Charles in which he denounces the Elliot name and disparages Sir Walter. But now he has reconsidered the value of the baronetcy, and wants to court Anne and discourage Mrs. Clay's relationship with Sir Walter, a threat to his inheritance. Mrs. Smith learned through the nurse of Mrs. Wallis (wife of William's friend's Colonel Wallis) that he hopes to put into his marriage articles with Anne a provision preventing Sir Walter and Mrs. Clay marrying. William had previously led Mrs. Smith's husband into excessive expenses leading to his ruin, the extent of which was apparent fully only at his death. Though William was named as Charles' executor, he refused to serve and demonstrated cold-hearted indifference and ingratitude to her. She had a property in the West Indies she needed help in legally unencumbering, and hoped to get William's help in doing this. Anne resolves to inform Lady Russell about William's true nature.

Anne ponders such hypocrisy in William and Mrs. Clay. They are seen meeting in the street. Meanwhile Mary and the Musgroves arrive in Bath and 2 weddings are

being planned.

At the Musgroves lodging, Anne talks with Captain Harville about the strength and constancy of female versus male love while Wentworth is writing a letter. Harville notes that Captain Benwick has gotten over his grief for Fanny's death quickly and now loves Louisa. Anne comments that it would be unlikely that Fanny would have gotten over her love for him so fast. "We certainly do not forget you, as soon as you forget us. It is, perhaps, our fate rather than our merit. We cannot help ourselves. We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us. You are forced on exertion. You have a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into the world immediately, and continual occupation and change soon weaken impressions." Harville argues of men that "as our bodies are the strongest, so are our feelings..." But Anne says "Your feelings may be the strongest ... but ours are the most tender. Man is more robust than woman, but he is not longer-lived... You have difficulties, and privations, and dangers enough to struggle with... It would be hard indeed... if woman's feelings were to be added to all this... All the privilege I claim for my own sex ... is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone. Wentworth hands Anne his letter-- in it he asks if he is too late to win her love back, that his love for her has not suffered an earlier death, that he has loved none but her. Anne conveys her desire to see him. They meet on the street and exchange rapturous thoughts and feelings. He describes his jealousy for William and the unintended entanglement with Louisa, and reassures her as to her beauty. Anne defends her bowing to Lady Russell's advice out of a sense of duty but indicates she would have been persuaded to him in 1808 when he returned somewhat better off financially.

Their marriage is accepted by Sir Walter, coolly by Elizabeth (who remains without prospects of her own), and graciously by Lady Russell (who admits she had been wrong about him). It disrupts William's cunning plans, but his double game is revealed when he takes Mrs. Clay under his protection (still to prevent Sir Walter's marriage). Captain Wentworth helps Mrs. Smith disentangle her West Indies property.

§5 Comparison between the story-lines

These three books have completely different story-lines. In general they are all love stories, but each book handles this theme differently, with different problems and different sorts of characters. Each book takes a closer look at different aspects. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen gives us a closer look on what prejudices against each other, and false pride can do. It is said that in Elizabeth she projects a bit of herself. She also describes the differences between a lively, daringly and self-confident character with quick wit (Elizabeth) and a softened, loving, generous

character who only sees the best in everybody (Jane).

In *Mansfield Park* she shows us that people can disguise their true identity (see the Crawfords). With *Fanny Price*, Jane Austen doesn't describe a "normal" heroine, but a modest, humble, romantic, sweet-natured and good-hearted shy girl. She is not at all self-confident or daringly. Jane Austen shows us that being humble and caring can also be heroic.

Anne Elliot is in *Persuasion* almost an ideal human-being. Jane Austen herself describes her as: "a heroine who is almost too good for me." *Persuasion* I believe is the most romantic book of all, and it is also the most seriously written, but of course there is still plenty in it of Jane Austen's irony. In this book she pays attention to the strong influences one can have on somebody else, and if it is good or bad to persuade people to do things they actually don't want to do. Also she expresses her thoughts on love, and how long you can love someone else, when "all hope is gone".

The stories and difficulties the heroines have to deal with are very different, but in style the books are very much alike. *Pride and Prejudice* is the thickest book, and also this book contains the most irony. In particular Mrs. Bennet, Caroline Bingley, Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine de Bourgh are more or less laughed at by Jane Austen's sharp irony.

About Lady Catherine "When the ladies returned to the drawing room, there was little to be done but to hear Lady Catherine talk, which she did without any intermission till coffee came in, delivering her opinion on every subject in so device a manner as proved that she was not used to have her judgment controverted. She enquired into Charlotte's domestic concerns familiarly and minutely, and gave her a great deal of advice, as to the management of them all; told her how everything ought to be regulated in so small a family as her's, and instructed her as to the care of her cows and her poultry."

Mrs. Bennet, when she hasn't heard yet of the engagement between Darcy and Elizabeth: "If that disagreeable Mr. Darcy is not coming again with our dear Bingley! What can he mean by being as tiresome as to be always coming here/ I had no notion but he would go a shooting, or something or other, and not disturb us with his company. What shall we do with him? Lizzy, you must walk out with him again, that he may not be in Bingley's way."

But when she finds out Elizabeth is going to marry this rich gentleman she exclaims: "Oh my sweetest Lizzy! How rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! Jane's is nothing to it – nothing at all. I am so pleased – so happy. Such a charming man! – so handsome! – so tall! ... But my dearest love, tell me what dish Mr. Darcy is particularly fond of, that I may have it to-morrow."

Mansfield Park is especially ironic in the description of Mrs. Norris.

"and Mrs. Norris had not the least intention of being at any expense whatever in

her (Fanny's) maintenance. As far as walking, talking and contriving reached, she was thoroughly benevolent, and nobody knew better how to dictate liberality to others: but her love of money was equal to her love of directing, and she knew quite as well how to save her own as to spend that of her friends."

In *Persuasion*, particularly Mary Musgrove is being criticized with irony, and also Elizabeth and Sir Elliot. In this book however is not a character that is totally foolish, like Mrs. Norris, Lady Catherine and Mrs. Bennet.

"When the plan (Anne's staying at Lyme to nurse Louisa) was made known to Mary, however, there was an end of all peace in it. She was so wretched, and so vehement, complained so much of injustice in being expected to go away, instead of Anne; - Anne, who was nothing to Louisa, while she was her sister, and had the best right to stay."

On the whole, Jane Austen's writing-style is in each book very much alike, but the stories are completely different. She shows us very different kinds of women, and very different kinds of engagements; from the cold, practical marriage between Mr. Collins and Charlotte Lucas, to the long-awaited-for marriage for love between Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth. She shows us that the most women, but definitely not all women were ignorant, and that not all men were so gentleman-like these days.

Chapter 6

How Does Jane Austen Describe Women?

§1 The main character of *Persuasion*: Anne Elliot

Anne Elliot is the heroine in this book. She really has a really good character, her only fault was, when she was younger, she was persuaded by her good friend Lady Russel to break her engagement to a man she really loves. In the beginning of the book she is described as:

"But it was only Anne that she could fancy the mother (Lady Elliot) to revive again. Anne, with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding, was nobody with either father or sister; her word had no weight; her convenience was always to give way; she was only Anne." ... "A few years before, Anne Elliot had been a very petty girl, but her bloom vanished early; and as even in it's height, her father had found little to admire in her (so totally different were her delicate features and milk dark eyes from his own); there could be nothing in them, now that she was faded and thin, to excite his esteem. He had never indulged much hope, he had now none, of ever reading her name in any other page of his favourite work." ... "and Anne an extremely pretty girl, with gentleness, modesty, taste and feeling. - Half the sum of

attraction, on either side, might have been enough. For he (Captain Wentworth) had nothing to do, and she had hardly anybody to love." ... "Anne Elliot with all her claims of birth, beauty and mind."

Now this is where the story is told about Anne being persuaded to believe she had no future with Captain Wentworth. "was more than Anne could combat. Young and gentle as she was, it might yet have been possible to withstand her father's ill-will, though unsoftened by one kind word or look on the part of her sister; but Lady Russel whom she had always loved and relied on, could not, with such steadiness of opinion, and such tenderness of manner, be continually advising her in vain. She was PERSUADED to believe the engagement a wrong thing." ... "Her attachment and regrets had, for a long time clouded every enjoyment of youth; and an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect" ... "No second attachment, the only thoroughly natural, happy and sufficient cure, at her time of life, had been possible to the nice tone of her mind, the fastidiousness of her taste, in the small limits of the society around them." Though she gave up their engagement, she could never stop loving Captain Wentworth.

Now the book proceeds and introduces us to other persons, especially to Miss Henrietta and Miss Louisa Musgrove. "Anne always contemplated them as some of the happiest creatures of her acquaintance but still, saved as we all are by some comfortable feeling of superiority from wishing the possibility of exchange, she would not have given up her own more elegant and cultivated mind for all their enjoyments; and envied them nothing but that seemingly perfect good understanding and agreement together, that good-humoured mutual affection, of which she had known so little herself with either of her sisters." ... "She played a great deal better than either of the Miss Musgroves; but having no voice, no knowledge of the harp, and no fond parents to sit by and fancy themselves delighted, her performance was little thought of, only out of civility, or to refresh the others, as she was well aware. She knew that when she played, she was giving pleasure only to herself; but this was no new sensation: excepting one short period of her life, she had never, since the age of fourteen, never since the loss of her dear mother, known the happiness of being listened to, or encouraged by any just appreciation of real taste. In music she had been always used to feel alone in the world; and Mr. and Mrs Musgrove's fond partiality for their own daughters' performance, and total indifference to any other person's, gave her much more pleasure for their sakes, than mortification for her own." ...

When she meets in Lyme with the widower Captain Benwick: "... a very good impulse of her nature obliged her to begin an acquaintance with him. (him refers to captain Benwick) He was shy and disposed to abstraction, but the engaging mildness of her countenance, and gentleness of her manners, soon had their effect;" ... "twelve years had changed Anne from the blooming, silent, unformed girl of fifteen, to the elegant little woman of seven and twenty; with every beauty

excepting her bloom, and with manners as consciously right as they were invariably gentle.”

Almost at the end of the book, Anne Elliot and Captain Harville have a discussion about truly loving men and women. She says: “It would not be the nature of any woman who truly loved to forget a man so soon” “Yes I claim that for my own sex. We certainly do not forget you, so soon as you forget us. It is, perhaps, our fate rather than our merit. We cannot help ourselves. We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us.” (she speaks from her own experience with Captain Wentworth).

This is how Anne is described in the book. It is very obvious that Jane Austen has a lot of respect for this Heroine. She is perfect, she looks good, has a good character and an intellectual mind. This is how a woman (from Jane Austen’s point of view) should be.

§2 The female characters of Persuasion

Lady Elliot †

Lady Elliot has already died when the story begins, but a small description is given: “An excellent woman, sensible and amiable. Whose judgment and conduct, if they might be pardoned the youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot, had never required indulgence afterwards. – She had humoured or softened or concealed his failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years, and though not being the very happiest being in the world herself, had found enough in her duties, her friends and her children, to attach her to life, and make it no matter of indifference to her when she was called to quit them.”

It is obvious that Jane Austen thinks highly of Lady Elliot. This description is given early in the book. According to Jane Austen, the only thing Lady Elliot had done wrong, was becoming Lady Elliot. She should never had married Sir Elliot, for she is superior to him. But even when the marriage isn’t a good one, she makes the best out of it.

Lady Russel

Lady Russel is a discrete and reasonable woman, who has a lot of influence on a lot of people. Reason is the keyword of her acting. She has very strong opinions, and thinks they are always right. She is a real Lady and very nice to Anne.

Descriptions given in the book:

“A very sensible deserving woman, who had been brought, by strong attachment to Lady Elliot, to settle close by her.” ... “(That Lady Russel, of steady age and character, and extremely well provided for, should have no thought of a second marriage, needs no apology to the public, which is rather apt to be unreasonably

discontented when a woman does marry again, than when she does not)" ... "She was a woman rather of sound than of quick abilities, whose difficulties in coming to any decision in this instance were great, from the opposition of two leading principles. She was of strict integrity herself, with a delicate sense of honour; but she was as desirous of saving Sir Walter's feelings as solicitous for the credit of the family, as aristocratic in her ideas of what was due to them, as any body of sense and honesty could well be. She was a benevolent, charitable good woman, and capable of strong attachments, most correct in her conduct, strict in her notions of decorum, and with manners that were held a standard of good breeding. She had a cultivated mind and was, generally speaking, rational and consistent. But she had prejudices on the side of ancestry, she had a value for rank and consequence, which blinded her a little to the faults of those who possessed them. Herself, the widow of only a knight, she gave the dignity of a baronet all its due." ... "...Lady Russel had little taste for wit; and of anything approaching to imprudence a horror. She deprecated the connexion in every light. (about Captain Wentworth)" ... "Lady Russel, as satisfied s ever with her own discretion, never wished the past undone. She began now to have the anxiety which borders on hopelessness for Anne's being tempted(by another man)." ... "I have always heard of Lady Russel, as a woman of the greatest influence with every body! I always look upon her as able to persuade a person to any thing! I am afraid of her, as I have told you before, quite afraid of her, because she is so very clever; but I respect her amazingly, and wish we had such a neighbour at Uppercross.(spoken by Henrietta)"

I think Jane Austen has a lot of respect for a woman like lady Russel, but shows with this character that you should be very careful with power one may have over one other. Lady Russel is the only worthy "friend" of Anne Elliot/

Elizabeth Elliot

Elizabeth is Anne's older sister. She is a proud and selfish woman, and is very much alike her father, Sir Elliot. Lady Russel has almost no influence on her, for Elizabeth is used to do things the way she wants. Descriptions that are given in the book are:

"For one daughter, his eldest would he (Sir Elliot) really have given up anything, which he had not been very tempted to do. Elizabeth had succeeded at sixteen, to all that was possible, of her mother's rights and consequence; and being very handsome, and very like himself (Sir Elliot) her influence had always been great, and they had gone on together most happily" ... "It sometimes happens that a woman is handsomer at twenty-nine than she was ten years before; and generally speaking, if there has been neither ill health nor anxiety, it is a time of life at which scarcely any charm is lost. It was so with Elizabeth; sill the same handsome Miss Elliot that she had begun to be thirteen years ago." ... "She had the consciousness

of being twenty-nine to give her some regrets and some apprehensions. She was fully satisfied of being still quite as handsome as ever; but she felt the approach to the years of danger(see also C4 §2 marriage and the alternatives) and would have rejoiced to be certain of being properly solicited by baronet-blood within the next twelvemonth or two.” ... “Mary was not so repulsive and unsisterly as Elizabeth, nor so inaccessible to all influence of hers(hers is referring to Anne).” ... “Elizabeth was certainly very handsome, with well-bred, elegant manners, and her character might never have been penetrated by Mr. Elliot, knowing her but in public, and when very young himself. How her temper and understanding might bear the investigation of his present keener time of life was another concern, and a rather fearful one.” Jane Austen doesn't like women like this character, and describes Elizabeth on purpose so, that no one will even think of liking her. She is only occupied by herself and her own pleasing.

Mary Musgrove

Mary is a younger sister of Anne. She married Charles Musgrove, who had first asked Anne to marry him, but she refused. Mary is described in the book as: “Mary, often a little unwell and always thinking a great deal of her own complaints, and always in the habit of claiming Anne when any thing was the matter” ... “Though better endowed than the eldest sister, Mary had not Anne's understanding or temper. While well, and happy and properly attended to, she had great good humour and excellent spirits; but any disposition sunk her completely; she had no resources for solicitude; and inheriting a considerable share of the Elliot self-importance, was very prone to add to every other distress that of fancying herself neglected and ill-used. In person, she was inferior to both sisters, and had, even in her bloom, only reached the dignity of being ‘a fine girl’.”... “Mary was not so repulsive and unsisterly as Elizabeth, nor so inaccessible to all influence of hers(Anne).” ... “Mary is good natured enough in many respects, said she, but she does sometimes provoke me excessively, by her nonsense and her pride; the Elliot pride. She has a great deal too much of the Elliot pride.” ... “Mary had her evils; but upon the whole, she had found more to enjoy than to suffer ... and all this, joined to the sense of being useful, had made really an agreeable fortnight.” Jane Austen describes this character with a lot of irony. In the book, it seems though Mary makes a complete fool of herself by always acting like she isn't properly attended to. In fact I believe that Jane Austen thinks this character is just foolish, but can be nice sometimes. She isn't so harsh and cold as her sister Elizabeth, for whom Jane Austen shows no respect at all.

Mrs. Clay

Mrs. Clay is the daughter of Mr. Shepherd, Sir Elliot (Anne's father) his lawyer. She is someone who is a “friend” of Elizabeth and creeps her way in their house,

hereby hoping to “catch” Sir Elliot, for he can still remarry. She is a very sly and deceitful person.

Jane Austen describes her like this:

“Mrs. Clay was a clever young woman who understood the art of pleasing. The art of pleasing, at last, at Kellynch Hall.(this is the estate of the Elliot-family)” ... “Mrs. Clay had freckles and a projecting tooth and a clumsy wrist, ... but she was young and certainly altogether well-looking, and possessed in an acute mind and assiduous pleasing manners.” ... “Mrs. Clay was very pleasant, and very smiling; but her courtesies were more a matter of course.”

I think Jane Austen one hand despises Mrs. Clay and her sly manners, on the other hand she creates a little bit of sympathy, by leaving her in the hands of Walter Elliot, while she is actually being used.

Mrs. Croft

Is the sister of Captain Wentworth, and she and Admiral croft have hired Kellynch-hall from Sir Elliot. She is described as:

“A very well-spoken, genteel, shrewd lady, she seemed to be.” ... “Mrs Croft, though neither tall or fat, had a squareness, uprightness and vigour of form, which gave importance to her person. She had bright dark eyes, good teeth, and altogether an agreeable face; though her reddened and weather beaten complexion, the consequence of her having been almost as much at sea as her husband, made her seem to have lived some years longer in the world than her real eight and thirty. Her manners were open, easy and decided, like one who had no distrust of herself, and no doubts of what to do; without any approach to coarseness, however, or any want of good humour.”

Mrs. Croft is a little bit an unwitnessed character, she is just a gentle, sympathetic woman, who has a bit of a background role, but is a respectable woman.

Mrs. Musgrove

“Mr. and Mrs Musgrove were a very good sort of people; friendly and hospitable, not much educated and not at all elegant.” ... “Mrs Musgrove was of comcortable substantial size, infinitely more fitted by nature to express good cheer and good humour, than tenderness and sentiment.”

Henrietta Musgrove & Louisa Musgrove

Henrietta and Louisa are often described together, that is why I discuss them together too.

“young ladies of nineteen and twenty who had brought from a school at Exeter all the usual stock of accomplishments, and were now, like thousands of other young ladies, living to be fashionable, happy and merry. Their dress had every advantage, their faces were rather pretty, their spirits extremely good, their manners unembarrassed and pleasant; they were of consequence at home, and favourites

abroad.” ... “Anne always contemplated them as some of the happiest creatures of her acquaintance but still, saved as we all are by some comfortable feeling of superiority from wishing the possibility of exchange, she would not have given up her own more elegant and cultivated mind for all their enjoyments; and envied them nothing but that seemingly perfect good understanding and agreement together, that good-humoured mutual affection, of which she had known so little herself with either of her sisters.” ... “The high-spirited, joyous, talking Louisa Musgrove!” ... “The idea of Louisa Musgrove turned into a person of literary taste, and sentimental reflection was amusing, but she had no doubt of it’s being so.” Jane Austen just describes two girls of which there must have been a great many in her days. Merry young women, very much accomplished and very much in want of a good husband. She respects them, but makes it quite clear they are inferior to women like Anne Elliot.

Mrs. Smith

“and twelve years had transformed the fine-looking, well-grown miss Hamilton (later married to Mr. Smith) in all the glow of health and confidence of superiority, into a poor, infirm, helpless widow ... Anne found in Mrs. Smith the good sense and agreeable manners which she had almost ventured to depend on, and a disposition to converse and be cheerful beyond her expectation. Neither the dissipations of the past – and she had lived very much in the world, nor the restrictions of the present; neither sickness nor sorrow seemed to have closed her heart or ruined her spirits.” Mrs Smith isn’t a really important character, but this character shows the strength one can have. Mrs Smith went to a lot of misery, but she still has her pride and good heart, though she is sick. And even though she has gone down the “genteel ladder” she is more respectable than an “Elizabeth Elliot”.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

I guess that, after reading this work, everyone now has an image of the women in the early nineteenth century. It has to be said though that Jane Austen only writes about women of the “genteel” classes, so these are the women we have taken a closer look at.

The early nineteenth century was time of changes, the crossing of two periods, the age of reason and the romantic period. It is quite clear Jane Austen is much more a

writer of the age of reason, than a romantic writer. Jane Austen herself didn't see much of the world, she never married and died at the age of only 41.

Women in the early nineteenth century had hardly any education if you compare it to what we now see as a decent education. Most important was it to have a great many accomplishments, like playing the piano, dancing and drawing. The most women had no other choice than to marry. If they remained unmarried, they became an "old maid" and were dependant of the charity and good-will of the rest of their family. A woman could never live on her own, she always needed companionship of another woman (in most cases they hired a 'Lady's companion). There were almost no professions for women, except for becoming a governess, or a 'Lady's companion, and these were not very much respected jobs. In her books, Jane Austen places some sort of love story round a Heroine. Her stories are never the same, and her heroines are very different also. Jane Austen mostly writes about "two or three families in the countryside", very much like the situation Jane Austen was in herself. She writes her books with a lot of irony, and makes fun of other persons of her own sex. She makes it quite clear in her books which character deserves a lot of respect, and which character should be laughed at. She gives very large descriptions of characters and their good or bad qualities in her books.

I think we can conclude from all this, that women were very dependent and not properly educated, they had almost no rights but to marry and be happy. Jane Austen is very ironic about the most women, but she also shows us not all women were ignorant, some of them were quite intelligent because they were blessed with a good mind and quick wit. Jane Austen criticizes society as it was in the early nineteenth century, but makes no difference between men and women; they both could be foolish and ignorant, or intelligent and well-bred.

I hope that you enjoyed reading this work.

Resources

Books:

Pride and Prejudice Jane Austen

Mansfield Park Jane Austen

Persuasion Jane Austen

Jane Austen's Novels Andrew H. Wright

The English novel Walter Allen

A memoir of Jane Austen J. E. Austen-Leigh

Jane Austen, A collection
of critical essays Ian Watt

Jane Austen Douglas Bush

A Portrait of Jane Austen David Cecil

Rhyme & Reason
(text- & workbook) Dick Siersema

Websites:

<http://www.pemberley.com>

<http://www.JASNA.org>

<http://www.janeausten.co.uk>

<http://www.austen.com>

<http://home.gwi.net/~gwallace/surf.html>

Images

<http://www.pemberley.com>

<http://www.proxis.com>

Logbook

datum tijd plaats Verrichte werkzaamheden Resultaat/afspraken/persoonlijke
ervaring

Week 36

30 min

School Afspraak met mevr. Verhelst, gepraat over de bedoeling en inhoud van
profielwerkstuk Weet nu wat de bedoeling is en welke kant ik met mijn werkstuk op
wil

Week 38

30 min

School Hoofd en deelvragen bedacht en ingeleverd Hoofd en deelvragen zijn bekend

Week 39

45 min Thuis & bieb Keuze gemaakt welke boeken ik wil gaan lezen voor mijn werkstuk Weet nu welke boeken ik moet doorwerken en in mijn werkstuk moet verwerken

Week 41 180 min

40 min Thuis & op school Pride and prejudice gelezen

Aantekeningen gemaakt

Verdiepen in het boek

Week 42+44 110 min

80 min

Thuis Persuasion gelezen

Aantekeningen gemaakt

Verdiepen in het boek

Week 45 130 min

35 min

Thuis Mansfield Park gelezen

Aantekeningen gemaakt

Verdiepen in het boek

Week 46 120 min

90 min Bieb

Thuis

-Informatie gezocht over Jane Austen

-Jane Austen, a collection of critical essays gelezen Meer achtergrondinformatie verkregen over Jane Austen.

Week 47

100 min Thuis & op school Informatie gezocht over Jane Austen en haar boeken

Veel informatie over Jane Austen in relatie tot haar boeken

Week 48

90 min

Thuis Informatie gezocht over het tijdsbeeld begin 19e eeuw, en de plaats van de vrouw Nu kan ik gaan kijken hoe dit in relatie staat tot haar boeken.

Week 49

180 min

Thuis Aantekeningen gemaakt bij karakters uit Persuasion Verdiepen in het boek

Week 50

270 min Thuis & op school Boeken uit de bieb gelezen en aantekeningen gemaakt Informatie over Jane Austen's leven verzameld en genoteerd

Week 51

200 min

Thuis Boeken uit de bieb gelezen en aantekeningen gemaakt Informatie over Jane Austen's leven verzameld en genoteerd

Week 52

280 min

Thuis Uittypen antwoorden op deelvraag 1 Deelvraag beantwoord

Week 1

240 min

Thuis Boeken vergeleken, karakterschets gemaakt van Anne Elliot en andere vrouwelijke personen in Persuasion Verdiept in karakters, ik door de hoeveelheid aan karakters besloten dat ik maar uit 1 boek alle vrouwelijke karakters bespreek

Week 2

200 min.

Thuis Biografie over Jane Austen uitgetypt Deelvraag 2 af

Week 3

310 min.

Thuis Jane Austen and the women of her time getypt, deel van de karakters getypt. Chapter 4 af + deel van 6

Week 4

350 min.

Thuis Karakters getypt, plaatjes gezocht, kaft gemaakt + titelpagina, Chapter 6 bijna af, plaatjes en kaft en titelpagina af

Week 5

480 min.

Thuis Inhoudsopgave, voorwoord, introductie, chapter 5 getypt en 6 afgemaakt, conclusie getypt en lay-out gedaan Profielwerkstuk is af!

totaal 3590 min. = 60 uur