

เมืองในนวนิยายเรื่อง เซนส์ แอนด์ เซนสิบิลิตี, แมนส์ฟิลด์ พาร์ค และ นอร์แทงเกอร์ แอ็บบี ของ
เจน ออสเตน



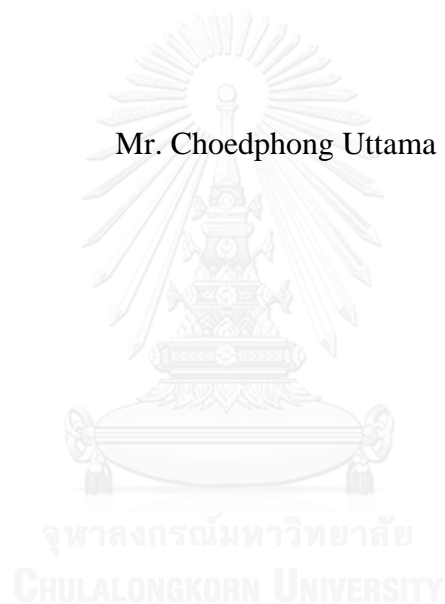
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THE CITY IN JANE AUSTEN'S *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*, *MANSFIELD PARK*
AND *NORTHANGER ABBEY*

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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เชิดพงศ์ อดตะมะ : เมืองในนวนิยายเรื่อง *เซนส์ แอนด์ เซนสิบิลิตี*, *แมนส์ฟิลด์ พาร์ค* และ *นอร์ทแทงเกอร์ แอ็บบี* ของเจน ออสเตน (THE CITY IN JANE AUSTEN'S *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*, *MANSFIELD PARK* AND *NORTHANGER ABBEY*) อ.ที่ปริกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ดร. ฉิดา ติรณสวัสดิ์, 134 หน้า.

นักวิจารณ์วรรณคดีและนักชีวประวัติผู้ศึกษาผลงานและประวัติของเจน ออสเตน ต่างแสดงความคิดเห็นว่าออสเตนไม่ชอบเมือง ข้อสรุปดังกล่าวได้มาจากการศึกษาจดหมายและนวนิยายของออสเตนและสอดคล้องกับภาพเมืองในแง่ลบซึ่งมีมายาวนานในฐานะแหล่งแห่งความเลื่อมทางศีลธรรมและความชั่วร้าย วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เห็นต่างและโต้แย้งข้อคิดเห็นดังกล่าว ถึงแม้ว่าออสเตนรักชนบท แต่ก็ไม่รังเกียจเมืองเสียทีเดียว และนวนิยายของเธอก็ไม่ได้นำเสนอว่าเมืองเลวร้ายหรือคืออะไร แต่ชี้ให้เห็นว่าเมืองมีทั้งด้านที่เลวร้ายและดีงาม ผู้วิจัยวิเคราะห์โดยอ้างอิงเนื้อหาประวัติศาสตร์จากหนังสือ *ดิ อิงลิช เฮอร์เบิน เรนซ็องส์ คัลเชอร์ แอนด์ ไซไซตี อิน เดอะ พรอวินเชียลทาวน์ 1660-1770 (1989)* ของปีเตอร์ บอร์เชย์ ซึ่งบรรยายว่าเมืองในศตวรรษที่ 18 อันยาวนาน (1660-1830) แท้จริงแล้วมีความเจริญเติบโตทั้งทางเศรษฐกิจ สังคม และวัฒนธรรม นอกจากนี้ผู้วิจัยยังวิเคราะห์โดยใช้ข้อโต้แย้งของเรย์มอนด์ วิลเลียมส์จากหนังสือ *เดอะ คันทรี แอนด์ เดอะ ซิตี้ (1973)* ซึ่งอธิบายว่าวรรณคดีในศตวรรษที่ 18 เริ่มนำเสนอภาพเมืองอันซับซ้อน ไม่ใช่เพียงภาพเมืองที่เลวร้ายดังแต่ก่อน ผู้วิจัยวิเคราะห์นวนิยายเรื่อง *เซนส์ แอนด์ เซนสิบิลิตี* *นอร์ทแทงเกอร์ แอ็บบี* และ *แมนส์ฟิลด์ พาร์ค* ในบริบททางสังคมวัฒนธรรมของศตวรรษที่ 18 อันยาวนาน และเปรียบเทียบให้เห็นว่าภาพเมืองในนวนิยายเรื่อง *เซนส์ แอนด์ เซนสิบิลิตี* แตกต่างจากภาพเมืองอันเลวร้ายในนวนิยายเร้าอารมณ์ซึ่งเป็นนวนิยายประเภทที่ *เซนส์ แอนด์ เซนสิบิลิตี* เสียคลี่ไ้ ในนวนิยายเรื่อง *นอร์ทแทงเกอร์ แอ็บบี* ผู้วิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่าตัวละครชนบทตกเป็นเหยื่อความชั่วร้ายของเมืองเพราะตัวเอง ไม่ใช่เพียงเพราะเมืองเท่านั้น ส่วนในนวนิยายเรื่อง *แมนส์ฟิลด์ พาร์ค* ชาวลอนดอนผู้เป็นตัวแทนของเมืองใหญ่ซึ่งมีทัศนคติและวิถีชีวิตแบบชาวเมืองนั้นเป็นภัยต่อชนบท แต่ขณะเดียวกันก็มีอำนาจอันส่งผลดีต่อชนบทเช่นกัน

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ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

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CHOEDPHONG UTTAMA: THE CITY IN JANE AUSTEN'S *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*, *MANSFIELD PARK* AND *NORTHANGER ABBEY*.
ADVISOR: NIDA TIRANASAWASDI, Ph.D., 134 pp.

A number of Jane Austen's biographers and literary critics have suggested that Austen disliked the city. Their conclusion is largely drawn from her letters and her negative portrayal of the city in her novels which fits the enduring image of the city as a place of moral corruption and vice. This thesis will argue that although Austen did prefer rural to urban life, she was not blind to the variety that the city offered and that her novels portray not only negative but also positive aspects of the city. The thesis employs Peter Borsay's history in *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (1989) which illustrates the economic, social and cultural revival of the city in the long eighteenth century (1660-1830), which contributed to new image of the city as a place of progress, civilisation and pleasure, and Raymond Williams' argument in *The Country and the City* (1973) against the age-old binary opposition of the country as representing peace and virtue and the city as representing vice and moral corruption. By analysing *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Northanger Abbey* (1818) and *Mansfield Park* (1814) in the socio-cultural context of the long eighteenth century, the thesis seeks to illustrate the complex or even positive portrayal of the city in these selected novels, showing that the depiction of London in the first novel is different from that in the sentimental novel which it satirises and also how the ways in which the picture of the dangerous city in *Northanger Abbey* is ameliorated through Austen's satirical presentation of the heroine's rural characteristics and how the urban intruders in the last novel can be both destructive and beneficial to the countryside.

Department: English

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: JANE AUSTEN AND THE CITY

A number of Jane Austen's biographers and critics have suggested that Austen disliked the city. Their conclusion is largely drawn from her letters and her negative portrayal of the city in her novels which fits the enduring image of it as a place of moral corruption and vice. However, historians have pointed out that in the eighteenth century the English city became celebrated for its achievement in industry and trade which contributed to its new image as a place of progress, power and pleasure, producing complexity and offering a wide range of urban experiences. People's attitude towards the city also changed and many literary works of this century portray the positive aspects of the city. Re-examining her letters together with an analysis of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Northanger Abbey* (1818), this thesis will argue that Austen did not have a hostile attitude towards the city and that these three novels present a complex picture of the city which subsumes both its negative and positive sides.

Writing at a period when her nation was confronting national and international turbulence, notably the Napoleonic Wars, Austen, who lived in the countryside where life was hardly disturbed by the chaos, deliberately chose to work on a subject within her personal experience—the life of the country gentry. The settings and characters in Austen's novels are predominantly rural while her antagonists are usually from the city (for instance, Mrs Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, the Crawfords in *Mansfield Park* and Mrs Elton in *Emma*). Her seeming preference for the country life and her association of antagonists and their misdeeds with the city have thus tended to place

her works at one end of the paradigm of the country versus the city. Indeed, this age-old binary opposition of the country, representing virtue and simplicity, and the city, representing vice and moral corruption, can be traced back to classical times and has dominated both readers' and writers' perceptions of the country and the city. As Raymond Williams famously argues in *The Country and the City* (1973) these "powerful feelings have gathered and have been generalized. On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue....on the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition" and throughout history with change and development "certain images and associations persist" (1-2).

When Austen's critics, whether or not they bear the age-old binary opposition of the city and the country in mind but who are clearly aware of these persistent images, study her six novels, they point out the negative portrayal of the city in her works. Paula Byrne in "The meaning luxuries of Bath": Urban Pleasures in Jane Austen's World", reports that there has been a general consensus in twentieth-century criticism that Austen is "deeply suspicious" of the urban world (17). Maggie Lane, in *Jane Austen's England* (1995), observes that London in Austen's novels is "a constant threat to country life, a range of shades on her moral spectrum, an aid to the fine discrimination she calls on her readers to make" (qtd. in Kaplan, "*Sense and Sensibility*: 3 or 4 Country Families" 197). Josephine Ross, in *Jane Austen: A Companion* (2002), also remarks that "[a]ll Jane Austen's heroines are countrywomen, deeply imbued with country ways and values, and half-suspicious of the supposed moral and physical ills of the cities" (160). Also, in contrast to her country heroes and heroines, villains and misdeeds are usually associated with the city. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Colonel Brandon's ward, Eliza William, is seduced by Willoughby when she is in Bath. In *Pride and Prejudice*,

Lydia and Wickham elope and hide themselves in London. The city also has the proclivity to breed a group of disagreeable people. The Dashwood sisters come into contact with Londoners such as Mrs Ferrars, who is bad-tempered and ill-bred. In *Emma*, Mr Elton goes to seek a wife in Bath where he finally secures the vulgar, domineering and pretentious Miss Hawkins (later Mrs Elton). Through a classic reading of *Mansfield Park*, the Crawfords are seen as urban interlopers who disrupt rural order and peace. In *Northanger Abbey*, the naïve Catherine Morland enters Bath society only to encounter the hypocritical Thorpes and the villain, General Tilney. In *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot's experience of leaving home to settle in Bath is similar to Austen's. As Ross asserts, "[L]ike the author herself—Anne Elliot in *Persuasion* is desolate at having to leave her family home in the heart of the countryside for the 'white glare' and dubious pleasures of Bath, which she did not think 'agreed with her'" (161). Reading Austen's novels in this light, one finds that the negative portrayal of the city is persuasive.

Her biographers and critics (who incline to such a reading) have also turned to studying her letters to look for evidence demonstrating her animosity towards the city. By examining her letters and selecting certain lines, they come to an expected conclusion. A letter dated 23rd August, 1796, written from London to her sister, Cassandra, contains a frequently quoted line that illustrates Austen's hatred of London: "Here I am once more in this Scene of Dissipation & vice, and I begin already to find my Morals corrupted" (Le Faye 5). The Austen family recorded her passing out upon being informed by her mother, "Well, girls, it is all settled, we have decided to leave Stevenson in such a week and go to Bath" (qtd. in Tomalin 169). During her years in Bath, Austen is reported by various biographers to have been unhappy and inactive. Jane Dwyer, in *Jane Austen* (1989), for example, suggests that "[t]he Austens' five-

year stay in Bath did not prove happy” and that Jane wrote little and could not finish *The Watsons* (22). Likewise, Ross writes that “[t]here was little real gaiety in her letters” (25) and concludes that Jane Austen’s residence in Bath was “the most unhappy (and uncreative) period of her life” (161). Claire Tomalin, in *Jane Austen: A Life* (1998), refers to another frequently quoted description of Bath: “vapour, shadow, smoke & confusion” from one of Austen’s letters and concludes that “[t]here is briskness and brightness in Jane’s letters at this time, much keeping up of spirit, but no enthusiasm” (171). Deirdre Le Faye, in *Jane Austen: The World of Her Novels* (2002), suggests that “[t]he Bath years were busy but not particularly happy for Jane; her letters show that she was no longer dancing in the Assembly Rooms, but constantly occupied with the duller social round of little card parties and tea-drinking visits amongst other genteel widow and spinster families” (28). The most cited lines from her Bath correspondence includes that in a letter dated 12th-13th May 1801, “Another stupid party last night” (Le Faye 85), which shows her dull association with Bath people, mostly spinsters like her. A letter dated 30th June-1st July 1808, directed to Cassandra a couple of years after leaving Bath for Southampton, registers her “happy feelings of Escape!” (Le Faye 138). It can be concluded from these biographers that Austen enjoyed Bath very little and her predominant impression of it was negative.

In the wider social and cultural context, the eighteenth century was noted for its rapid urban growth and the growing complexity of urban experience which posed a great challenge to the long established image of the city. Peter Borsay in, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (1989), argues the case of the incredible growth of the English metropolis and towns, referring

to the post-Restoration period and the long eighteenth century¹, in particular, as the era of the “English urban renaissance”. This term has been so influential that Rosemary Sweet in, *The English Town, 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture* (1999), acknowledges its power as best summarising the overall picture of unprecedented urban development. London and other towns undoubtedly owed their growth to the prosperity of industry, trade and commerce. However, what constituted and defined towns and what differentiated towns from the country and into what ranks towns were categorised is very complex. Borsay suggests that the size of population as well as economic and political structure have been indicators when defining any individual community as a town but equally, and even more crucially in the eighteenth century, was the degree of influence a community exercised over its surrounding countryside. Borsay suggests four broad categories of towns: commercial towns, regional centres, provincial towns and the metropolis. Sweet also shows that towns were distinguished from the countryside in terms of their function as well as their size and suggests four broad categories into which towns fell: market and administrative centres, port and dockyard towns, manufacturing and industrial centres and spas and leisure towns.

Whilst still acknowledging the significance of demographical, socio-economic and administrative approaches to categorise towns, both Borsay and Sweet argue for the definition of towns to be based on their provision of administrative and cultural services. The latter, in particular, was undeniably an eighteenth-century phenomenon

¹ The phrase the long eighteenth century is used by historians to refer to the historical period rather than the use of the calendar definition. The long eighteenth century either ran from the Restoration of 1660 or the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to the Battle of the Waterloo in 1815 or the Reform Bill of 1832. This thesis uses the phrase “the long eighteenth century” and “the eighteenth century” interchangeably.

and was crucial to defining the city. As Sweet suggests, “[t]he provision of these cultural and administrative services became an increasingly marked part of urban life, and provided the foundations for ‘urban renaissance’” (230). The existence of town halls, public buildings and other urban facilities which housed both cultural and administrative services, Sweet shows, were urban features that, though varying from town to town in number, size and vibrancy, made the urban community distinct from the rural one. Borsay also illustrates that the provision of both luxurious and pastime delights available at leisure facilities created a cultural, social and intellectual milieu which was distinguishably urban and notes that the development of towns was obviously driven by the customs of the gentry (both the elite and the rich middling sort). Nevertheless, the lower rank did participate in an inferior form of urban leisure that was to be found in alehouses or in clubs and societies and this made their lives different from those of their rural counterparts.

Due to the unprecedented development of London and towns, people’s perception of cities changed and they started to associate them with not only the traditional image of vice and moral corruption but also pleasure, learning and civilisation. As Borsay states in his article, “Urban Life and Culture”, “[In the eighteenth century] [t]owns became—and became seen to be—attractive and fashionable places, and the idea and ideal of the town came to occupy a new prominence in people’s minds” (202). The development of various kinds of urban entertainment greatly contributed to urban society as a pleasurable place. The introduction and implementation of social rules and codes of conducts to govern people who were enjoying urban entertainments made urban society civilised and polite. Urban society, thus, was seen to be able to foster man’s finer qualities through his participation in cultural entertainments and its

“underlying mission was to rescue the nation from barbarity and ignorance; in a word, to *civilize* it” (Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance* 257). Clubs and societies which sought to widen knowledge particularly flourished in the eighteenth century and ceased to be exclusively upper class as they began to admit the middle ranks of men into their circle. The fast expansion of circulating libraries and the wide supply of printed material throughout provincial towns greatly encouraged public literacy and enhanced the reputation of the city as a place of learning and intellectual exchange.

Following Borsay and Sweet’s argument describing the change in the city and in people’s perception of it, this chapter will show that, although Austen did prefer rural to urban life, she was not blind to the variety that the city offered and she did not hate the city. Since the novels discussed in this thesis include *Sense and Sensibility*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park* which feature three different types of town—the metropolis, London, a resort town, Bath, and a dockyard, Portsmouth, as their distinct settings, it will be necessary to provide the socio-cultural context of these cities against which Austen’s urban attitude and experience can be reevaluated. This will be crucial to the analysis of the novels in later chapters. The analysis of the selected novels in this thesis does not follow a chronology of the publication but the importance of the city as listed above, beginning with London, Bath and Portsmouth.

None of English cities, in 1400, were considered to be among the largest and the most prosperous cities in Europe. By the European standards, London had been in the second division, smaller than Paris, Milan, Florence, Venice and Naples. However, by 1600 London became one of the Europe’s top five cities and by 1800 it was the grandest in Europe and the largest city in the world after Edo (Tokyo). London as well

as other English cities grew remarkably during the long eighteenth century, or the years after the Restoration (1660).



(General view of London (1794) by T Bowles, retrieved from <http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk>)

The largest city in England is London. Roy Porter's *London: A Social History* (2002) extensively discusses the rapid growth of London in the Georgian period when Austen lived. London owed its rapid expansion to the growing prosperity of trade and industry and the increasing number of people flocking to the capital (there were 900,000 people by 1801, the time at which *Sense and Sensibility* is set). Daniel Defoe in the middle of the eighteenth century had been upset by the "straggling, confus'd" growth of London which was "out of all shape, uncompact, and unequal" and had asked, "Wither will this monstrous city then extend?" (qtd. in Porter 122). Horace Walpole humorously observed, in 1791, that the urban dispersion inevitably drove the sedan-

chair trade into bankruptcy, “for Hercules and Atlas could not carry anybody from one end of this enormous capital to the other” (qtd. in Porter 123).

While London stretched out in every direction, topography became even more important. (This thesis will discuss the topography of London at some length since it is important to the analysis of *Sense and Sensibility* in chapter II.) In London, addresses mattered. Craftsmen and merchants occupied the City while the *hoi polloi* populated the extramural East End, an area which became notorious as an exotic nation of its own. The new emergent area, such as the elegant West End made popular by St James’s and Mayfair, grew to accommodate aristocrats and the gentry. The West End was developed by capitalist aristocrats whose aim was profit and prestige. The community, therefore, was not only superior but also intimate and private. In *Sense and Sensibility*, major characters such as Mrs Jennings, the Palmers, Mrs Ferrars and the John Dashwoods have their homes or rental lodgings in this area because they are rich. The exception is the Steeles whose lodgings are in the City. Robert Southey, around 1800, commented on the distinction between the West End and the City:

There is an imaginary line of demarcation which divides them from each other. A nobleman would not be found by any accident to live in that part which is properly called the City...whenever a person says that he lives at the West End of the Town, there is some degree of consequence connected with the situation: For instance, my tailor lives at the West End of the Town, and consequently he is supposed to make my coat in a better style of fashion: and this opinion is carried so far among the ladies, that if a cap was known to have come from the City, it would be given to my lady’s woman, who

would give it to the cook, and she perhaps would think it prudent not to inquire into its degree. (qtd. in Porter 118)

Southey's remark is a little too restrictive. Berkeley square in Mayfair, for example, housed not only noblemen but also a number of superior tradesmen. Mrs Jennings' deceased husband, for instance, was a businessman who made his fortune in the City and later bought a house in the West End. Bond Street, at the east of the West End, also emerged as a mixture of homes, shops and elegant residences. It is not surprising that Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility* resides in Bond Street since it was a genteel and fashionable area.

Changes to the city brought about changes in cultural life. Previously, London life had been centred on parishes and guilds but in the Georgian period life increasingly revolved around the town's public spaces, streets, shops, parks and theatres, all of which created the pleasurable urban environment and a culture of sociability and even hedonism. People loved outings and they loved to see and to be seen. Venetia Murray, who discusses Regency life in *High Society in the Regency Period* (1999), suggests that "it is obvious from contemporary journals that those who could afford to do so spent far more of their time out of doors, even in London, than their descendants do today" (102). Mrs Jennings and Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility* take a morning stroll in Kensington Gardens where the former meets and exchanges news with her friends while the latter enjoys the fresh air. Elinor shares Austen's impressions of this place as can be seen in a letter of 25th April 1811 when Austen mentioned walking in this very garden when "everything was fresh & beautiful" (Le Faye 184).

Austen, who visited London many times and stayed there for months with her brother, must have been impressed by London. The earliest record of Austen's

acquaintance with London comes from Mr Austen's eldest sister, Philadelphia Hancock, in a 1788 letter (Kaplan, "3 or 4 Country Families" 179). Mr and Mrs Austen, Cassandra and Jane had been invited to visit Mrs Philadelphia Hancock's home in Orchard Street in the area of Marylebone, which must have made an impression on the imagination of the twelve-year-old Jane since the major addresses in *Sense and Sensibility* are within walking distance of Orchard Street (Kaplan, "3 or 4 Country Families" 179). Constance Hill, on the other hand, suggests that Austen's early impressions of London probably date back to 1796 when she was travelling between Hampshire and Kent and frequently passed a few days in London. Hill adds that "the future author [may have taken] notes of the various localities in the neighbourhood" (206-7) by which Hill means Cork Street where Austen lodged. Her principal contact with London was during her thirties when she was frequently obliged to visit her publishers in order to correct proofs and revise her works. She stayed with her brother Henry and his wife Eliza in Sloane Street in 1811. Austen, however, was far better acquainted with Number 10 on Henrietta Street in Covent Garden to where her brother moved after his wife's death in 1813 and Number 23 at Hans Place near Kingsbridge, to where he also moved. The latter particularly impressed Jane: "It is a delightful Place—more than answers my expectation" (23rd-24th August 1814). Austen also describes herself walking between the house and the garden and praises her brother for allotting her the beautiful attic bedroom (Tomalin 242).

Austen's London life or, to be precise her frequent London visits, proved to be enthusiastic and animated. Tomalin suggests that Austen's life in London involved "dealing with publishers, enjoying the company of [Henry's] circle of colleagues and well-to-do friends, and joining him in many visits to the theatres conveniently clustered

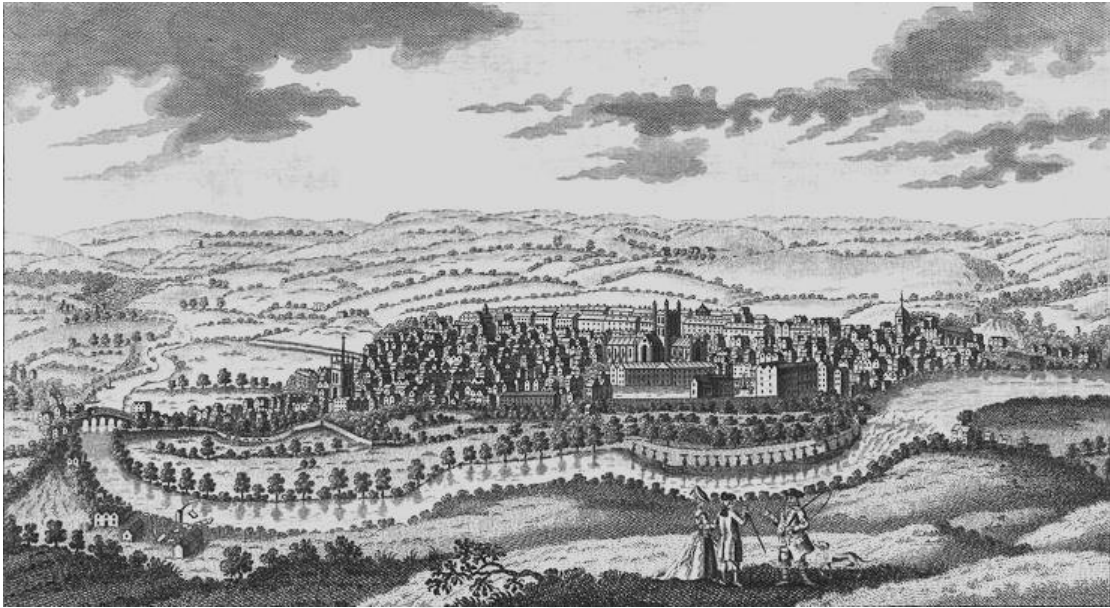
around Henrietta Street” (240). She enjoyed going shopping and attending the theatre and Porter suggests that shopping was the climax of her London visit:

Jane Austen loved shopping expeditions while staying with her brother...She often went to Layton & Shear’s, the fashionable mercers in that street...On one occasion she allowed the milliner ‘to go as far as 36s’ for a white-flowered cap, but then became far more extravagant when her other brother, Edward, gave her five pounds to spend, hurrying back to Layton & Shear’s to treat herself to twenty yards of striped poplin. Later she spoiled herself ‘in satin ribbon with a proper peal edge’ from a shop in Cranbourn Alley. (174-5)

Jane, her brother and his wife regularly attended the theatre. One night before watching *The Devil to Pay*, she wrote in a letter dated 5th-8th March 1814, “I expect to be very much amused”, and in the same letter she told her sister that she was “highly amused with the Farce” (Le Faye 260). Wandering around exhibitions and driving about London on her own were two of her favourite activities as she reported in her letter of 24th May 1813: “Henry & I went to the Exhibition at Spring Gardens...I was very much pleased [with the exhibition]” (Le Faye 212). On another occasion, “I like my solitary elegance very much, & was ready to laugh all the time, at my being where I was.—I could not but feel that I had naturally small right to be parading about London in a Barouche” (Le Faye 213-4). In 1815 Henry Austen became very sick. The Prince Regent’s physician, who attended him, reported to the Prince that the author of *Pride and Prejudice* was now in London with her brother. The Prince, who claimed to be her great admirer, granted her permission to view the library at Carlton House in return for the dedication of *Emma* made upon his request. Although Austen was silent about the

visit, mainly because she did not like the Prince, she was reported to have been impressed by the grandeur of the library.

It should be noted here that several of her supposedly serious remarks directed toward the ills of the city are, arguably, meant in jest. Her vociferous declaration of London as a place of moral corruption in a letter dated 23rd August 1796, for instance, is regarded by some critics as a jocular comment. Likewise, Kathryn Sutherland, Professor of English at St Anne's College, Oxford University, argued in the BBC programme entitled "Did Jane Austen hate Ramsgate?" that even though there seems to be a remark against Ramsgate in her letters dated 14th-15th October 1813, "the reference is clearly facetious". Sutherland added that we "find Austen making similarly facetious remarks about other places...These are all humorous remarks to her sister Cassandra" and suggests that "we should exercise the same humour in reading Austen as she exercised in writing" (Onyanga-Omara). Other humorous statements can be found in a letter of September 1804 which describes Weymouth as "a shocking place" and this John Mullan also refutes as "a joke in reply" to her sister (89).



(Perspective view of the city of Bath, in Somersetshire (1772), Anonymous artist, retrieved from www.en.wikipedia.org)

Ninety-seven miles from London is located the leading spa town of the eighteenth century—Bath. According to Jean Freeman’s *Jane Austen in Bath* (2002) and Maggie Lane’s *Jane Austen and Regency Bath* (2007), Bath became the city that Austen knew after Queen Anne’s two visits at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Queen’s visits did not only encourage but also set the trend for a number of fashionable visitors. In 1800 it was estimated that 8,000 visitors came weekly for their health and leisure in Bath (Neale qtd. in Byrne 17). To accommodate the increasing number of people flocking there, elegant hotels, streets and many public places were constructed. The New Assembly Rooms (known in Austen’s day as the Upper Rooms) were built in 1771. Sydney Gardens was decorated to attract tourists and the Pump Room was rebuilt to replace the old one. Bath was also renowned for its shopping centres. Milsom Street, whose popularity has survived until today, was, perhaps, the

most famous of these. Bath's Theatre Royal was also opened in 1750 and was not only the first theatre in Bath but also the first to be opened outside London.

With so many people coming to Bath as John Brewer, the historian, puts it, Bath was "crowded with valetudinarian politicians, retired soldiers, gouty squires and rich widows taking its medicinal waters, visited by mothers and daughters in pursuit of suitable husbands and frequented by young men in search of eligible heiresses; it was a city of quackery, leisure and intrigue" (qtd. in Byrne 14). Visitors to Bath or other spa towns were required to sign their names and addresses in the book at the Pump Room. (In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine looks for Mr Tilney's address in this book.) They were also obliged to meet the Master of Ceremonies who was charged with making sure that entertainment and hospitality in the town were rendered appropriately. The most famous Bath Master of Ceremonies was Richard ('Beau') Nash who was its first Master of Ceremonies and is usually referred to as the 'King of Bath'. He was the first to establish the assembly rules. The Master of Ceremonies welcomed visitors, inquired after their health and their lodgings and made sure that they knew about Bath's facilities and amenities. Allison Thompson suggests that apart from these routine inquiries, the Master of Ceremonies interviewed them to make sure that they were of good quality and suitable to enter his domain. Mr King James, Bath's Master of the Ceremonies in Austen's time, expressed the rule clearly:

[A]s it is absolutely necessary that no improper company should be permitted to frequent the assembly room, the Master of the Ceremonies particularly requests, that all strangers, (ladies as well as gentlemen), will give him an opportunity of being introduced, before they hold themselves entitled to receive

that respect and attention, which is not more his duty than his inclination to observe (qtd. in Thompson).

After meeting the Master of Ceremonies, visitors were able to indulge themselves in a variety of Bath entertainment. The most popular leisure facility was perhaps the Lower and the Upper Rooms; in *Northanger Abbey*, it is at the Lower Rooms where Catherine is introduced by the Master of the Ceremonies to Mr Tilney and later treated to a cup of tea by him. During the daytime, the ball-room was used as a promenade because its windows allowed people to look through to an extensive view of the River Avon. People also considered it fashionable to invite or accompany each other to breakfast at the Lower Rooms after taking the first glass of spa water. The New Assembly Rooms or the Upper Rooms were completed in 1771 and Catherine visits these when she first arrives in Bath. It should be noted that although these assembly rooms were public, not everyone was admitted and they were organised on a subscription basis.

People could enjoy Bath throughout an entire week, both night and day. During the daytime, those who loved walking could indulge themselves with the spectacular Sydney Gardens in which Austen enjoyed strolling. Byrne claims that Sydney Gardens, where exotic plants and trees and stunning water cascades could be found, was purported to be the best pleasure garden outside London (16). Impressed by the garden, Austen first thought of living near it when her family considered moving to Bath in 1801 for, as she put it in a letter dated 21st-22nd January, 1801, “it would be very pleasant to be near Sydney Gardens!—we might go into the Labyrinth every day” (Le Faye 76). Apart from the garden, the next activity would be going shopping, which Austen loved, at Milsom Street, Bath Street and Bond Street. Byrne also suggests that while looking

for her new address in Bath, Austen would have come across a number of service advertisements which boasted of Bath's variety (16).

Apart from seeking entertainment, visitors came to Bath for medical treatment from the healing waters. Lane suggests that "[t]here was scarcely a complaint that the Bath waters were not supposed to remedy" (12) and Mr Allen in *Northanger Abbey* comes to Bath to cure his gout. According to Lane, the city was very well known for its distinguished doctors, one whom was Dr William Oliver who founded with other doctors the Bath General Hospital which opened to admit patients in 1742. Country doctors often ordered their rich patients, who often came to Bath with introductions from their doctors back home, to one of many Bath physicians. Jane's brother, Edward, came for medical treatment in this manner and Jane speaks of Edward's treatment saying "[h]e drinks at the Hetling Pump, is to bath tomorrow, & try Electricity on Tuesday" (qtd. in Lane 12). The excellence of the medical treatment and the glamour of the city no doubt placed Bath as one of England's foremost cities at that time.

Jane's first trip to Bath, together with her mother and brother, was made in 1797. No letters survive so her first impression of Bath is unknown. What can be conjectured is that she stayed with Mrs Austen's brother, James Leigh Parrot and his wife, at their house in Paragon No. 1. The house was "a fairly large house of four storeys (and a basement) with a rather gloomy view looking on to the street at the front but with fine view across the city at the back" (Freeman 19). Another piece of evidence of her visit comes from the Bath Chronicle entry for the 23rd November, 1797, which lists the arrival of "Mrs. and 2 Miss Asten[sic]" (Lane 9) . This excursion inspired Austen to write her third novel which was to be *Northanger Abbey*. Jane, her mother, her brother James and his wife made a second journey to Bath in 1799. The Bath Chronicle entry

recorded their arrival but no mention was made of Jane and her mother (Lane 10). The Austens found their own lodgings at 13 Queen's Square which Jane Austen preferred to Paragon No. 1. "I like our situation very much—it is far more cheerful than Paragon, & the prospect from the Drawing room window at which I now write, is rather picturesque" (Le Faye 41), she wrote in a letter dated 17th May, 1799, upon moving into these lodgings. Austen concluded in the same letter, "We are exceedingly pleased with the House" (Le Faye 40). Her second visit to Bath in 1799 proved to be delightful as two of only four letters written during the second visit show. The first letter dated 2nd June, 1799, records her "very charming walk from 6 to 8 up Beacon Hill, & across some fields to the Village of Charlcombe, which is sweetly situated in a little green Valley" (Le Faye 43). The celebration for King George III in Sydney Gardens, as she wrote in the second letter dated 19th June, 1779, was spectacular for her: "Last night we were in Sydney Gardens again, as there was a repetition of the Gala... we did not go till nine, & then were in very good time for the Fire-works, which were really beautiful, & surprising my expectation;—the illuminations too were pretty" (Le Faye 47).

The Austens came to Bath again in 1801, not as visitors, but as residents after Mr Austen's retirement. They stayed, at first, with the Leigh Parrots at Paragon before moving to the 4 Sydney Place. The first letter dated 5th-6th May, 1801, to Cassandra, written during her stay at Paragon, contains one of the most quoted descriptions of Bath—"vapour, shadow, smoke & confusion" (Le Faye 82)—which is referred to by her biographers when they wish to point out Austen's jaundiced view of Bath. It should be noted that she employed these words when the sky was overcast and "[t]he Sun was got behind everything" (Le Faye 82). In addition, she did not much like the location of Paragon (where she had first stayed with her aunt before looking for a place of her own)

which faced a very busy road crowded with horses, carriages, wagons and mail coaches. In fact, she expressed her dislike of Paragon in her second visit as mentioned above. She had her own lodgings at 4 Sydney Place which “had views from the front windows over the public pleasure of Sydney Garden” and, certainly, made her situation more pleasant (Lane 34). She also had the pleasure of strolling in the Royal Crescent and taking a beautiful drive. She shopped for the luxurious goods for which Bath was renowned and wrote about them in detail to Cassandra (Ross 163). From May 1801 to September 1804, no letters exist because Jane and Cassandra were always together during the Sydney Place years. Whether or not she enjoyed her life in Bath is difficult to tell. They later moved to a house in Green Park Buildings East, “a low-lying spot by the river that they had rejected three years earlier as being too damp” (Lane 36). They moved again to Gay Street and finally to Trim Street. Although it is undeniable that Austen preferred rural to urban life, she did not have a hostile attitude towards the city. Bath, after all, was both a pleasurable and a dull place for her. In addition, the prospect of living in Bath was a matter of being in the right place and associating with the right people.

The influence of Bath over Austen’s writing has been debated by critics. When one of Austen’s biographers, Ross, suggests that Austen’s years in Bath was “the most unhappy (and uncreative) period of her life”, she is representing the view of those who, by surmising from Austen’s inability to finish *The Watsons*, claim that Bath was largely to be blamed for her writer’s block. While there is some truth in this suggestion, William Somerset Maugham provides another interpretation. He calls attention to “[t]he most probable explanation” of Austen’s long silence, by which he is referring to the long interval between 1798 to 1809 when Austen wrote nothing but a fragment of

The Watsons, suggesting that she “was discouraged by her inability to find a publisher”(76). Margaret A Doody, in her “Introduction” to *Sense and Sensibility*, suggests that Austen might have been dispirited by the death of her father which resulted in her family’s financial precariousness. The story of *The Watsons* is very close to her own situation since it is about the condition of women who are subjected to the loss of their home; as Doody states: “*The Watsons*, left unfinished probably because she could not bear to continue it after her father’s death in 1805, deals directly with these conditions in a clerical family” (ix). While Austen’s settlement in Chawton Cottage, where solitude restored her artistic creativity and encouraged her writing, has been regarded as a sound interpretation of events, Maugham nevertheless proposes that Austen’s attempt at writing again can be understood more from an historical than personal perspective. Maugham took this argument from Professor Spurgeon’s lecture on Jane Austen delivered to the Royal Society of Literature. Professor Spurgeon, quoting the preface to *Original Letters from India* by Eliza Fay, made the suggestion that, from the 1790s to the 1810s Britain witnessed a considerable change in the reading public’s attitude towards female authorship. The preface indicates that the author had been encouraged to publish this particular work in 1782 but she had declined because the public opinion of female authorship was so hostile. Later, in 1816, Fay wrote:

Since then a considerable change has gradually taken place in public sentiment, and its development; we have now not only as in former days a number of women who do honour to their sex as literary characters, but many unpretending females, who fearless of the critical perils that once attended the voyage, venture to launch their little barks on the vast ocean through which amusement or instruction is conveyed to a reading public. (qtd.in Maugham 76-77)

Maugham concludes that the appearance of *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811 possibly resulted from the changing opinion of the reading public which held that “it was no longer outrageous for a woman to write” (77). Indeed, a survey of the fiction market in 1813, which reveals that 66 per cent of the new novels published were written by women (Garside qtd. in Miles 30), tells us about the growing acceptance of female authorship. Bath had very little effect, if any at all, on Austen’s literary production. It is however safe to conclude that not only the growing acceptance of female authorship but also Chawton’s peaceful atmosphere and, most important of all, her writer’s passion, contributed to the publication of her works.



(English man-o'war entering Portsmouth harbour, with Fort Blockhouse off her port quarter (unknown date) by Dominic Serres (1719 - 1793), retrieved from <http://www.sailing-by.org.uk>)

Whilst Bath owed its growth to its mineral waters and later to the “consumer revolution”, the English port towns emerged from the prosperity resulting from

international trade and especially warfare and the expansion of the Empire. They grew at a spectacular rate from the mid-eighteenth century to nineteenth century. Among them was Portsmouth on Portsea Island located on the south coast of England. Two separate cities were situated on this Island—Portsea, the site of the Royal dockyard and Portsmouth, where the Royal Navy was based. Portsmouth occupied the southwest corner of the island and served as the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. These two cities were surrounded by heavy fortifications and separated from each other by the Mill Pond (an inlet from the sea). Because these fortifications paralysed any further expansion of the city development had to be confined to outside the walls. Landport and Southsea became areas of new settlement but Southsea, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was nothing more than a small area dotted with a few stray houses. According to B C Thomas, during Austen's time, there were some 7,000 people in Portsmouth.

Unlike London which Austen frequently visited, and Bath, where she lived for five years, Portsmouth, to a certain extent, remained relatively unfamiliar to her. Austen visited her brothers there in the 1780s and 1790s (Thomas, "Portsmouth in Jane Austen's Time") but where and how long she stayed during her visits remains unknown. Her impression of the city is scarcely known. A few letters mention "Portsmouth", but none of them record any pleasure or disappointment. Austen must have felt disgusted by the dirtiness of Portsmouth, the result of the fortifications around the town forcing the construction of old and new buildings to be crammed together, clustering squalidly around each other and creating "a geography of narrows streets...and filthy ridden allies behind the genteel main streets" ("Portsmouth and its People"). Furthermore, "houses were badly built, with older houses allowing the damp in through dilapidated cellars and newer buildings being too quickly and shoddily made" ("Portsmouth and its

People”). Life for the poor, in particular, was extremely difficult. In addition, Austen’s attitude towards Portsmouth people can be gathered from *Mansfield Park*’s heroine, Fanny Price’s opinion: “[t]he men appeared to her all coarse, the women all pert, every body under-bred” (310).

Austen’s impression of Portsmouth lay in its connection with the home of the Navy which Austen greatly admired. Her last finished novel, *Persuasion*, is dominated by captains who are portrayed in a favourable light. As Louisa Musgrove tells Anne Elliot, she

burst forth into raptures of admiration and delight on the character of the navy—their friendliness, their brotherliness, their openness, their uprightness; protesting that she was convinced of sailors having more worth and warmth than any other set of men in England; that they only knew how to live, and they only deserved to be respected and loved.(83)

Brian Southam, in *Jane Austen and the Navy* (2003), suggests that “to a greater degree [*Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*] can be seen as forming a tribute to [her brothers] and to their service, a recognition that the nation’s security and success in the Long or Great War...was largely a naval achievement” (4). In addition, her nephew, Austen-Leigh, wrote in *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (1869) that his aunt showed “partiality for the Navy” and of “the readiness and accuracy with which she wrote about [the Navy]” (qtd. in Southam 7).

Indeed, Portsmouth as the home of the British Navy, attracted a number of tourists. It was fashionable in Austen’s time to visit Portsmouth to see the greatness of the British Navy especially at the dockyard. Portsmouth as a place that excited visitors and created for them a sense of nationalism will be discussed in detail in chapter IV.

Austen saw these cities as they really were. She perceived the dangers and vices of the city but she was not blind to these entertainments and civilised qualities. Not being a moralist herself, Austen neither had personal hatred toward the city nor any desire to pen warnings against urban immorality. In her novels, maturation and improvement, rather than seduction and moral degradation, usually ensue after a visit to the city as will be illustrated in the later chapters. In this chapter, it is crucial to explore the fictional representation of the city during the period considered to be the “English urban renaissance”.

For some critics, the growing complexity of urban experience had little effect upon the literary representations of the city (that is, London). It was obvious that London was celebrated for its economic prosperity, civilisation and even morality and such images were highlighted when it was pitted against other European capitals; but once it was juxtaposed with the English countryside it was condemned for its vice and immorality (Sussman 65). It appears that the traditional representation of London as the embodiment of vice and folly, in contrast to the virtuous countryside, persisted. As Sweet states: “The writers and moralists of the eighteenth century were the heirs to a long literary tradition which had always presented towns as centres of evil and vice” (223). Williams argues that there is such thing as “a myth functioning as a memory” (43) from which literature derives its representation of the city and the country in spite of any changes which have taken place in the city. These images have long been embedded in literature and have thus not only reproduced the rural-urban binary opposition but also served to consolidate its existence up to the present day.

Williams, however, notes significant changes in the eighteenth century London which directly affected the way in which literature portrayed this capital city. Williams

illustrates his argument by drawing examples primarily from poetry. James Thompson's series of four poems in *The Seasons* (1726-1730), he argues, represents "an interesting combination of new and old attitudes", showing not only a glorification of the country but also the celebration of industry and "a bourgeois sense of achieved production and trade with an Augustan sense of civilized order" (142-143). Voltaire also saw London as the symbol of progress and enlightenment. Emerging together with these improvements, however, were new kinds of danger such as mobs and intensified scenes of crime, victimisation and despair. Williams observes that "[o]n one hand, in polite literature, there was a new urbanity. On the other hand, in Hogarth and Fielding, Gay and Defoe, there was a darker reality²" (144).

Prior to examining the representation of the city in the genre of the novel, it is worthwhile looking at the rise of the novel and the growth of the city. The novel, as we know it today and as it is characterised by the representational mode that Ian Watts in *The Rise of the Novel* (1965) dubs "formal realism", emerged during the eighteenth century. It is true that there had existed literary prose before the eighteenth century but it lacked the elements of formal realism which centred upon particularity: "particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places" (Watt 31). Rejecting type characters, vague settings and times common in earlier prose work, the novel is

²These figures are known for depicting negative aspects of London. As Porter explains, "Henry Fielding exposed [London]'s vanity, deceits and cheats, and William Hogarth's capital – Newgate, the Fleet, Tyburn, Bedlam – was all disease and violence, filth, noise, falling buildings and fallen women, chaos, poverty, drunkenness, suicide, distress, disarray, infidelity and insanity. In the moral contrast drawn by Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness*, by [John] Gay's *Beggar's Opera* and by Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, London's sordidness forbids any would-be idealization of the city as the cradle of refinement" (197).

a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms (Watt 32)

Novels then were written according to “a set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel, so rarely in other literary genres” (32) and aimed to show the authentic report of life or represented “real life”.

Watt famously argues that the emergence of the novel was made possible due to the rise of the middle class. Adding to the existing aristocratic readership, the growing middle ranks forged a new and most powerful audience for the novel, a literary genre which represented reality in both a form and content easily recognisable to them and, to a large degree, similar to their lives as opposed to the previous works of romance which dealt with the lives and adventures of kings and knights. The public reading of the novel also expanded to the lower class not only because the novel was easy to read but also because literacy in general increased, although not spectacularly. The change in the market in which public demand, not the patronage system, drove literary publication also contributed to the rise of the novel.

The rise of the middle class was indispensable to the rise of the novel and also crucial to this rise was the emergence of the city. Novelists such as Daniel Defoe and Eliza Haywood, as Sussman argues, needed a new literary form to describe “the emerging cultural, social, and economic practices of eighteenth-century London to an audience eager to learn about the new world in which they lived” and they “turn[ed] to the emerging forms of prose fiction in their accounts of individual adventure in

London” (69). *Moll Flanders* (1722), for example, is arguably a product of Defoe’s fascination with metropolitan spaces and his interest in “the anonymity of the crowd” both of which created “a distinctly urban setting” (Sussman 73). In addition, the fact that novels portrayed a recognisable life of the middle class in a familiar place made the city a popular setting in many novels since the majority of the middle class resided in the city.

Critics draw attention to the gendered representation of the city which reveals a complex representation of it in fiction. Any exploration of the fictional representation of London in the eighteenth century suggests a broad difference between that written by men and women. The male established convention exploited the negative aspect of London as its narrative was usually associated with crimes and criminals which some critics consider to have been the root of the mid-nineteenth century ‘Newgate’ fiction, stretching from the work of Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding to those of Charles Dickens and W M Thackeray (Landau 121). It is interesting to note here, as Linda Bree suggests in her “Introduction” to Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*, that the huge vogue for biographical and autobiographical accounts of criminals, particularly in London, was “prompted by the prevalence—or at least, the increasing fear—of crime in the rapidly growing metropolis” (x). One of the greatest novelist of the eighteenth century, Samuel Richardson, and other writers such as Henry Mackenzie may be exceptions since their works belong to the genre of the sentimental novel. However, these fictions, particularly Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747-8), which represents London as a place of sexual and social ruin for the heroine, participate in the traditional male narrative of urban depravity and crime. On the other hand, the female urban tradition, which was established in the latter part of the century, focused upon the polite consumer culture of

London society as exemplified by the works of Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth and who were considered by some critics to anticipate the nineteenth-century silver-folk school of the novel (Landau 121). In these typical female narratives of London, which concern its positive and pleasurable aspects, London society is predominantly pleasurable and polite. Although various forms of danger, vice and corruption pervade the scene, they present no real danger to the protagonist. It can be concluded that the city in literature written during the eighteenth century to the time of Austen, and even beyond, became ever more complex.

It can be observed that “the city” in English literature in the period before the eighteenth century signified London. In both Jacobean City and Restoration City comedy, “the city” generally signified the metropolis and, more often than not, specifically the City, the commercial and financial centre of London (Miles 44). Whilst “the city” in the eighteenth century fiction still predominantly referred to London, it did not necessarily mean only London as other provincial and spa towns had been seen to grow into cities during this period. London and the other cities together define and co-create the complex image of the city in the eighteenth century. That is, the image of the city as a place of ills and vices on the one hand and of pleasure and civilisation on other became linked not only to London but also to other cities. Sweet argues that the negative image of London in, for instance, William Blake’s “London” in *Songs of Experience* (1794) depicts “the despair of urban life, which was to become associated not just with London, but with large cities all over the country” (227). Likewise, the positive image of the city as a pleasurable centre of society can be found in Bath where its society is portrayed as no less vibrant than London’s in *Evelina*. “The city” in eighteenth-century fiction is therefore the town, as opposed to the country or as classified by historians

such as Borsay and Sweet. Thus, “the city” or the image of the city discussed in this thesis is not confined to London but also includes other cities.

When it comes to Austen and the representation of the city, Francis Burney deserves special attention here, not only because her works had the most immediate influence upon Austen but also because they set the trend for the female tradition of city representation from her most successful novel *Evelina* (1778) onwards, where the thematic significance of “a young lady’s entrance into the world” (as she subtitles this novel) is innovative. Burney’s bildungsroman of an innocent rural girl, who comes to the city to experience urban entertainments and, at the end of a novel, not only emerges with her virtue still intact but also having achieved considerable improvement, was rather inventive. As Burney shows, in a letter of December 1776 written to her publisher in order to persuade him to read her first volume:

[T]he plan of the first Volume, is the Introduction of a well educated, but inexperienced young woman into the public company, and a round of the most fashionable Spring Diversions of London. I believe it has not before been executed, though it seems a fair field open for the Novelist. (qtd. In Jones, “Introduction” xii)

Vivien Jones, in her “Introduction” to *Evelina*, suggests that Burney rejected the established narrative precedent of vulnerable women betrayed into social and sexual ruin in the city as in *Clarissa* (xiii). Burney’s *Evelina* is a story of “the young women of the 1770s [who] can actually learn to cope and survive when they make it into the world. This is different from Richardsonian tragedy, in which the heroine’s spiritual survival and triumph are measured by her readiness to die” (xiv).

Austen, who maintains a balanced view towards the city, as illustrated above, and who is influenced by Burney, can be considered as both a female writer participating in the female urban tradition and as an eighteenth-century writer capturing the emerging positive aspects of the city in literature which Williams famously argues. Firstly, it should be noted that although Austen does not situate the city at the centre of her novels, the city becomes a setting for her plots and characters. She also represents the city as a polite and pleasurable society where folly and vice do not reign supreme, in contradiction to male writing and the sentimental novel tradition. In addition, Austen does not advocate alarmist warnings against urban dangers as moralists and moralising literature do. Her heroines even reach maturity through their “entrance into the world” as Burney’s heroines do. The only Austen’s novel with a vibrant representation of urban entertainments is *Northanger Abbey* and, here, the setting shifts from London to Bath. The settings of the other novels are predominantly rural but a considerable portion of the time that the characters do spend in the city is sufficient for an analysis of city life.

As shown above, twentieth-century criticism was fixated on the assumption that Austen was deeply suspicious of urban pleasures. Indeed, Austen’s biographers such as Jane Dwyer, Josephine Ross, Claire Tomalin and Deirdre Le Faye have pointed out Austen’s dislike of the city and particularly Bath, where her family spent five years. The literary critic Maggie Lane, who has studied the depiction of the city in Austen’s novels, asserts that London was a threat to country life while Ross argues that Austen’s heroines are suspicious of the supposed moral ills of the city. The negative portrayal of the city has been a tradition in literary interpretation and it has long been associated with vice and corruption as Raymond Williams proposes. Later literary critics, however, such as Celia A Easton and Paula Byrne challenge the previous reading of the

city as a place of moral corruption. While the former argues for Austen's "Urban redemption" in her rejection of Richardson's negative portrayal of the city, the latter illustrates the vibrant representation of Bath in her novels.

This thesis also aims to show the complex representation of the city in Austen's novels in light of the English Urban Renaissance which created a highly complex image of the city and changed the way in which the city was represented in eighteenth-century literature, particularly the novel. Austen, then, is a female writer belonging to the female tradition of city representation and a eighteenth-century novelist whose novels can be considered to present a complex representation of the city. The representation of the city discussed in the selected three novels is not only confined to the physical setting but also includes the exploration of urban and rural qualities and the influence of the city upon the country. Chapter II discusses the depiction of London in *Sense and Sensibility*. As *Sense and Sensibility* is agreed by many critics to be a counter-reaction to the sentimental novel, the representation of London in this work will be discussed in connection with the genre it satirises. The chapter aims to show that *Sense and Sensibility*'s conformity to the conventional portrayal of London in the sentimental novel is one way in which the novel is able to undermine and complicate such a portrayal in the sentimental novel at its own expense. Chapter III deals with the representation of Bath in *Northanger Abbey*. The discussion moves away from the joyous portrayal of Bath which has already been extensively expounded to that of the collision between the country and the city. The chapter challenges the image of the city as a place of vice that endangers an innocent rural character by illustrating that any rural character who is subject to such dangers owes his imperilment as much to his weak rural qualities which make him prone to all kinds of danger as to any dangers that the

city may possess. The discussion of the city in Chapter IV focuses on Londoners and Portsmouth. While the first half engages with the disruption brought to the country by urban intruders, the second half will discuss Portsmouth in connection with the navy and the sense of national pride this city creates. The last chapter, which is the conclusion, will look at the portrayal of Bath in *Persuasion* as well as the idea of the growing city in *Sandition*.



CHAPTER II

LONDON IN ANTI-SENTIMENTAL *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*

The previous chapter briefly referred to the sentimental novel or the novel of sensibility³, a genre which can be considered to participate in the male depiction of London and as representing the enduringly negative portrayal of the city in literature in general. London in the sentimental novel, though it does not dwell much on the criminal aspects of the city, is portrayed as a place of moral degradation and danger where a young woman/man finds herself/himself in distress. This conventional representation reaches back to the earliest sentimental novels in English literature by Samuel Richardson. By the time Austen wrote *Sense and Sensibility*, the public enthusiasm for the novel of sensibility had waned and Austen's novel is clearly not an example of the novel of sensibility in its heyday but rather offers a satire of the genre and participates in the debate about sensibility in the period. *Sense and Sensibility*'s portrayal of London, therefore, deviates from the novel of sensibility's conventions, not only

³ The sentimental novel was a popular genre of fiction that flourished from the 1740s to the 1770s. This particular genre of literature features scenes of the virtuous hero and heroine in distress. It demands emotional manifestations such as tears and trembling from both its characters and readers. Sentimental literature is part of the "sentimentalism" which characterised the movement in philosophy, politics and the arts and which was based on the belief or hope in "the natural goodness of humanity ... manifested in a humanitarian concern for the unfortunate and helpless" (Todd 7). Thus, sentimental literature's prime concern was to evoke pity and tenderness in its readers since moved individuals were thought to possess morality, good heartedness and delicate feelings, all of which were considered essential to a humane society. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* is regarded as the first major sentimental novel. His work played a crucial role in establishing the trend of sentimental fiction (Latimer 61). Janet Todd also notes that the term "sentimental novel" and the term "novel of sensibility" can be used interchangeably although slight differences can be discerned. The sentimental novel was, most commonly, written during the 1740s and 1750s and it "praises a generous heart and often delays the narrative to philosophize about benevolence. The novel of sensibility, increasingly written from the 1760s onward, differs slightly in emphasis since it honours above all the capacity for refined feelings" (8).

because it is a satire (this point will be discussed later) but also because Austen was influenced by Burney's (female) portrayal of polite London and she herself did hold not a hostile attitude toward the city. This chapter will discuss the portrayal of London in *Sense and Sensibility* by looking at this novel as an anti-sentimental novel.

At the time when *Sense and Sensibility* was published in 1811, the sentimental novel had become exhausted after repeated attacks from its earliest appearance. Only a year after the publication of the first sentimental novel, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, by Richardson in 1740 the literary market witnessed an emergence of anti-sentimental or "AntiPamelists" works⁴. This is because the so-called first wave of counter-reaction lashed out against the virtue and morality Pamela upholds as well as the physical manifestations of sensibility she displays. Henry Fielding's *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* (1741), is the earliest of these counter-reactions. As a first and direct response to *Pamela*, it purported to the truth behind the life of Pamela who is, in fact, lascivious and scheming, pretending to be virtuous by playing hard to get, only to entrap her master. A similar satire can be found in Eliza Heywood's *The Anti-Pamela; or Feign'd Innocence Detected* (1741). A less parodic version is John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748-1749), commonly known as *Fanny Hill*, which narrates, with pointed references to *Pamela*, the life of a prostitute who is at the end

⁴ The term "Antipamelists" was first used by Dr Peter Shaw in *The Reflector* (1750) in which he noted that the publication of *Pamela* created "two different Parties, Pamelists and Antipamelists... Some look upon this young Virgin [Pamela] as an Example for Ladies to follow...Others, on the contrary, discover in it, the Behaviour of a hypocritical, crafty Girl, in her Courtship; who understands the Art of bringing a Man to her Lure". (qtd. in Gooding 109) A D McKillop in *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist* (1936), however, argues that Shaw's assertion is a plagiarism of a passage from the dramatist Ludvig Holberg's *Moral Thoughts* (1744) (Gooding 109).

also rewarded with a husband and a fortune. However, regardless of the continuous backlashes against the sentimental novel, its popularity remained throughout the 1770s. Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) was very popular and the translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* into *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* (1774) proved to be an immense success in England.

Roughly, after the 1780s, the sentimental fiction was increasingly and heavily criticised. The later wave of the backlash, apart from its satire of Richardsonian virtuous heroines, highlighted the drawbacks of sensibility as well as supremacy of "sense". Janet Todd, in *Sensibility: An Introduction* (1986), suggests that works with titles similar to *The Curse of Sentiment* (1787) or *The Illusions of Sentiment* (1788) appeared frequently throughout the 1780s and 1790s (144). Todd explains that the hero of sensibility "turned out to be either isolationist and in retreat from the metropolitan sources of power or fragile in its contact with the worldly and the predatory" while the heroine was "often reclusive, melancholy or doomed" (129). By the 1790s a number of major novelists had marked "the selfishness, irrationality and amorality of the cult of sensibility" (Todd 144). In addition, the manner employed by the anti-sentimental novelists to diminish the significance of sensibility was the glorification of its binary oppositional quality "sense". Maria Edgeworth's *Letters of Julia and Caroline* (1795), epitomises this fashion, as Edward Copeland illustrates:

In Edgeworth's novel one sister is assigned the role of rationality and the other the role of uncontrolled sensibility. The rational heroine finds her reward in love and material wealth at the conclusion; the sister with acute sensibility falls into a series of bad decisions, disappointments and punishments. (li)

Sense and Sensibility was also recognised at its early reception as such. One anonymous reviewer in *Critical Review* (1812) considered *Sense and Sensibility* as belonging to the later wave of the sentimental novel backlash, pointing out that Marianne, as representing the heroine of sensibility, suffers a great deal from her extreme sensibility and that the novel “furnishes a most excellent lesson to young ladies to curb that violent sensibility which, too often, leads to misery, and, always, to inconvenience and ridicule” (152).

There has been debate whether *Sense and Sensibility* is meant to be a satire or can be viewed as a satire. It is noteworthy to mention here that Austen did write a satirical novella of the sentimental novel called *Love and Freindship* [sic] (1790) which is her juvenile story. *Sense and Sensibility* clearly differs from *Love and Freindship* in its representation of sensibility. In BBC Radio 4’s discussion of sensibility, Professor Hermione Lee from Oxford University suggested that one important issue the novel plays with is “the relationship and contrast of sense and sensibility” and Austen’s biographer Tomalin argued that the novel is a “debate” about sense and sensibility. Nevertheless, both agree that Austen does not attack sensibility nor condemn Marianne who represents the heroine of sensibility and that the concept of sense and sensibility is treated with a degree of complexity. It is thus fair to state that *Sense and Sensibility* is neither an example of the sentimental novel in its heyday nor does it belong to either the first or the second wave of backlash. The novel can be variously described as a “counter-reaction”, “backlash”, “anti-sentimental novel” or even a “satire” in the sense that it engages in some ways with the literary tradition of the sentimental novel, whether to satirise, to complicate or to debate. What concerns this thesis is the fact that *Sense*

and Sensibility is a counter-reaction allowing the novel to re-examine London as the city crucial to the suffering of a protagonist in the sentimental novel.

As the primary concern of the sentimental novel is to teach “its consumers to produce an [emotional] response equivalent to the one presented in its episodes” (Todd 4), it usually casts its archetypal characters, either the sensitive man or the virtuous woman, in the vicious world of the large city where the former finds his sensitive feelings wounded by urban scenes of distress and the latter finds her virtue destroyed. This tradition of the negative portrayal of London reaches back to one of the earliest sentimental novels, *Clarissa* (1748), by Richardson, for, as Celia A Easton notes, the “seduction of country innocents was a popular theme in Richardson’s day” (125) and as Vivien Jones "Introduction" has remarked the established narrative of vulnerable women betrayed into social and sexual ruin in the city is essential to the “Richardsonian tragedy” (xiv). London, forming either one half of or an episode in the sentimental novel, was clearly a place of vice and ruin and the sentimental fiction deliberately exploited the negative side of London, as Todd puts it:

Sentimentalism was rather at odds with the capital... In mid-century literature, London was frequently the place of vice and frivolous pleasure; in later decades it stood also for social malice and economic greed. The average sentimental novel, opposing vice and virtue, took the virtuous hero to the horror of London; it then allowed him to escape into the rural provinces to find a happy ending.

(14)

Indeed, placing the sentimental protagonist in corrupt London society was a way in which the novelists could exploit scenes of urban distress over which the protagonist, not necessarily a victim of urban vice himself/herself, could weep as a part of his/her

display of virtue and as part of the authors' attempt to make the readers cry. Mackenzie's hero in *The Man of Feeling*, for instance, cannot help but weep over the inmates of the Bedlam asylum and at the miserable story of the prostitute whom he happens to meet. London is also a place suitable for creating sympathetic scenes of virtue in distress in which a heroine is left to sexual and social ruin, necessarily generating anguishing scenes for the readers, again, to weep over. Easton argues that, in *Clarissa*, the hero-villain of the novel, Robert Lovelace, knows that London "will best assist his villainy" (126), in his attempt to seduce the heroine; as Lovelace writes to his friend, "A prince begging for her upon his knees should not prevail upon me to spare her if I can but get her to London" (qtd. in Easton 126).

Sense and Sensibility owes much of its complex representation of London to its being a counter-reaction against the sentimental novel, a work written by a woman and therefore participating in the female tradition of writing about London, as well as a work written by Austen whose attitude toward London was not hostile. This chapter will look at the portrayal of London in *Sense and Sensibility* as a part of the backlash against the sentimental novel, showing the ways in which the novel follows the convention set by the sentimental novel, only to undermine it. That is, London, in *Sense and Sensibility*, appears as a place which is inhabited by disagreeable people whose behaviour contributes to the series of miseries the sentimental heroine, Marianne, has to encounter and where the shocking revelation of Willoughby's true character intensifies her agony. *Sense and Sensibility* registers all these incidents only to turn them into the salutary experience necessary to Marianne's education and maturation. As the discussion of the thesis concerns the way in which London affects the heroine of sensibility, the main focus will be on Marianne.

Sentimental novelists take their heroes and heroines to the city where their delicate feelings are wounded through their encounter with urban vice and danger. *Sense and Sensibility* conforms to this tradition only to undermine it. The Dashwoods' neighbour, Mrs Jennings, invites Elinor and Marianne to accompany her to London in order to avoid being affected by the ennui of winter and to experience the urban pleasures. Marianne, seeing the chance to meet Willoughby there after their abrupt separation, accepts Mrs Jennings' invitation which Elinor consequently agrees to as well. In London, Elinor and Marianne encounter a set of disagreeable people ranging from Mrs John Dashwood and Mrs Ferrars to Mr Robert Ferrars, all of whom possess different unpleasant urban characteristics which greatly contribute to Elinor's and Marianne's unhappiness.

The winter season⁵ is significant to the plot as it draws rural characters to London. It was a tradition of the rural gentry to spend their winters in London and this explains why Mrs Jennings asks Elinor and Marianne to accompany her to London at this time of year and why the Dashwood sisters' encounter their relatives Mr and Mrs John Dashwood who have also come to London for the season's entertainment. The Dashwood sisters therefore cannot avoid meeting their relatives either in public or private places. The first to be discussed is Mrs John Dashwood, an urban character whose behaviour adds to the unpleasant urban experience of the sisters. Mrs John Dashwood has never liked the Dashwood women, viewing them as poor relatives.

⁵ The London season coincided with the sitting of Parliament which began after Christmas and ended in mid-June. During the Parliamentary sessions which lasted for the said months, London provided entertainment at full swing for the members of both Houses and their wives. The season, thus, was a popular period for the rural gentry and the upper class who needed to be entertained by urban variety.

When her husband proposes that she invite the Dashwood sisters to stay at their house, he tries to convince his wife that “the expense would be nothing” (189) in order to lessen his wife’s resistance. His wife, however, is startled by the proposal and immediately protests:

‘I do not see how it can be done,’ said she, ‘without affronting Lady Middleton, for they spend every day with her; otherwise I should be exceedingly glad to do it. You know I am always ready to pay them any attention in my power, as my taking them out this evening shews. But they are Lady Middleton’s visitors. How can I take them away from her?’ (189)

Her reasoning here seems appropriate but her husband’s is more valid. Lady Middleton would not be affronted because Elinor and Marianne are Mr John Dashwood’s nearest relatives and it is a matter of “propriety” (189) to invite them. Mrs John Dashwood, regardless of her short acquaintance with the Steele sisters, who are related to her simply because Edward used to be under their uncle’s tuition and who, perhaps, may not be in town for much longer, instead invites them. Her invitation, however, has nothing to do with any desire on her part to promote the Steeles to society, they are simply used to downplay the importance of the Miss Dashwoods. After the engagement between Edward and Lucy comes to light, the Steele sisters are immediately driven out of the house. Because of her hatred of the Dashwood sisters she subtly uses Lucy very hardly to undermine the Dashwood sisters’ importance and, by doing so, her mischief is far more damaging than her mother’s since it destroys both Lucy and Elinor. Her manipulation clearly declares her to be one who is characterised by hypocrisy, pretentiousness and selfishness, all of which are generally considered to be urban traits in the context of the convention of both the sentimental and eighteenth-century fiction.

Mrs John Dashwood's mother, Mrs Ferrars, is more obvious in displaying her dislike towards the Dashwood sisters. Mrs Ferrars is introduced to them at the first party at the Middletons' house. When Austen first describes her, she makes it clear that "[Mrs Ferrars] was not a woman of many words: for, unlike people in general, she proportioned them to the number of her ideas; and of the few syllables that did escape her, not one fell to the share of Miss Dashwood, whom she eyed with the spirited determination of disliking her at all events" (174-175). Mrs Ferrars must have been previously informed by Mrs John Dashwood that Elinor is the object of her son's affection, therefore, she instantly decides to despise Elinor on first sight. She then directs all her attention at Lucy with the aim of downplaying Elinor's importance. At the same party, Mrs Ferrars even unveils her "cold insolence [of] general behaviour to [Elinor]" (177) by audaciously disregarding Elinor's painting and praising Miss Morton's at Elinor's expense (177). The narrator declares, after the party, that Elinor has seen enough of Mrs Ferrars' "pride", "meanness" and "determined prejudice against herself" (178). Elinor later makes a sound assumption regarding Lucy being so "honourably distinguished" (175), concluding that it is simply because "she [is] *not Elinor*" (179). Mrs Ferrars is also severe in her punishment of her own son, Edward, whom she disinherits because he refuses to break his engagement with Lucy. She becomes even worse when she, enthralled by Lucy's wonderful series of flattering remarks, forgives her younger son, Robert, for marrying the very same woman whom she had denounced in every possible way.

It is interesting that Mrs Ferrars is only seen in London. Although she does pay a visit to Edward and Elinor in Dorsetshire, her visit is performed offstage, which implies that her presence in the country does not deserve to be mentioned. This is

because she comes only “to inspect the happiness which she [is] almost ashamed of having authorised” (285) and to show “the make-believe of decent affection” (285) towards them. Her visit is far from sincere and compassionate. In addition, her urban character, which is loaded with mean spiritedness and insolence, is in total contrast with the rural happiness and simplicity represented by the marriage of Edward and Elinor. Austen thus highlights rural happiness by reducing Mrs Ferrars’s visit to a short description and refusing to quote any of her speech. Not only is she a person who rarely speaks but if she does, her words must be seen to have contributed nothing to Elinor’s happiness. As John Mullan in *What Matters in Jane Austen?: Twenty Crucial Puzzles Solved* (2013) argues, Austen’s “declining to quote a character is a kind of diminution of him or her” (141). Unlike John Dashwood’s visit and his congratulatory remarks to Edward and Elinor which are performed sincerely, not a single word is heard from Mrs John Dashwood, who accompanies her husband. Although Mrs Ferrars eventually forgives Edward, it is not cordially done at all and the familial reunion at the end of the novel is rather forced.

Robert Ferrars is the least disagreeable London character but best epitomises the London beau whose chief concern lies in fashion. The very first description of Robert’s character comes from Lucy’s observation, “I fancy he is very unlike his brother—silly and a great coxcomb” (110). Robert is first introduced at Sackville-street, Piccadilly, choosing a then fashionable accessory: “He was giving orders for a toothpick-case for himself, and till its size, shape, and ornaments were determined, all of which, after examining and debating for a quarter of an hour over every toothpick-case in the shop, were finally arranged by his own inventive fancy” (165). Indeed, a tooth-pick case was a part of the Regency beau’s display of appearance. Elinor later

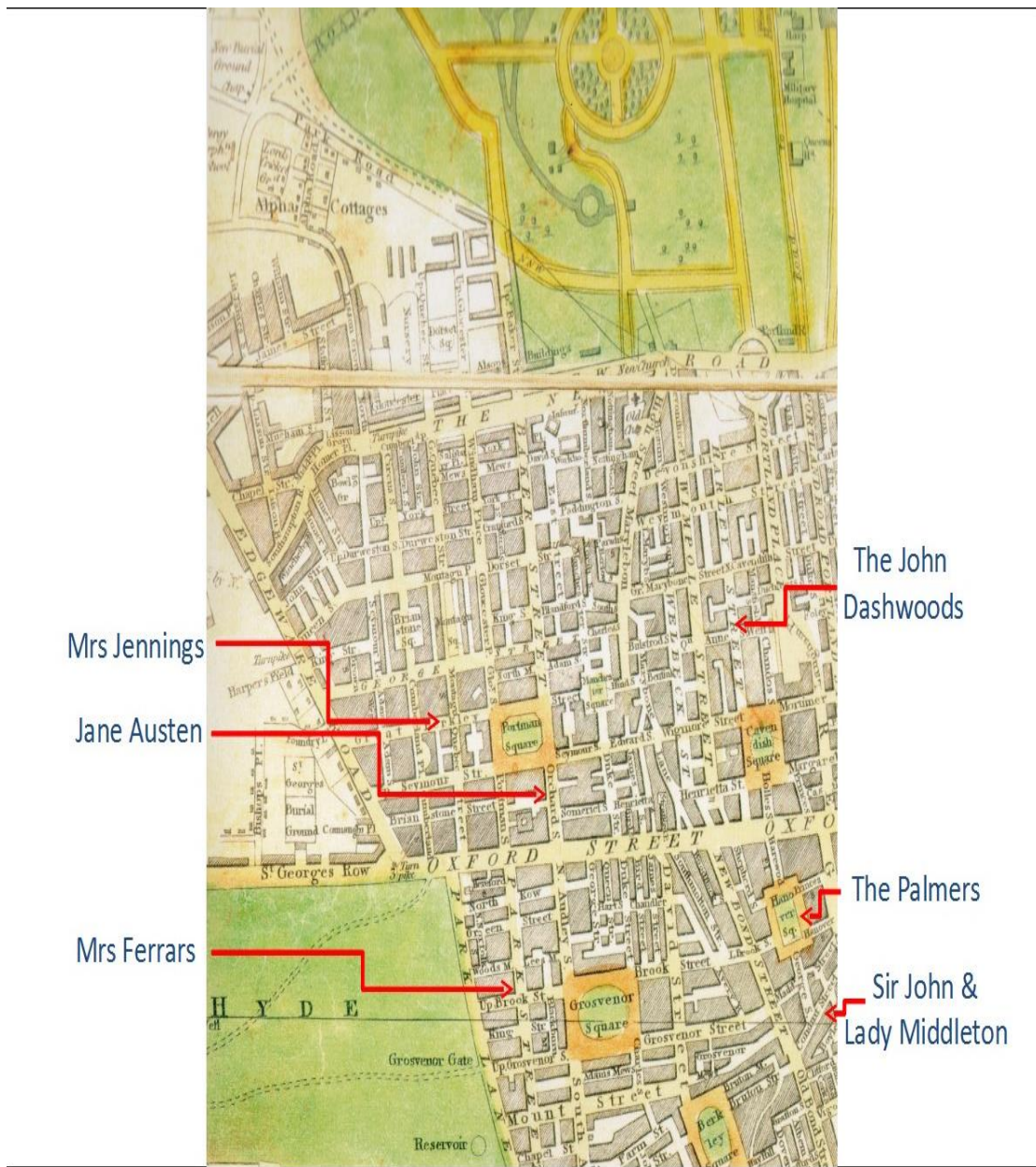
meets Robert at a musical party where, after seeing the pompous way in which he addresses her, she concludes that “he [is] exactly the coxcomb she [has] heard him described to be by Lucy” (187). His conversation with Elinor later on reveals that he considers himself superior to his brother because of the public education he [Robert] had been given. On learning that the Dashwood girls live in a cottage, he readily expresses a desire to own a cottage located “within a short distance from London” (188) and relates to Elinor his conversation with his friend Lady Elliott to whom he has given recommendations concerning the construction and decoration of a cottage:

‘...There is not a room in this cottage that will hold ten couple, and where can the supper be?’ *I* immediately saw that there could be no difficulty in it, so *I* said, “My dear Lady Elliott, do not be uneasy. The dining parlour will admit eighteen couple with ease; card tables may be placed in the drawing room; the library may be open for tea and other refreshments; and let the supper be set out in the saloon” (189).

The conversation ends when Elinor “agree[s] to it all, for she [does] not think he deserve[s] the compliment of rational opposition” (189). Robert here concentrates upon how a cottage could be arranged to hold a party for many people instead of on what simple life in a country cottage would be like. Claire Lamont reads this passage as a “satire on the use of the term ‘cottage’ by rich people who pay lip-service to pastoral simplicity without forgoing their usual conveniences” (321).

Apart from the negative portrayal of these people whom the Dashwood sisters encounter, London topography is also effectively exploited in the setting. Austen makes sure that Elinor and Marianne are located close to these repulsive characters in the area of the West End so that visitations and interactions which generate unpleasant

experiences for them can be frequently arranged. Laurie Kaplan suggests that Elinor and Marianne, to the greater degree, suffer from this proximity (*“Sense and Sensibility: 3 or 4 Country Families”* 202). The heroines are confined in the same part of the town as their disagreeable relatives such as Mrs John Dashwood, Mrs Ferrars and their affable but intolerable friends the Middletons. The address of the Middletons, in particular, is the perfect place for those meetings which Sir Middleton loves. Their residence on Harley Street, which facilitates a brief walk from Berkeley Street, is close to the Palmers’ (see Figure 1). Consequently, the very first party is thrown by the Middletons and this occasion proves to be dreadful for the Dashwood sisters. Elinor and Marianne are first induced to meet a new acquaintance, Mrs Ferrars, who is introduced only to show her pride, insolence and mean spiritedness towards them, for example, by praising Miss Morton’s painting while looking at Elinor’s. The party ends with Marianne shedding tears because of Mrs Ferrars’ ill-treatment of Elinor, who unhesitatingly pronounces that “a farther connection between the families [is] undesirable” (178). Although they do occasionally manage to refuse later invitations, when they are obliged to meet their acquaintances, they always encounter unfavourable situations resulting from “mismatched guest lists of family members” (Kaplan, “3 or 4 Country Families” 200). Marianne, on one occasion, complains to Edward, “[w]e spent such a day, Edward, in Harley-street yesterday! So dull, so wretchedly dull!” (182) Owing to the proximity of these houses, Elinor and Marianne are constantly forced to interact with those whom they have the least desire to.



(Figure 1 shows the locations of the main characters who reside close to one another in the same area of the West-End (Map by Edward Langley (1809) and modified by Kaplan, "London as Text")

Regardless of London's vast demographic area, the space for the genteel is limited while the country allows more liberty. Back in Devonshire, Elinor and Marianne are able politely to avoid interaction with undesirable people by simply sneaking out to take a walk upon seeing them coming. Mrs Jennings once jokingly inquires, "Where is Marianne? Has she run away because we are come? I see her instrument is open". Elinor replies, "She is walking, I believe" (80). In the country, women are able to take a walk alone in the neighbourhood and Marianne and Margaret first come across Willoughby when they are out walking alone. Such an escape is impossible in London since what surrounds them is not open country but endless blocks of building. In addition, the urban space for genteel women was not as capacious as the geographical space would lead one to expect. In Austen's period, women had to be chaperoned. They could not simply go outside on their own in the city and they had to choose proper places to visit. There were certain parts of the town where genteel women were not supposed to be seen such as in the precincts of Charing Cross to Drury Lane where streetwalking prostitutes were ever-present. Even within the area of the West End, the famous high-class brothel at King's Place located around St James was to be found.

Not only is Marianne an Austen country heroine but also the heroine of sensibility who is particularly fond of nature (this explains why she finds London so unendurable). Todd suggests that in the sentimental novel, "the country became a literary fashion, a state where mind harmonized with natural beauty" (14-15). This idea, as Watt suggests, can be seen as the literary reaction against Thomas Hobbes' outlook of humans as self-centred and self-seeking beings and John Locke's theory

of the *tabula rasa*⁶ (“*On Sense and Sensibility*” 49). As a revolt against Hobbes and Locke, this notion, which was also influenced by Lord Shaftesbury’s doctrine of natural benevolence and the innate moral sense, held that “man’s outgoing impulses obviously included the sensations of imaginative and aesthetic pleasures; these also were unselfish feelings, and as a result an intense love both of nature and arts somehow became indicators of the individual’s moral superiority in general” (49). Marianne’s rhapsody over dead leaves and addresses to beloved places, in one way, “were part of the stock in trade of the heroine of sensibility” (Moler qtd. in Lamont 304). Austen also repeatedly illustrates the positive influence of nature over Marianne. Distressed at her permanent departure from Norland, Marianne and her family, upon seeing a view of Barton Valley, are imbued with “cheerfulness” from “a pleasant fertile spot, well wooded, and rich in pasture” (22). Dejected and low-spirited by the departure of Willoughby, who has left Devonshire, Marianne can “wander about the village of Allenham” (63) and have “solitary walks and silent meditations” (63-64). When she leaves London for the Palmers’ house in Cleveland, she feels “all the happy privilege of country liberty, of wandering from place to place in free and luxurious solitude” (229).

Not only is London a place of abominable people but it is also the location for the shocking revelation of Willoughby’s venal character that torments Marianne. Marianne’s sole purpose in London is to renew her relationship with Willoughby. It is in the London assembly rooms that Marianne becomes

⁶ “[T]he notion that at birth the individual had no innate propensities, and that his moral and social being must therefore be regarded merely as the result of the impressions inscribed by the external environments on the originally “clean slate” of his mind during the process of growing up” (Watt, “*On Sense and Sensibility*” 48)

acquainted with new Willoughby whose behaviour leaves her “dreadfully white” (132) while he appears cool and indifferent to her. She is left horrified and saddened. She receives his letter only to discover it to be “imprudently cruel” and “proclaim[s] its writer to be deep in hardened villainy” (137) since it has been written to refute their previous relationship. Peter Sabor finds this letter not only cruel but “the ugliest in any of Austen’s novels⁷” (“Good, Bad, and Ugly Letters”). Willoughby later informs Elinor that the letter was forged against his will by his fiancée, Miss Grey, but the critic Elisabeth Lenckos finds this account highly questionable asserting that “it is not clear how Miss Grey could have seized Marianne’s letters or forced Willoughby to write his infamous rejection without his collusion” (“ . . . [I]nventing elegant letters’ ”). After all, Willoughby is indeed a “hardened villain” (247) as he later admits; he must be so or else Marianne would not be thrown into the state of misery inflicted upon her by his radical change. London reflects the dark side of Willoughby, revealing his cold and heartless persona.

Indeed, Willoughby is an indebted, hardened villain who needs to convince a rich woman to marry him (this explains his coolness to Marianne in the assembly rooms) but in the country his venality is suppressed and his compassion highlighted. The contrast between the rural and urban Willoughby is made clear here. He is first

⁷ Sabor notes that the style of the letter is insulting because of its formality, beginning with “My dear Madam,” and ending with “Your most obedient humble Servant”. Such phrases were typical of business letters and correspondence between strangers. Juliet McMaster, as quoted in Sabor, also observes that the language carries an implicit reference to prostitution. Willoughby writes, “It is with great regret that I obey your commands of returning the letters, with which I have been honoured from you, and the lock of hair, which you so obligingly bestowed on me” (136). McMaster suggests that “[t]his piece of Marianne’s body stands for the body itself. To write that she ‘obligingly bestowed’ it is to suggest something like prostitution” (qtd. in Sabor)

introduced at Barton as the prince on a white horse who rescues a damsel in distress. His character is pleasant, open and affectionate while he is in the country and everybody loves him. These qualities, arguably, are genuine and Elinor, who passes judgment on his character, acknowledges a “disposition naturally open and honest, and a feeling, affectionate temper” (251). He is reintroduced to the country after his marriage of convenience with Miss Gray. He comes to Cleveland to visit Marianne who is seriously ill. Even though by now he is a “hardened villain”, he is not portrayed as being cool and impolite as he was in London but is, rather, sympathetic. He confesses to Elinor that, although his initial intention to court Marianne originated from mischief, he is sincerely attached to her. He had even thought of proposing to her. Watt observes that Willoughby’s confession, though it looks “rather stagy”, “underlines the suffering that comes from letting economic sense dominate the dictates of sensibility” and suggests that “reason and experience have brought him, by a devious route, toward a sorrowful understanding of the need to reconcile the two claims” (53). It is also in the country that he attempts to clear himself of the charge of abandoning Eliza Williams whom he had left to ruin. The country brings out the best in him.

Willoughby’s venal revelation is necessary for Marianne’s misery since it is a part of London’s contribution to the heroine of sensibility’s despair. Marianne must go to London to learn this truth and then sink into a state of sadness. Tomalin argues that the ball at which Marianne almost has a fit is presented more as a “tragedy” than a mere “embarrassing social occasion” for “the tragic shadow” leads her to a severe illness (157). Having returned from the assembly room rejected by Willoughby, Marianne hardly steps out of the house but wretchedly confines herself to her bedroom where all she can do is to “[walk] from one window to the other, or [sit] down by the fire in

melancholy meditation” (128). Marianne is obliged by her mother to prolong her stay in London. Mrs Dashwood is hardly aware that “by requiring her longer continuance in London ... deprive[s] [Marianne] of the only possible alleviation of her wretchedness, the personal sympathy of her mother, and doom[s] her to such society and such scenes as must prevent her ever knowing a moment’s rest” (160). “Such society and such scenes” can refer to both the constant interactions with those disagreeable people and the scenes of London’s turmoil and restlessness that do not offer her “a moment’s rest”. In addition, a consideration of Marianne’s intense love of nature and solitude, which is a part of the sentimental heroine’s attribute, reveals the great extent to which her life is in misery under such circumstance.

Marianne’s “invaluable misery” and “tears of agony” (229) affect her more than she is aware of. As a heroine of sensibility who is supposed to be susceptible to other people’s feelings, Marianne is overwhelmed by a strong flow of emotion to the point where she is unable to perceive what those around her really feel, even her closest companion, Elinor. Watt argues that Marianne’s “pride in [her own] sensibility” can be seen as “a form of selfishness” (“On *Sense and Sensibility*” 50). After being jilted, Marianne indulges herself in excessive grief. She even considers her misery to be ineradicable. Constantly feeding her sensibility with crying and lamenting, she sees only her pain and misjudges Elinor’s calmness, mistakenly maintaining that Elinor “must be happy” and “*can* have no grief” (138) since Edward loves her when Elinor is, in fact, suffering to a great degree from the promise to keep secret Lucy’s engagement. As Watt explains: “Austen...makes us observe that Marianne’s selfish indulgence of her own sufferings makes her insensitive to Elinor’s...[S]uch indulgence [results] in a parasitical exploitation of others. Marianne forces Elinor to take over all the unpleasant

tasks of practical life” (50). Marianne’s selfishness prompted by her excessive grief is Austen’s way of criticising the heroine of sensibility. In addition, Watt shows how “selfishness associated with sensibility” was previously parodied in her piece of juvenilia, *Love and Friendship*, in which the heroine proudly admits that “[a] sensibility too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Freinds [sic], my Acquaintance, and particularly to every affliction of my own, was my only fault, if a fault it could be called” (qtd. Watt, “*On Sense and Sensibility*” 50).

So, the agonised and miserable Marianne is blind to the remedy that the city can offer for her suffering. The positive portrayal of London in *Sense and Sensibility*, as opposed to the negative one of sentimental novels, is presented in such a way that the variety of London is given credit for its ability to alleviate sadness or is, at least considered, as such by certain rural characters of moral worth. Willoughby considers urban entertainment as the perfect means to eliminate his misery when he confesses, “I say awakened, because time and London, business and dissipation, had in some measure quieted it [my remorse]” (247). It should be noted that his is an example that needs to be taken as the cautionary tale of a morally-loose individual since Willoughby is corrupted thanks to his reckless association with London. Willoughby’s case in fact reiterates the traditional representation of London as a place of moral corruption in sentimental fiction. As the aunt of Harley, the protagonist in *The Man of Feeling* warns Harley before he sets off to London, “[Her instructions] consisted mostly of negatives, for London, in her idea, was so replete with temptations that it needed the whole armour of her friendly cautions to repel their attacks” (Mackenzie 7). However, for those possessing moral strength, London’s variety simply is considered to offer them pure joy. Easton suggests that Austen “challenge[s] the moral disdain” with which the

sentimental novelists, such as Samuel Richardson, “inflicts his city scape” (121). Readers are also assured that Austen’s heroines, who are “morally complex”, will not be corrupted by their contact with the city because she trusts in their merit to stand up against a variety of urban evils and vices (Easton 121). When Mrs Dashwood learns that Marianne is in distress caused by her separation from Willoughby, she tells her to prolong her stay because “a variety of occupations, of objects, and of company, which [cannot] be procured at Barton, [will be] inevitable there, and might yet, she hope[s], cheat Marianne, at times, into interest beyond herself, and even into some amusement” (159-160). Mrs Dashwood, by telling Marianne this, shares the same method of misery-healing with Willoughby. They both consider London’s diversions as an effective remedy for distress. Mrs Dashwood trusts Marianne’s merit and the presence of Elinor as a moral and social guide for her sister also confirms the rationality of her request that they prolong their stay in London. It should be noted that even though Marianne fails to be diverted from her misery, it does not follow that London’s diversion is less effective or that Marianne is virtuous and hence not to be diverted. Marianne after all is a heroine of sensibility who needs to be portrayed weeping throughout the novel regardless of the various ways in which she is entertained and consoled.

In showing London’s variety in a favourable light, Austen makes *Sense and Sensibility* distinctive from the sentimental novel’s flat portrayal of London. The novel rejects the simple opposition of the country as a place of virtue and the city as one of vice. In fact, Austen’s immediate precursor, Frances Burney, had acknowledged the complexity of London when her rural character, the Reverend Arthur Villars, in *Evelina* tells Evelina, “we may doubtless find as much goodness, honesty, and virtue, in London as in the country” (Burney 98). Mrs Dashwood thinks similarly. Metropolitan society,

for Mrs Dashwood, is endowed with both vice and pleasure and a careful interaction with London will provide her daughters with advantageous and salutary experiences. Mrs Dashwood, upon being told of Mrs Jennings' wish to have Elinor and Marianne accompany her to London, immediately tells her daughters, "[i]t is very right that you *should* go to town; I would have every young woman of your condition in life, acquainted with the manners and amusements of London" (116). Mrs Dashwood's mention of "manners" can be taken as the polite and refined manners which London society and other urban societies were well-known for and which could be taught by associating with it. This is because London society is considered to be a school of manners where young ladies and gentlemen are *taught* by their introduction to an urban society where they are constantly required to meet new people and by their experience, for instance, in the assembly rooms where they were required to behave in accordance with the rules pertaining to socially acceptable decorum and propriety. In addition, the fact that Mrs Palmer is excited by Bond Street indicates that Austen does justice to London's vibrancy. Mrs Palmer, "whose eye [is] caught by everything pretty, expensive, or new; who [is] wild to buy all, [can] determine no more, and dwell[s] away her time in rapture and indecision" (123) is an example of the positive portrayal of London's vibrant shopping. Although it can be argued that Mrs Palmer here is ridiculed by Elinor and Marianne, her "born-to-shop" mentality strongly recalls Austen's *shopaholic* occasions in London, one of which was mentioned in a letter dated September 15, 1813 in which Austen described herself ordering an expensive cap and later becoming even more extravagant, when she received five pounds from her brother Edward, by hurrying back to Layton and Shear's.

Sense and Sensibility's portrayal of London as a place of education ultimately complicates its representation of London as a place of moral corruption. The novel follows the sentimental novel's trend of deliberately exploiting London's horror through the episode of the heroine's unfavorable association with her relatives and with Willoughby's revelation in order to create scenes of distress. This series of sufferings is so intense that Marianne at one time cries to Elinor, "Had I died,—it would have been self-destruction" (262). Tomalin speculates from this particular line that Austen may have allowed Marianne to die in an early version (157), her argument being drawn from the popular depiction of the sentimental protagonist's suicide, as she suggests:

Marianne's self-destructive impulse fit[s] the ethos of that decade. The linking of love with suicide became an important theme in literature from the publication of Goethe's hugely influential *Sorrows of Young Werther*; it appeared in English in 1779 and produced a crop of imitations. (158)

Austen, however, does not usher her heroine to a fatal ending as the published version shows and the novel adheres to the traditional portrayal of London only to exploit those scenes of distress. This allows the novel to derive lessons from these miserable events that will eventually provide its heroine of sensibility with the constructive experiences necessary for her maturity. The irony thus lies in the fact that no matter how atrocious and vicious London may be, through her contact with it, Marianne is transformed⁸.

Marianne is initially introduced as a heroine of sensibility "who [is] sensible and clever; but eager in everything; her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation.

⁸ The thesis follows one of the popular arguments that a number of critics have suggested about the need to balance sense and sensibility and about the acquisition of the quality that each heroine lacks.

She [is] generous, amiable, interesting: she [is] everything but prudent” (6). It is clear that Marianne is sensible and intelligent but eagerness and imprudence dominate her “sensible” qualities. She is also portrayed as romantic and imaginative and tells Elinor that she can only be happy with a man who “enter[s] into all [her] feelings; the same books, the same music must charm [them] both” (14). She talks a great deal of Edward’s lack of “spirit” and “fire” (14) and pays no attention to old Colonel Brandon’s courtship. At Barton, she finally meets her man, Willoughby, who rescues her in a fairy-tale-like manner. The narrator then describes Marianne’s fanciful reflection: “[h]is person and air [are] equal to what her fancy [has] ever drawn for the hero of a favourite story.... Her imagination [is] busy, her reflections [are] pleasant” (33). She spends time with him as happily as possible, disregarding the notions of prudence and propriety. Apart from her romantic sensibility, Marianne’s prejudice leads her to mistake Mrs Jennings’ attention to her as insincere behaviour. She is also irritated by Lady Middleton’s haughtiness and pretentiousness. Marianne suffers from the intolerableness of the former and vanity of the latter but little does she know that there are people who are worse than these two ladies that she will later see in London and that her ungoverned feelings, which paint her romantic imagination and feed her prejudice against Mrs Jennings, are destructive.

It is largely owing to London that Marianne becomes acquainted with the dangers of sensibility and the advantage of a balance between sense and sensibility. On being informed of Edward and Lucy’s engagement and Elinor’s knowledge of it only then does Marianne come to realise how “barbarous” (199) she has been to her sister whose suffering has been equal to her own. The next scene sees Marianne’s attempt to behave sensibly when she is dining with Mrs Jennings but not, as yet, her complete acquisition of sense:

She performed her promise of being discreet, to admiration. — She attended to all that Mrs. Jennings had to say upon the subject, with an unchanging complexion, dissented from her in nothing, and was heard three times to say, ‘Yes, ma’am.’ — She listened to her praise of Lucy with only moving from one chair to another, and when Mrs. Jennings talked of Edward’s affection, it cost her only a spasm in her throat. — Such advances towards heroism in her sister, made Elinor feel equal to anything herself. (199)

Marianne’s self-composure here is a result of the lesson she has learnt from Elinor. In other words, Elinor’s discretion and propriety maintained during her internal turmoil, sets an example for Marianne to follow. It seems as if one sister learns from the other. However, it is worth noting that it is in the city that Elinor shows much more of her strength than she does in the country and consequently it is here that Marianne perceives much of her sister’s sense. In addition, the major illumination occurs during the course of her illness as she, herself, admits: “[m]y illness has made me think—It has given me leisure and calmness for serious reflection” (262). She now sees the danger of ungoverned sensibility and what she has ungratefully done to Mrs Jennings—“I saw that my own feelings had prepared my sufferings, and that my want of fortitude under them had almost led me to the grave” (262) and confirms Elinor, “my feeling shall be governed and my temper improved” (263). Marianne’s grief is mainly depicted in London where the environs greatly affect her feelings and where her feelings are further blighted by her association with hostile people and where, also, she is away from her mother’s and nature’s comfort. It can be stated that London confronts her with the real world where sense is required to deal with any unpleasantness from disagreeable people, with disappointment in her love and to stand up against the cruelty of the world.

It is one of the strong arguments of the opponents of sensibility that women possessing too much of sensibility are prone to “fantasy and withdrawal” (Doody, “Introduction” xii). It is, thus, socially inconvenient for them to stand up against what they have to endure or when they have to encounter the cruelty of reality (Doody, “Introduction” xii). Marianne’s illness, which has developed from her first emotional breakdown in London’s assembly rooms to the time in Cleveland, leads her to the gradual acquisition of sense. Finally, she becomes sensible when she agrees to the prudent marriage with Colonel Brandon.

At the end of the novel, Marianne learns to counterbalance sense and sensibility. Even though it is not entirely London that is responsible for Marianne’s acquisition of sense, the city does play the most crucial role. Had she not been in London, associated with her relatives and discovered the truth about Willoughby, she probably would not have learned how destructive her ungoverned sensibility is when she is pressured to sadness and disappointment. As Tomalin points out that Marianne’s “key characteristics” becomes “...her vulnerability” once she is in London and that “one theme of the book is that survival in society means you cannot afford to live with Marianne’s openness” (156). With London providing Marianne with salutary although painful experiences, *Sense and Sensibility* clearly challenges the long established tradition of the sentimental novel’s representation of London since it was not only written by an author who has a neutral attitude toward London and whose portrayal of the city follows the female traditional representation of London but, also, after the sentimental novel of the mid century had gone out of vogue.

CHAPTER III
REDEEMING THE CITY IN *NORTHANGER ABBEY*: THE RURAL
HEROINE IN BATH

The country has long been the object of satire and mockery. From Raymond Williams' observation, rural traits such as "backwardness", "ignorance" and "limitation" (1) were targets of ridicule for urban entertainment in late sixteenth and seventeenth-century drama. Such examples can be found in both Elizabethan and Jacobean city comedy. The mockery became more severe in Restoration comedy where "the contrast between 'country' and 'town' is commonly made... Written by and for the fashionable society of the town, the plays draw on evidently anxious feelings of rejection, or a necessary appearance of rejection, of the coarseness and clumsiness, or simply the dullness, of country life" (Williams 52). These rural stereotypes were the subject of scornful laughter and thus exploited for urban entertainment.

This sardonic representation of the rustic and the uncouth aims not only at urban entertainment but also seeks for the improvement of the rural gentry themselves. Perceiving the necessity for civilising and rescuing the rural gentry from coarseness, Richard Nash⁹ composed numerous satirical entertainments, including a puppet-show, in which he stigmatised the dress and habits of the country gentry at their own expense (Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance* 261). As Oliver Goldsmith in *The Life of Richard Nash* (1762) observed, after Nash's mission had been launched with his satirical entertainments during his years as Master of Ceremonies at Bath, "from that

⁹ Richard Nash (1674-1761), popularly known as "Beau Nash", was a celebrated dandy and prominent arbiter of fashion in the eighteenth century. He rose to fame after becoming Master of Ceremonies at Bath in 1704 and Tunbridge Wells in 1735. He played a vital role in making Bath a leading fashionable spa of the country.

time few ventured to appear at the assemblies in Bath in riding-dress: and whenever any gentleman, through ignorance, or haste, appeared in the Rooms in boots, Nash... would tell him, that he had forgot his horse” (23). People, specifically the gentry or those from the emerging middling ranks, travelled to towns to be entertained and, whether they liked it or not, were forced to be civilised through their participation in a variety of polite urban entertainments. As Peter Borsay asserts, “many towns came to be seen as fountains of civilization... [and] towns were perceived as agents for spreading polite behaviour throughout the nation” (*English Urban Renaissance* 261).

In the genre of the novel of manners in which Austen is often categorised by literary critics, rural mockery continued but it is clearly different from that found in Restoration comedy. In Burney’s *Evelina* which is regarded as the earliest novel of manners, the protagonist Evelina belongs to the gentry and is not a Restoration comedy stock character such as the coxcomb or the country bumpkin. She is not mocked for her rural manner and dress but for her ignorance. Ignorant of the conventions and behaviour of urban society she makes a series of *faux pas* which expose her to social ridicule. The heroine of *Northanger Abbey* who, as critics suggest, is greatly influenced by Burney’s *Evelina*, is also ridiculed in this novel. Far from being treated as a Restoration comedy country clown, Catherine’s mockery comes close to *Evelina* but is not exactly the same. Austen, at the very beginning of the novel, writes of her heroine: “No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be an heroine” (3). Catherine is the opposite of what a heroine is supposed to be. Not only is she plain but she is also “inattentive, and occasionally stupid” (4). Because she is in “training for a heroine” from the age of fifteen to seventeen her appearances begin to mend and she also reads “all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those

quotations” (5). Nevertheless, Catherine is still stupid and she barely understands the quotations which she recites (as will be demonstrated later). She neither draws nor sings well, in other words, she is not accomplished and she is innocent, credulous and intellectually limited. Unlike the playwrights of Restoration Comedy, Austen does not mock her heroine for her rustic appearance and manner but for her other rural characteristics such as her naivety, credulity and ignorance.

It is only after Catherine enters into urban society that her rural characteristics become the object of mockery. By bringing her to Bath, Austen shows how her rural heroine fares poorly when encountering both urban vice and urban intellect. Her celebrated rural qualities of “innocence” and “simple virtue” (1) that are mentioned by Williams, when set against urban vice and hypocrisy, turn out to be a weakness, bringing her trouble and allowing her to be deceived and manipulated. Her scorned rural traits such as her ignorance of the social rules (of courtship) and a lack of both scholastic and worldly knowledge, which are in accordance with Williams’ stereotypical attribution of “ignorance” and “limitation” (1) to rural people, make her an object of fun when juxtaposed with urban learning and sophistication. Even her relationship with the hero, Mr Tilney, can be seen as a form of rural exploitation. Urban society is as much a place of entertainment as a place of mockery and deception for the heroine.

Mockery and deception of a rural character have often rendered a negative image of the city. Rural characters, particularly women, whether they are from the genteel, the middle or the lower ranks, are all victims of urban vice. A closer examination of *Northanger Abbey*, however, reveals that Austen does not totally condemn urban society for its malicious treatment of her heroine but points out that her

heroine's rural characteristics, which endow her with vulnerability, foolishness and ignorance, are also an invitation to that kind of mistreatment. The complexity of these representations lies in the fact that Catherine's exposure to the city and to various forms of urban vice and deception also plays a crucial role in her improvement.

To begin with, Catherine owes her innocence and ignorance to her young age and family. She is not only the youngest but also the least informed of all Austen's heroines. Before she leaves for Bath, her mother fails to give her "advice of the most important and applicable nature" or "[c]aution against the violence of such noblemen and baronets as delight in forcing young ladies away to some remote farm-house" (8). As Austen puts it,

Mrs. Morland knew so little of lords and baronets, that she entertained no notion of their general mischievousness, and was wholly unsuspecting of danger to her daughter from their machinations. Her cautions were confined to the following points. 'I beg, Catherine, you will always wrap yourself up very warm about the throat, when you come from the Rooms at night; and I wish you would try to keep some account of money'. (8)

Her father says not a word and her neighbours, the Allens, with whom Catherine travels to Bath also fail to suggest any precautions. Indeed, Mrs Allen, who is supposed to be Catherine's chaperone, is even less sensible than Catherine, caring as she does only for muslin and gowns.

Upon her arrival at Bath, Catherine is introduced to her brother's friend, John Thorpe, who decides to like her immediately on learning that she is probably the presumptive heiress of the wealthy but childless Allens. The novel also makes clear that his sudden decision to like her originates from his "vanity and avarice" (234). John

Thorpe, who lives “near London” (22), is thus presented as a lesser version of the Restoration comedy rake¹⁰ or, at least, a fortune hunting rogue in Bath who is trying to capture an innocent and rich rural girl. In keeping with his plan to secure himself a potential wife, Bath, which has the reputation of being a marriage market, is the perfect revue for flirtation and admirably fits the execution of his scheme.

John Thorpe is persuaded to like Catherine not only by her presumed wealth but also because of her innocence and ignorance of the courtship custom that allow him to advance his attempt. In other words, Catherine innocently displays several signs of encouragement to him. As Deidre Le Faye explains, the decorous rules governing courtship in Austen’s period,

Unrelated young men and women were not supposed to be left alone together in private, and when in public the slightest expression of interest or concern for a member of the opposite sex—‘being particular’—could be taken by onlookers as an indication of matrimonial intentions. Conversations therefore, had to be exceedingly discreet at all times and much had to be interpreted from facial reactions alone—stares, frowns, blushes, tears. (*Jane Austen: The World of Her Novels* 113-4)

Catherine, unknowingly, disregards this aspect of social conduct and her very first conversation with John Thorpe paves the way for his advancement:

“My horse! Oh, d—— it! I would not sell my horse for a hundred. Are you fond of an open carriage, Miss Morland?”

¹⁰ A rake is a Restoration comedy stock character that is morally loose, licentious and prodigal and is known for his seduction of young women before leaving them to social and financial ruin.

“Yes, very; I have hardly ever an opportunity of being in one; but I am particularly fond of it.”

“I am glad of it; I will drive you out in mine every day.”

“Thank you,” said Catherine, in some distress, from a doubt of the propriety of accepting such an offer.

“I will drive you up Lansdown Hill tomorrow.”

“Thank you; but will not your horse want rest?” (37)

Although Catherine here questions the propriety of accepting his offer, her prompt acceptance is already taken by John to be an invitation. When her brother, James, asks her, after her talk with John, if she likes him, she replies, “I like him very much; he seems very agreeable” (40). James may have carried her compliment to John who feels flattered and encouraged. She also accepts John’s pre-engagement offer for dancing which can be taken as an indication of her interest in him. Catherine displays her most obvious sign of amenability when she agrees to take a ride on a gig alone with him to Claverton Down. Her agreement clearly indicates her partiality for him—a situation similar to the occasion in *Sense and Sensibility* when Marianne’s ride with Willoughby draws both speculation from other people and criticism from Elinor. In addition, Mr Allen later warns Catherine of the impropriety of going out alone in an open carriage with a man: “As far as it has gone hitherto, there is no harm done,” said Mr Allen; “and I would only advise you, my dear, not to go out with Mr. Thorpe any more” (95). Even if a man and a woman are discerned to be romantically attached to each other, as is the case with James and Isabella, it is still indecorous to go out together. Catherine, after having been informed of this by Mr Allen, needs to “explain the indecorum of which [Isabella] must be as insensible as herself; for she considered that Isabella might

otherwise perhaps be going to Clifton the next day” (95-6). Catherine’s invitation of John to her home, though logically grounded, is mistaken by him as her final invitation to make a proposal and, as Le Faye argues, “[readers] would have been well aware, as the naïve Catherine was not, that John Thorpe was clumsily announcing his intention to call at Fullerton to ask her father’s permission to marry her” (*Jane Austen: The World of Her Novels* 114). Indeed, there cannot be anything else John Thorpe is expected to do with obvious signs of invitation from Catherine, together with his desire of her wealth.

Having got the green light from callow Catherine, John Thorpe, to the point of being manipulative tries, flamboyantly, to ensnare her. Her innocence clearly lands her in trouble but it should be noted that, when compared to other Austen’s anti-heroes, John Thorpe is the least villainous in his manipulation; the real villain of the novel being, perhaps, General Tilney. Thorpe neither indulges in a scandalous elopement like Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice* nor does he seduce a girl like Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility*. In an attempt to get Catherine, who already has an engagement with the Tilneys, to accompany him to Blaize Castle, he lies to her that he has seen the Tilneys riding off in the opposite direction to her house. When John’s party plans to go to Clifton and after hearing Catherine’s resolution to stay, he immediately informs the Tilneys, on Catherine’s behalf, that she is already engaged with his party and thus unable to take the walk with them as promised. John frequently and shamelessly disregards both minor and major rules of propriety. He is ready to lie about anything at any time and, in addition, is not ashamed when he is found out. For instance, Catherine reproaches him for lying about the Tilneys only to hear that he “defend[s] himself very stoutly, [declaring] he [has] never seen two men so much alike in his life, and [will]

hardly give up the point of it having been Tilney himself' (78). He manipulates these situations in order to win Catherine's heart and, once again, her innocence and ignorance which unknowingly signal her acquiescence to John place her in a number of difficult situations. These two rural traits are apparently innocuous when she is in the country but in the city, where she has to meet all kinds of people with a variety of intentions, they simply do her harm.

Catherine's naivety and ignorance that mistakenly encourage John and need to be eliminated. One of her limitations, which is evident in her inability to comprehend linguistic complexity as is exemplified by John Thorpe's contradictory accounts, Mr Tilney's wit and, notably, by Isabella's double entendre, is especially the result of her own lack of social sophistication as well as her family's use of simple language. As readers are told,

Her own family were plain, matter-of-fact people who seldom aimed at wit of any kind; her father, at the utmost, being contented with a pun, and her mother with a proverb; they were not in the habit therefore of telling lies to increase their importance, or of asserting at one moment what they would contradict the next. She reflected on the affair [John Thorpes' contradictory opinion about James' gig] some time in much perplexity, and was more than once on the point of requesting from Mr. Thorpe a clearer insight into his real opinion on the subject [of the condition of James' gig]; but she checked herself, because it appeared to her that he did not excel in giving those clearer insights, in making those things plain which he had before made ambiguous. (56)

In this particular scene, Catherine asks John Thorpe if James' gig is going to break down only to hear that the gig is in bad condition and that "[she] might shake it to pieces

[herself] with a touch” (55). After Catherine implores him to stop their carriage to inform James about this, John Thorpe abruptly assures her that “the carriage is safe enough, if a man knows how to drive it” (56). It is clear that Catherine is unable to understand the ambiguity of the remark and what is happening at a linguistic level because of her family’s plainest use of language. John Thorpe makes use of the possibility of James’ gig breaking down only to show off his knowledge of carriage equipment and he later reassures Catherine of the unlikelihood of any such collapse because he does not want to slow down his carriage to wait for them. Margaret A Doody argues in her article “Turns of Speech and Figures of Mind” that “Catherine’s chief trouble is her ignorance of figures of speech” (168). Her father’s fondness of puns—“linguistic doubling, complexity without significant tenor” (Doody 167)—increases her inability to discriminate. It is likely that she does not fully understand her father’s puns and her mother’s predilection for proverbs or “plain statement[s] of wisdom, [of] overtly significant tenor without complexity” (Doody 167) also clearly contributes nothing at all to her understanding of language complexity.

At the age of seventeen, her linguistic competency seems to have improved since she demonstrates an ability to quote lines from great poets such as Thomas Gray, James Thompson, Alexander Pope and William Shakespeare; however, arguably, she recites what she herself barely understands since the quotations from these authors contain various figures of speech¹¹. Because of her inability to comprehend figures of speech, Catherine simply repeats them. As Doody argues:

¹¹ From Pope, she learnt to censure those who

“bear about the mockery of woe.”

From Gray, that

Gray's flower "born to blush unseen" in the *Elegy [Written in a Country Churchyard]* stands for the poor individual and his or her talents; James Thompson's "young idea" being taught "how to shoot" like a plant exhibits mental vigor under a teacher's care; Shakespeare's poor beetle and dying giant are equalizing comparisons, while the figure of "Patience on a monument" is a double transformation of personification and active metaphor. Poetic comparisons have made no dent on Catherine; they are merely lines she can repeat. ("Turns of Speech" 168)

Austen's comment on Catherine's quoting of these poets is also satirical since she refers to it as an act of reading "all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations" (5). It is an extraordinary reference which recalls the various

"Many a flower is born to blush unseen,
"And waste its fragrance on the desert air."

From Thompson, that—

—— "It is a delightful task
"To teach the young idea how to shoot."

And from Shakespeare she gained a great store of information—amongst the rest, that—

—— "Trifles light as air,
"Are, to the jealous, confirmation strong,
"As proofs of Holy Writ."

That

"The poor beetle, which we tread upon,
"In corporal sufferance feels a pang as great
"As when a giant dies."

And that a young woman in love always looks—

——like Patience on a monument
"Smiling at Grief." (6)

occasions when a typical eighteenth-century heroine recites sentimental lines like these simply because she is a sentimental heroine whose love of nature and poetry must be made evident. Catherine is also fairly incompetent in her drawing and, as Austen asserts, “her houses and trees, hens and chickens” are “all very much alike one another” (4). Her drawing is similar to her thinking process in that she simply cannot discriminate (Doody, “Turns of Speech” 169).

It should be noted that, in Catherine’s case, the relationship between literary taste and time is inconsequential. It is not the case that Catherine has not learned long enough or is not old enough to acquire taste and be able to truly appreciate the poems which she quotes. It is unknown when she started to learn but it was presumably at around seven or eight years old (Austen herself was sent to school at the age of seven) and by the time Catherine enters into Bath she is seventeen. At the age of seventeen she is old enough, by the standards of her time, to be able to acquire taste and intellectual sophistication. She simply does not want to cultivate it and the novel makes clear that she objects to those books which require thinking and reflection; all she cares to read is Gothic fiction. When we consider Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*, the issue of Catherine’s age and acquisition of taste becomes even more irrelevant. Younger than Catherine, Marianne who is only sixteen has fine taste in her love of nature and poetry, probably the finest taste of all Austen’s heroines.

In Bath, Catherine spends the main part of her daily life with Isabella whose language is generally agreed by critics and readers alike to be exaggerated, ambiguous and pretentious, and thus, characteristically urban. This is not only because Isabella is hypocritical and more urban than her brother since she prides herself in her ability to “compare the balls of Bath with those of Tunbridge; its fashions with the fashions of

London” (22) but also because she speaks the kind of pretentious language that is normally considered to belong to urban people as opposed to the plain one usually spoken by rural folk. William Wordsworth makes the contrast between these two styles of language clear in his “Preface” to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in which he praises the “simple and unelaborated expressions” of rural people whose “ranks in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse [are] less under the influence of social vanity” (61). In her representation of Catherine’s inability to comprehend language complexity due to “the sameness and narrow circle” of Fullerton society in which she lives, Austen appears to encourage her heroine to leave her narrow society for a wider one so that she can be familiar with various ways in which language is used but certainly without being affected by urban hypocrisy. Austen’s view seems to concur with Burney’s *Evelina* which highlights its heroine’s association with a wide variety of people in the city where she is made acquainted with a wider range of idiolects. As Vivien Jones suggests, the story of *Evelina*’s ‘entrance into the world’ is “a series of encounters not just with new places and events but, overwhelmingly, with a wide variety of unfamiliar people and their idiosyncratic uses of languages” (“Introduction” ix). The small community which Catherine is from does not prepare her for all kinds of speech difference or pretensions and this is why she is so easily fooled.

Isabella’s ambiguous and hypocritical language evidently confuses Catherine. For example, when having waited for Catherine for only five minutes, she utters the hyperbolic remark, “Oh! These ten ages at least. I am sure I have been here this half hour” (28). Catherine innocently replies, “Have you, indeed!” and sincerely apologises, “I am very sorry for it” (28). Catherine tells Isabella of her visit to the Tilneys’ place

where she experienced, as Isabella later calls it, the “superciliousness” of the family.

Isabella expresses a contradictory account after hearing the story:

“Let me entreat you never to think of him [Mr Tilney] again, my dear Catherine; indeed he is unworthy of you.”

“Unworthy! I do not suppose he ever thinks of me.”

“That is exactly what I say; he never thinks of you. Such fickleness! (120).

Even though she misinterprets Catherine, Isabella cleverly manages to agree with her and throughout the rest of their intercourse we witness Isabella’s dominance in almost every conversation. Isabella knows how to manipulate language so as to make it agreeable to Catherine who will thus value her as her best friend.

While Catherine’s lack of linguistic competency (and social sophistication) leaves her unaware of what Isabella really means, her innocence and over optimism induce her to misjudge Isabella’s affected and nonchalant manners to other men and, also, her pretentious modesty. Isabella lies to Catherine saying that she cares for no man other than her brother James to whom she is engaged. However, while they are looking for some books in the circulating library, Isabella, who is aware that they are being observed by two young men, pretends to be irritated wishing to be rid of them but later orchestrates a plan to pursue them. At one time she praises herself for being the least worried about money: “my wishes are so moderate, that the smallest income in nature would be enough for me. Where people are really attached, poverty itself is wealth” (111). Nevertheless, when she learns how little Mr Morland is able to give his son, she expresses her disappointment and this rather perplexes Catherine. In addition, she responds to Captain Tilney’s courtship although she is already engaged to James. At one ball, she declares her wish to be seated all night but when asked to dance by the

Captain, she readily agrees, later explaining to Catherine that she had been so pressed by him and would have been able to find no peace if she had not yielded to his request. Mr Tilney, who sees through Isabella's character, informs Catherine, when she asks him to persuade the Captain to leave Bath in order to put an end to the danger of such an affair, that the woman's capitulation is far more to be blamed than the man's advancement. Mr Tilney, in other words, claims that the breach of the relationship between James and Isabella is because of the woman's indiscretion but Catherine ardently protests against Mr Tilney's accusation of her friend. In spite of having once been told by Mrs Allen that "[Isabella] is old enough to know what she is about" (96) and, by Mr Tilney, that she indeed knows what she is doing, Catherine still chooses to remain ignorant since she is completely deceived. Isabella's hypocrisy and manipulation have persuaded Marilyn Butler to align her with *Othello's* villain by calling her a "female Iago" because she comes so close to destroying both Catherine's and James' happiness (165).

While this chapter has so far shown the ways in which Catherine's innocence is exploited in the city, particularly by the Thorpes, it is General Tilney who most abuses her innocence by displaying his favouritism in order to secure her for his son. Naïve as she is, Catherine is completely unaware of his scheme. It can be stated that Catherine enters Bath innocently only to be victimised by the villain of the novel. General Tilney is a fortune hunter for his children and one of the most hypocritical and pretentious manipulators to be found in Austen. On being informed of Catherine's presumed wealth by John Thorpe, he immediately declares to John that she is "the finest girl in Bath" (86). He pays special attention to her even to the point of over-displaying his civility and hospitality and making her uncomfortable. The second meeting with the General

registers Catherine's anxiety: "in spite of [his] great civilities to her—in spite of his thanks, invitations, and compliments—it [has] been a release [for Catherine] to get away from him" (119). However, she is too naïve to doubt him and her simple virtue leads her only to believe in human goodness.

The General's "greatest kindness" lies in his invitation to Catherine to accompany his daughter to Northanger Abbey in the effort to secure Catherine for his son and to show her his considerable wealth and taste which may be a match for hers. Upon entering the house and perceiving Catherine's eyes surveying her surroundings, the General begins "to talk of the smallness of the room and simplicity of the furniture" (151-152). Such overt humility undoubtedly originates from his belief in Catherine being used to the largesse of the Allens'. In addition, his conversation with her is solely concerned with Mr Allen and his wealth. He first asks, while showing her the dining parlour, "[you] must have been used to much better sized apartments at Mr. Allen's?" (156) Although Catherine assures him that the Allens' is not large, it appears that the General thinks that Catherine is just being humble, politely praising his house at the expense of diminishing the Allens' grandeur since the narrator declares, "Mr. Allen's house, he [is] sure, must be exactly the true size for rational happiness" (156). In the kitchen garden, he again asks Catherine about Mr Allen's and by showing off his special hothouse for growing pineapples and by informing her that the piney has yielded only one hundred, the General actually boasts of his wealth because, in Austen's time, pineapples were difficult and expensive to grow and their price was very high. He feels equal to the Allens after witnessing Catherine's expression of surprise and is flattered by her acknowledgment of having never seen any gardens equal to his. To a large extent, he is able to deceive Catherine into thinking that he cares very little for money

and feels that the occupation of his children is far more important. With the exception of Catherine's excessive credulity about the General as a domestic tyrant and a murderer of his late wife, Catherine thinks well of him. Eventually, the incensed General, after discovering Catherine's real financial situation, drives her away from his house in a socially and morally unacceptable manner. Catherine is forced to leave in the early hours and to travel without company. Claudia L Johnson suggests that the General's expulsion of Catherine is more serious than it appears because such conduct "is grossly uncivil in the deepest sense, exhibiting insolence towards the inferiors, indifference to the good opinion of neighbours, and a contempt for the rules of hospitality, gentlemanliness, and decency, particularly toward women" (xxii). The General is simply a genuine urban threat for an innocent girl who is rich or presumed to be rich like Catherine.

Catherine's innocence and inexperience allow her not only to be deceived by Isabella's protean character and the General's unscrupulousness but also to be mocked when they are juxtaposed with the hero's sophistication and cleverness which may be considered an example of urban intellect. Catherine, as a young girl, was "often inattentive, and occasionally stupid" (4) and Austen makes it clear that, "provided that nothing like useful knowledge could be gained from [books], provided that they were all story and no reflection, she had never any objection to books at all" (5). Her childhood reading equipped her with no "useful knowledge" and "no reflection". Her ability to quote snippets from notable authors is shown to be only a product of memory not her understanding.

Throughout the novel the reader witness Catherine's naivety, ignorance and lack of social sophistication which are the objects of Mr Tilney's mockery and can be seen

as one way in which Austen explores urban ridicule of country limitations. At their first encounter at the ball, Mr Tilney engages her on the subject of journal keeping and the faults of female letter-writing. He tells her to keep a journal for the benefit of those whom she leaves behind (to learn about her life) and to improve her own “talent of writing agreeable letters” (17). Catherine, no doubt, takes this suggestion literally. Norman Page observes that Mr Tilney’s remark concerning female letter-writing and journal keeping is actually aimed at satirising the epistolary novel¹² (178). Catherine is oblivious to this reference because her knowledge of fiction is mainly confined to Gothic novels (most of which are not epistolary in their narrative style) although readers are informed of her reading of Samuel Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison*. The walk along Beechen Cliff again introduces Catherine to a long lesson centring upon “the incorrectness of language” (98). Catherine here fares poorly when Mr Tilney mocks her choice of phrase when she refers to Ann Radcliffe’s, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, as the “nicest book” (98), by which she means the best whereas Mr Tilney means the most neatly-bound. Her word choice here, again, indicates her lack of language competency. He next discusses with his sister the subject of drawing and the aesthetics of the picturesque about which Catherine knows so little and yet wishes to gain knowledge:

In the present instance, she confessed and lamented her want of knowledge; declared that she would give anything in the world to be able to draw; and a lecture on the picturesque immediately followed, in which his instructions were so clear that she soon began to see beauty in everything admired by him. (102)

¹² Referring to certain passages in the novel such as “Whether the torments of absence were softened by a clandestine correspondence, let us not inquire”, Page argues that a line such as this “refers to romantic exchange of letters [in many an epistolary novel] in ironic terms” and that *Northanger Abbey* could be described as an anti-epistolary novel (178).

Knowledge of drawing and the picturesque is considered to be one of accomplishments which Catherine is supposed to possess. Austen herself was “enamoured of Gilpin on the Picturesque at a very early age”, according to the “Biographical Notice of the Author” by Henry Austen (qtd. in Litz 13). In this novel, Mr Tilney who “[is] fearful of wearying [Catherine] with too much wisdom at once [...] suffer[s] the subject to decline” (102). The narrator here knowingly acknowledges Catherine’s lack of “wisdom” which makes Mr Tilney “suffer[s]” to continue the discussion. Catherine next addresses Miss Tilney; “I have heard that something very shocking indeed will soon come out in London” (102), by which she is simply referring to the new publication of a Gothic fiction while Miss Tilney is led to think of a “dreadful riot” (103). Though Mr Tilney calls his sister’s confusion “scandalous” (103) because she mistakes Catherine’s “clearest expressions” (104) concerning the latest release of a Gothic novel, Catherine’s limitation and ignorance are being ironically mocked. Miss Tilney’s misunderstanding is shaped by her knowledge of various historical and contemporary incidents in London by which, in this case, she may be referring to the Gordon Riots (1780), which were still fresh in people’s memory, or even the French Revolution whose “Reign of Terror” generated scenes analogous to Mr Tilney’s description:

a mob of three thousand men assembling in St. George’s Fields, the Bank attacked, the Tower threatened, the streets of London flowing with blood, a detachment of the Twelfth Light Dragoons (the hopes of the nation) called up from Northampton to quell the insurgents, and the gallant Captain Frederick Tilney, in the moment of charging at the head of his troop, knocked off his horse by a brickbat from an upper window. Forgive her stupidity. The fears of the

sister have added to the weakness of the woman; but she is by no means a simpleton in general. (104)

Catherine knows so little about riots or other matters and Mr Tilney's description here aims at teaching her the danger of the real world or of what has really occurred in the country rather than merely poking fun at his sister's misunderstanding.

Mr Tilney's reference to urban scenes of horror begot by riots seems to convey a negative image of the city that is both chaotic and threatening—indeed, as Williams points out, mobs and riots were new kinds of danger emerging in the eighteenth century. Austen however exploits this horrifying scene in a positive way. The Tilneys' knowledge of riots in London generates less of a negative image of the city than an enlightening of Catherine with a wider knowledge formed through the speaker's contact with London. With Miss Tilney's image and Mr Tilney's talk of a London riot, Austen is able to show that, through their association with the city, the Tilneys are knowledgeable and realistic in their approach to the world in which they live as opposed to Catherine who is not only engrossed with Gothic fictions but also limited to her small rural world.

Due to her lack of connection with the city where real pictures of both terror and horror can be seen and her preoccupation with the Gothic novel, Catherine judges reality through the lens of the Gothic, being able only to imagine episodes of horror in her world as she recognises them from Gothic fiction. To begin with, Catherine's tendency to judge reality through a Gothic lens leads her to retain her friendship with Isabella. Catherine meets Isabella whom she wishes to befriend and Jane Dwyer suggests that Catherine's strong need for Isabella as a friend and confidante is explicable: "Just as her need for adventure has made her susceptible to the charms of

gothic novels, her need for a friend has made her susceptible to the charms of Isabella Thorpe” (48). Catherine judges Isabella’s character by imagining her as one of the heroines she used to read about:

This charming sentiment, recommended as much by sense as novelty, gave Catherine a most pleasing remembrance of all the heroines of her acquaintance; and she thought her friend never looked more lovely than in uttering the grand idea. (110-1)

Catherine clearly fuses the real person Isabella, whose character is far more complex, with the one-dimensional Gothic heroine who is usually virtuous and helpless. By connecting Isabella to “a most pleasing remembrance of all the heroines of her acquaintance”, Catherine is unable to judge Isabella’s character impartially until she is able to “throw off her attachment to the simplistic gothic framework of good and evil” (Dwyer 48).

Catherine, in fact, oscillates between doubt and trust in Isabella’s friendship throughout the course of their relationship because of Isabella’s occasional revelations of her true character. The first glimpse of Catherine’s detection of Isabella’s lack of compassion for her sorrow occurs when Isabella blames the Tilneys for being late for an appointment instead of her brother, John Thorpe, who has lied to Catherine; as the narrator declares: “Catherine could almost have accused Isabella of being wanting in tenderness toward herself and her sorrows; so very little [do] they appear to dwell on her mind, and so very inadequate [is] the comfort she offer[s]” (80). In the very next scene when the Thorpes again urge Catherine to go to Clifton, Isabella, after hearing of Catherine’s refusal, reproaches her for choosing “strangers” over their “friendship” (89). Catherine again starts to question Isabella’s treatment of their friendship:

“Catherine thought this reproach equally strange and unkind. Was it the part of a friend thus to expose her feelings to the notice of others? Isabella appeared to her ungenerous and selfish, regardless of everything but her own gratification” (89). Regardless of the doubts and mistrust, however, their friendship is again strengthened by Isabella’s announcement of her engagement to James.

Catherine’s preoccupation with the Gothic not only leads her to see Isabella as a Gothic heroine but also causes her imagination to run wild at Northanger Abbey. En route to the Abbey, Mr Tilney teases Catherine by referring to those Gothic trappings such as a haunted chamber where she is to be lodged, a skeleton and the memoir of a sufferer, to name but a few. Mr Tilney’s narrative fuels Catherine’s imagination and she fully expects to see an old Gothic abbey similar to Udolpho. As it turns out, however, the Abbey is not Gothic at all but Catherine is still ignorant of this fact and even the Abbey’s interior betrays a Gothic setting with the “furniture in all the profusion and elegance of modern taste” (151). Later on Catherine sees her apartment that contains neither a tapestry nor a veil and its condition is “far from uncheerful” (152) but her curiosity is aroused by an old-fashioned black cabinet which she cannot resist exploring. In it, she finds what she believes to be the memoir of a sufferer but which turns out to be only a laundry bill. To a large degree, Catherine comes to realise “the absurdity of her recent fancies” (162) but, later, her Gothic illusion runs wild to the point of irrationality when she suspects the General of being a Gothic villain like Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Driven by her Gothic fantasy, Catherine gleans evidence from the General’s wish not to take a walk in his wife’s favorite shrubbery, his prevention of herself from examining of Mrs Tilney’s apartment and his staying up late at night, to support her suspicion of the General as a murderer or torturer who has

confined his wife to her room. Catherine, who suspects the General in the same way as Emily St Aubert suspects Montoni, summons up the courage to explore Mrs Tilney's bedchamber, as Emily does with Madame Montoni's, to find out the truth. At this point Catherine "start[s] at the boldness of her own surmises, and sometimes hope[s] or fear[s] that she [has] gone too far" (178). She realises her absurdity but the evidence, strengthened by her Gothic fantasy, leads her, nevertheless, to explore the room. Discovering that there is nothing there, she again realises her own folly. The moment of her awakening comes with Mr Tilney's reproach:

Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you. Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing, where every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay everything open? Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting? (187).

Mr Tilney's censure has a strong impact on Catherine by pointing out to her the reality of the world and the civilised nature of English society where law and order prevail. Catherine is completely disillusioned: "The visions of romance were over. Catherine was completely awakened. Henry's address, short as it had been, had more thoroughly

opened her eyes to the extravagance of her late fancies than all their several disappointments had done” (188).

Disillusioned with the Gothic world, Catherine next comes to learn that the General’s character, like Isabella’s, is not what it appears to be and that the real world in which she lives is as dangerous as the Gothic one. After the General has learnt that Catherine is not as wealthy as he had expected he orders her to leave Northanger Abbey at the earliest hour without a companion, a treatment that is grossly uncivil and cruel because travelling companionless for a long distance was extremely dangerous for a young woman at that time. When she learns about the cause of her dismissal, she realises that there is a person like Montoni in her actual life, a man who marries for money and who places her in a very dangerous situation by having her travel alone. Her claim to align the General with Montoni is, therefore, valid and, as the narrator concludes: “Catherine, at any rate, hear[s] enough to feel, that in suspecting General Tilney of either murdering or shutting up his wife, she [has] scarcely sinned against his character, or magnified his cruelty” (237).

It is obvious that Mr Tilney plays a crucial part in correcting Catherine’s faulty judgment and in ridding her off her Gothic fantasies; in other words, he teaches Catherine whose rural traits ironically turn out to be her best recommendation and capture his affection. Austen makes clear that “Catherine did not know her own advantages—did not know that a good-looking girl, with an affectionate heart and a very ignorant mind, cannot fail of attracting a clever young man, unless circumstances are particularly untoward” (102). Tamisha Johnson suggests that Catherine’s innocence renders her sweet while her lack of sense keeps her interesting to Mr Tilney (2). These characteristics charm Mr Tilney who has a propensity to educating women for, as he

himself admits, “a teachableness of disposition in a young lady is a great blessing” (164). Catherine’s limitations draw Mr Tilney to teach, improve and occasionally ridicule them. His teaching is both direct and achieved through mockery and no matter by whatever means his teachings are directed at Catherine, she benefits from Mr Tilney who plays a crucial role in increasing her maturity.

The courtship (and marriage) of Mr Tilney and Catherine, which involves both teaching and mockery from Mr Tilney and Catherine’s admiration for his immense knowledge, is rather unconventional and closer examination reveals them to be a form of rural exploitation for urban entertainment. The novel makes clear the origins of their love:

She was assured of his affection; and that heart in return was solicited, which, perhaps, they pretty equally knew was already entirely his own; for, though Henry was now sincerely attached to her, though he felt and delighted in all the excellencies of her character and truly loved her society, I must confess that his affection originated in nothing better than gratitude, or, in other words, that a persuasion of her partiality for him had been the only cause of giving her a serious thought. It is a new circumstance in romance, I acknowledge, and dreadfully derogatory of a heroine’s dignity; but if it be as new in common life, the credit of a wild imagination will at least be all my own. (232-33)

Austen recognises in their romance as “a new circumstance” due to their unconventional attachment. Conduct books warned a woman not to express her love for a man before he first had shown her signs of his affection¹³. It is “derogatory” on

¹³ In chapter V of *Northanger Abbey*, Austen writes, “as a celebrated writer has maintained ... no young lady can be justified in falling in love before the gentleman’s love is declared, it must

Catherine's part to break this conventional rule of propriety and first display "a persuasion of her partiality for him", nevertheless, she is rewarded with a husband and Katie Halsey suggests that the constitution of their unconventional romance also lies in Austen's ascribing "gratitude" to men. She argues that "social and literary conventions [see] gratitude as a respectable motivation for love in a woman, but cannot conceive of it ('it is a new circumstance in romance') as the motivation for men" (48).

Regardless of Austen's appending of "gratitude" to their relationship, this "new circumstance in romance" is highly unconvincing. Carson points out that Catherine is attracted to Mr Tilney because he is intelligent and witty. She admires his knowledge and delights in his conversation in which she is dimly aware that there is something interesting but she never once fully understands what he is saying or is fully engaged with his irony. Carson also suggests that Catherine, who is ignorant and gullible, is "unable to appreciate Henry's main character trait—his wit—and so it is doubtful if she will be able to appreciate him for who he truly is" (38). The novel also makes this point clear: "He talked with fluency and spirit—and there was an archness and pleasantry in his manner which interested, though it was hardly understood by her" (15). Mr Tilney's affection for Catherine is equally incomprehensible. He loves her because of being loved first and idolised. He is charmed by Catherine's innocence and simplicity. He enjoys the fact that he can teach and tease her, making fun of her innocence with his ironic remarks without being understood at all by Catherine. Although Austen ends the

be very improper that a young lady should dream of a gentleman before the gentleman is first known to have dreamt of her" (19). The "celebrated writer" refers to Samuel Richardson whose works are recognised as morally didactic. These particular lines, as critics agree, satirise Richardson's letter to the *Rambler* 97 in which he wrote, "[t]hat a young lady should be in Love, and the Love of the young Gentleman undeclared, is a[n] Heterodoxy which Prudence, and even Policy, must not allow" (95).

novel by throwing “gratitude” into their relationship to save herself from the trouble of an unconvincing romantic plot she “is aware that her hero and heroine are not ideally compatible”, the said “gratitude” is not strong enough to obscure the fact that their deep romance has not been sufficiently prepared throughout the course of the novel (Carson 39). Although Austen proves that it is plausible to connect two people with gratitude such as in *Sense and Sensibility* where Marianne’s affection for Colonel Brandon is in gratitude to his patience and love, the problem with Catherine and Mr Tilney is not the gratitude itself but rather how “such a small debt of gratitude could lead to affection strong enough to outweigh Catherine and Henry’s disparate temperaments” (Carson 40). In addition, in acknowledging this kind of romance, Austen after all hints that “a wild imagination” is needed.

Mr Tilney may be aware that he is not loved for who he really is and his returning of Catherine’s partiality can thus be seen in the context of his exploitation of her rural innocence and stupidity for his own pleasure. Carson points out that Mr Tilney is likely to be aware that he is not loved for who he really is (39) and the fact that he is able to see through Isabella’s character makes it impossible that he is unable to perceive the origin of Catherine’s obvious affection for him. With this realisation in mind, Mr Tilney’s requiting of Catherine’s love is suspicious; that is, he may wish to fulfil his personal need to teach and make fun of her. She benefits from his urban intellect which gives her greater maturity but her rural innocence and ignorance are also exploited by this urban cleverness. Mr Tilney is bound to Catherine’s love that was shown towards him first and greatest in his esteem is his intellect which she hardly understands. His witty remarks to Catherine are for his own amusement and, as Tamisha Johnson suggests, he amuses himself in a way in which he makes himself incomprehensible to

her (3). Her linguistic incompetency increases his entertainment and, though it is obvious that Mr Tilney takes both Catherine's innocence and ignorance for his own fun and her improvement, it is difficult to weigh to which he gives priority. As Carson argues, "[Henry's] ironic remarks have already been purchased at Catherine's expense, and it is possible that she would become a main source of fun" (39). Her rural innocence, on the one hand, is viewed as something requiring improvement and, on the other hand, a resource of exploitation for urban pleasure.

Catherine and Mr Tilney are a couple that will remain unmatched. They will enjoy themselves after their marriage for only a certain period of time. The wife will probably adore her husband's intellect and the husband his wife's stupidity. Once Catherine starts to feel that she is the main source of his amusement and Mr Tilney becomes bored with his wife, their relationship will be similar to that of Mr and Mrs Bennet; as Carson concludes, "their marriage is a mistake...the same variety of mistake that made by Mr and Mrs Bennet in their youth in *Pride and Prejudice*" (40). Doody even suggests that "[r]hetorically unengaged, Catherine will always misunderstand [him]" and similarly concludes that "[Catherine] will be a wife who, like Mrs Palmer or Mrs Bennet or Isabella Knightley, cannot understand her husband's irony. Husband and wife will remain unequally matched" ("Turns of Speech" 170). Even though Catherine improves considerably at the end of the novel, she is still an object of his amusement. Their courtship and marriage are clearly not based upon female gratitude, the concept of conjugal companionship so crucial to Austen's couples. In Austen's novels gratitude is indeed a powerful element in the love of Marianne for Colonel Brandon, Elizabeth for Mr Darcy and Emma for Mr Knightley. As gratitude is piled on gratitude, it leads these two heroines to true knowledge of their lovers' characters

(Brooke 197). The element of gratitude is absent or, as Carson points out, too small in Catherine and Mr Tilney's relationship and probably, because of the fact that they are the only Austen's couple who meet each other in the city, their relationship is quite superficial.

Catherine's urban experience is a complex one and so is the representation of the country and the city in this novel. Even though her urban experiences which are formed through her association with the Thorpes and the General appear to be unpleasant, they are essential to the process of her maturation. Catherine enters the city not only to encounter those who treat her perfidiously but also to meet her husband and it seems to be a rather fortunate urban trip since the novel suggests that there is a greater chance of getting a husband in the city. However, her relationship with the man whom she meets in the city is highly ambiguous as this kind of courtship and marriage reduces her to the status of a clown whose rural characteristics such as ignorance and limitation become a constant target for mockery and a pleasure to him. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Catherine improves partly because of Mr Tilney's correction and teaching, which on many occasions, are achieved at her own expense. It is not far-fetched to draw a similarity between their courtship and marriage and Nash's satirical entertainment. If rural people come to the city to be subjects of Nash's mockery for urban people's entertainment, Catherine likewise becomes a source of Mr Tilney's amusement and if one of Nash's primary aims is to improve and civilise those rural people at their own expense, Mr Tilney's then is not different.

CHAPTER IV

URBAN INTRUSION AND PORTSMOUTH IN *MANSFIELD PARK*

Although Austen told her aspiring novelist niece that “3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on” (Le Faye 275) when writing a novel, the rural community in Austen’s novels is clearly not hermetically secluded as she either takes her heroines to the city (as in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Northanger Abbey*) or brings urban people to her provincial society. *Mansfield Park* illustrates the movement of characters from the country and the city and vice versa. The novel opens with the arrival, from Portsmouth, of the heroine, Fanny Price, at Mansfield Park, a country estate in Northamptonshire. Another arrival in the country is that of the Crawfords, a brother and a sister of metropolitan glamour from London. Near the end of the novel, Fanny is transported back to her home in Portsmouth. This criss-crossing between the country and the city in the novel reveals the complex relationship of these two spheres during the eighteenth century. In other words, the increasingly intricate link between the country and the city, as a result of the growth of the city in this period, is captured in this novel.

The remarkable growth of the city during the eighteenth century led to a stronger link between the country and the city (both of which, in fact, had never been separated). The development of both industrial and port towns resulted in a high demand for labour and this century was, therefore, noted for its huge labour movement from the country to the city. Leisure towns also grew to strengthen the urban-rural relationship. The country gentry usually visited the town during its urban season and it was observed that, in these leisure towns, the social season was made possible not by the inhabitants

but by visitors from the surrounding countryside or from other places. The sphere of business and trade probably best illustrates this inextricable link. The country gentry increasingly became enmeshed in the urban commercial network whilst the rich urban merchants left the city and bought their way into the landed gentry. This marriage between the country gentry and the *nouveau riche* also represented the commonest form of connection between the country and the city.

As the city, which had long been associated with vice and moral corruption, grew rapidly and became intricately linked with the country, which was associated with peace and simplicity, the fear of and anxiety about destructive urban influences upon the country and its people were felt, particularly by moralists. Whilst Raymond Williams argues for the enduring rural exploitation by rural landowners, he observes that “the [urban] ‘intruders’, the new men, were entering [into the country] and intensifying a system [of exploitation] which was already established...[and] was developing new forms of predation” (50). Rosemary Sweet shows how rural labourers, through their contact with the city, were corrupted: “Provincial moralists [of the eighteenth century] expressed alarm at the prospect of servants and other migrants bringing back vicious habits from the city” (226). The fictional narrative of a rural innocent being deceived, seduced and morally corrupted was indeed obvious in the works of many writers, including the most influential novelist of the century, Samuel Richardson (Easton 121).

However, historians dubbing the eighteenth century as a period of urban renaissance clearly bring forth the positive picture of the town (as shown in the Introduction). The enduring image of the city as a place of vice and moral corruption was contested by its newly emerging image which presented it as a civilised, polite and

pleasurable place. The city in the eighteenth century was therefore characterised by complexity, contrast and variety. The novel *Mansfield Park* (1814) captures this complexity, showing that contact with the city can be both destructive and beneficial.

By analysing this novel in the socio-historical context of the long eighteenth century, specifically 1801-1811 (the years in which the novel is set), when towns were becoming associated with power, civilisation and learning and when the country and the city were increasingly interlocked, this chapter shows that the arrival of Londoners, who represent the city in this novel, can be read as an urban encroachment which causes disruption and even the near ruin of Mansfield Park which represents the country and its values. However, this intrusion is, actually, far more complex. Some critics have noted Austen's insinuation of the crumbling moral standards at Mansfield Park which make its inhabitants particularly vulnerable to this intrusion. Mansfield Park's own imputation of moral erosion can be seen as Austen's attempt to lift, albeit partially, the blame from the Crawfords for the destruction they cause. In addition, the significance of their intrusion as representing an urban power which benefits the country seems to have escaped the critics' attention. Henry's rendering assistance to Fanny's brother, William Price, by helping him get promotion in the navy, clearly represents this desirable urban intervention, generating a positive portrayal of this urban encroachment. The discussion of William Price's career as a naval officer also leads, in the second part of this chapter, to an exploration of the depiction of Portsmouth as the home of the navy.

To begin with, various incidents in the novel show that London is clearly a place of vice and moral corruption. It is there that Tom Bertram, the oldest son of the Bertrams, is drawn to a life of debauchery which consequently leads him to acquire a

serious illness that pushes him to the edge of death. Maria Rushworth (née Bertram) meets her old lover, Henry, in London and the two elope. While in London, another Bertram sister, Julia, falls for the Honourable John Yates and, foolishly, the two also elope in spite of their prospective marriage which could have been easily arranged since both are single. Most importantly, it is also London, as Tony Tanner points out, that has made and formed the Crawfords who bring destruction to the Mansfield Park (14).

The Crawfords have become very urban and mercenary in their lifestyle. They have been bred in an attitude which is amoral and thus pernicious to rural values and the rural way of life. Mrs Grant, upon Mary's arrival, is concerned that "Mansfield should not satisfy the habits of a young woman who [has] been mostly used to London" (33). Having indeed been mostly used to London, Mary, shortly after her arrival, offends the rural farmers by expecting them to be mercenary by prioritising money over their rural way of life. She is contemptuously amazed that she cannot hire a cart, at any price, to transport her harp since it is the harvesting season. After being given an explanation of the importance of the cart to farmers at this period of time, she cries, "I shall understand all your [rural] ways in time; but coming down with the true London maxim, that everything is to be got with money, I was a little embarrassed at first by the sturdy independence of your country customs" (47). As Tanner observes, Mary "interfere[s] with the harvest to satisfy a whim" (15).

Mary's urban intervention does not stop there. As a character from London society where money and distinction are worshipped, Mary tries to beguile Edmund, the hero of the novel, into her world, constantly informing him of the significance of those two necessities. Marriage, for her, is essentially "a manoeuvring of business" (37). So, it is far from surprising when Mary, who is so mercenary, informs Edmund

that “[a] large income is the best recipé for happiness I ever heard of” (167). After hearing that Edmund intends to be a clergyman, Mary, who is beginning to become attached to him, instantly inquires if he is serious about it. A true Londoner that she is, Mary has been made to think of material and worldly advantage and is unable to comprehend why Edmund should choose the church; as she cries out “[m]en love to distinguish themselves, and in either of the other lines [law and army], distinction may be gained, but not in the church. A clergyman is nothing” (73). In addition, after hearing Edmund assigning the role of a clergyman to the “guardianship of religion and morals” (73), Mary argues, “[o]ne does not see much of this influence and importance [of a clergyman] in society” (73). Edmund’s reply is a remark attacking London’s corruption:

‘You are speaking of London, I am speaking of the nation at large.... We do not look in great cities for our best morality. It is not there that respectable people of any denomination can do most good; and it certainly is not there, that the influence of the clergy can be most felt.’ (73)

Nevertheless, she advises him to get into the law which is certain to secure his financial prospects. Throughout the novel she mocks and teases Edmund’s vocation and hardens herself against him when she perceives his firm belief in his high calling. This is because money is crucial for maintaining her fashionable lifestyle in London; as Jane Stabler "Explanatory Notes" illustrates, Mary with £1,000 a year “is unlikely to be able to enjoy the more extravagant pleasures attached to a London residence unless she marries a wealthy man, hence her concern at Edmund’s choice of profession” (“Explanatory Notes” 397). Mary, who represents mercantile London society where, in

marriage, money is valued over conjugal companionship, threatens those rural values represented by Edmund who aims for simplicity and love in marriage.

While Mary is persuading Edmund from his high calling into her luxurious world, Henry is ruining Maria through flirtation. The novel makes clear that, as a product of London society, he is “thoughtless and selfish from prosperity and bad example” (91). His indecorous courtship of Maria clearly originates in nothing better than his thoughtlessness and an impulse to satisfy his whim. At Sotherton Court, Maria’s fiancé’s ancestral estate, Henry’s first and direct courtship of Maria is registered. Julia, in the attempt to imply that she is available while Maria is engaged, calls Henry’s attention to the up-coming marriage of Maria and Mr Rushworth when the two are observing the altar in the family chapel. Things do not turn out as Julia expects since Henry’s viciousness is aroused as he “smile[s] his acquiescence, and stepping forward to Maria, [says], in a voice which she only [can] hear, ‘I do not like to see Miss Bertram so near the altar’ ” (70). Maria then “instinctively move[s] a step or two, but recovering herself in a moment, affect[s] to laugh” (70). Standing in front of the altar Maria is placed in the middle between her fiancé, Mr Rushworth, and Henry and her wavering between these two men foreshadows her elopement at the end of the novel (Stabler, “Introduction” xv).

In Sotherton’s wilderness¹⁴, the flirtation between Henry and Maria becomes more insidious as is reflected by the space in which they appear and symbolised by the

¹⁴ The wilderness is “a piece of ground in a large garden or park, planted with trees, and laid out in an ornamental or fantastic style, often in the form of a maze or labyrinth” (Stabler, “Explanatory Notes” 401).

significance of the ha-ha¹⁵ and the iron gate. Indeed, this space, within which Henry and Mary find themselves, is that of a maze and darkness, necessarily creating the environment of intrigue where they metaphorically transgress social rules and propriety. In the wilderness, the group is finally divided and Fanny finds herself with Mr Rushworth, Maria and Henry at a bench from which the ha-ha can be looked over into the park. Maria then, “observing the iron gate, express[es] a wish of passing through it into the park” (77). Mr Rushworth is obliged to fetch a key to unlock the iron gate, leaving Maria with Henry and Fanny. Once her betrothed is gone, Maria, impatient to go beyond the gate, remarks that “the park looks very cheerful. But unluckily that iron gate, that ha-ha, give me a feeling of restraint and hardship. I cannot get out” (78). Henry, well aware of Maria’s implication, steps up to her and says:

‘And for the world you would not get out without the key and without Mr. Rushworth’s authority and protection, or I think you might with little difficulty pass round the edge of the gate, here, with my assistance; I think it might be done, if you really wished to be more at large, and could allow yourself to think it not prohibited.’ (79)

A number of critics have agreed upon the metaphorical significance of the ha-ha and the iron gate. While the ha-ha is considered to be an invisible restraint, the gate perfectly symbolises the rules and restrictions imposed upon people by society (Tanner 25). Maria is indeed expected by society to be faithful to her fiancé even though deep inside she is not. Oddly enough, Maria who accepts Mr Rushworth’s hand, initially considering marriage as a form of escape from the confinement of her family, now feels

¹⁵ The ha-ha is “a sunken wall or fence constructed to restrict the movement of livestock without interrupting the view” (Stabler, “Explanatory Notes” 402).

entrapped and restrained in this loveless engagement. Henry's assisting of Maria to slip through the iron gate foreshadows their adultery at the end of the novel. Henry, as an urban intruder, is wrecking Maria's morality.

At Mansfield Park, the group of young people agrees to stage, for their own amusement, the amateur theatrical which can be seen as an activity disrupting rural peace and order because it is associated with urban characters, Mr Yates and the Crawfords. Mr Yates, who introduces the theatrical scheme, is arguably an urban character. There is no textual indication that Mr Yates is a Londoner but the fact that he is the younger son of an Earl who has "not much to recommend him beyond habits of fashion and expenses" (95) clearly indicates his perfect knowledge of fashionable urban society. Tom begins his acquaintance with Mr Yates at Weymouth, a fashionable Regency resort, and invites this noble friend, whose enthusiasm for the theatre knows no bounds, to Mansfield Park. The private theatrical, once proposed, is considered to be improper by Edmund due to the absence of their father. Even worse, it is transformed from being improper into being dangerous by the Crawfords. In other words, Mr Yates' theatrical scheme would not have been as dangerous as it appears to be had the Crawfords not turned the performance into an opportunity for intrigue from which they can flirt with the Bertrams. The private theatrical, though not proposed by the Crawfords, is encouraged by them and this turns the household entertainment into a dangerous game which has a lasting impact upon the rural world of Mansfield Park.

The theatrical scheme is well received by the young people at Mansfield Park, except for Fanny and Edmund, the latter thinks this entertainment is improper and raises several objections. Sir Thomas's absence and possible overseas dangers are the two main reasons for his disagreement. Edmund also argues that his father "would never

wish his grown up daughters to be acting plays. His sense of decorum is strict” (100). Sir Thomas’s “decorum” may sound too strict at a time when private theatricals were prevalent household entertainments among the genteel and the aristocratic. In addition, the Austen children frequently staged home theatricals. Again, the absence of paternal control may well justify his disapproval and Edmund furthers his objection by asserting that the theatrical enterprise is particularly “imprudent” for Maria “whose situation is a very delicate one” (99) since she is an engaged woman.

It is certainly imprudent for Maria to appear in the notorious German play *Lovers’ Vows*¹⁶ (which will be discussed later) and it should be noted that Edmund raises his objection even before this play is suggested; his disapproval therefore reflects an unfavourable opinion of the private theatrical. Gillian Russell argues that, throughout the eighteenth century, private theatricals were commonly associated with adultery and suggests that “[a] number of high-profile divorce cases in the 1780s and 90s were linked to the vice of private acting” (201). Stabler echoes this argument, stating that both public and private theatricals were known for “exhibitionism” and “off-stage intrigue” and a number of playwrights, therefore, “expressed a preference for dramatic works

¹⁶ *Lovers’ Vows* is the English translation of *Das Kind der Liebe* by the German playwright August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue (1761-1819). While there are several translations of this play, the most popular one was translated by Elizabeth Inchbald for Covent Garden and published in 1798. The story begins with the destitute, Agatha Friburg, who reveals to her son, Frederick, that he is the illegitimate son of Baron Wildenhaim who was not allowed to marry her because of her social inferiority and who thus married another woman and went to live in France. The Baron, now a widower, returns to Germany with his daughter, Amelia, who is being courted by Count Cassel. Amelia loves her tutor, Anhalt, and makes her feelings known to both Anhalt and her father. While Agatha takes shelter with a couple of villagers, Frederick has an encounter with the Baron who is out hunting. Injured Frederick is taken back to the Baron’s castle where Frederick and the Baron realize that they are father and son. The Baron accepts Frederick as his heir and marries Agatha. Anhalt is allowed to marry Amelia (Jones, “Appendix A” 373-375). In Austen’s time, the role of Amelia was controversial and when Elizabeth Inchbald translated the play for Covent Garden, Amelia’s forward and passionate declaration of her affection for her lover had to be toned down (Stabler, “Introduction” xxiv).

which would be read in private rather than performed in public and this period also saw the development of closet drama, designed to be read rather than staged” (“Introduction” xiii). Edmund must be aware of the risks that can ensue from participation in this form of entertainment. Fanny agrees with Edmund’s stance against the performance and, in addition, she is the only person who can see that the theatrical interlude is being used by the Crawfords to develop their relationship with the objects of their affection.

Private theatricals, on one hand, were seen to embody the concept of sociability, the improper ones then represented the wrong type of sociable activity. The popularity of private theatricals could be seen as a wider craze of eighteenth-century society for sociability, as Gillian Russell suggests, “Private theatricals enabled men and women not only to play at being actors and actresses but also to participate in theatre as a key social ritual which in many aspects defined what it meant to be a subject in Georgian Britain” (191). As both plays and the practice of sociability were urban culture, the rural people at Mansfield Park, by choosing and acting an improper play, seek a suspicious form of urban sociability. The fact that these rural characters embrace the notorious play also suggests that the country becomes a locus of corruption. As a result, the country is as threatening to the nation’s moral stability as the city is. In addition, it is obvious that the concept of sociability is broken down in this novel as disharmony is created among the characters even before the play begins. As Tanner points out, everybody “squabble[s] selfishly over which play to choose” and “is solely concerned with seeking a desirable role” (Tanner 28).

While in the wilderness at Sotherton, Maria and Henry crossed the iron gate, an act equivalent to social transgression, and in the theatrical display these two characters

use the stage, clearly not as a pleasurable sociable activity, but to develop their amorous relationship. Austen deliberately casts Maria and Henry in the roles of Agatha and her illegitimate son, Frederick, in order to develop their “insidious intimacy” (Tanner 29). They flirt through acting; as Mary observes: “Agatha and Frederick. If *they* are not perfect, I *shall* be surprised. By the bye, I looked in upon them five minutes ago, and it happened to be exactly at one of the times when they were trying *not* to embrace” (132-133). As Stabler points out, “Austen draws on Inchbald’s stage directions about embraces and clasps to mark the increasingly dangerous physical intimacy between Henry and Maria” (“Introduction” xxiv). They are so intensely absorbed in their salacious rehearsal that the news of Sir Thomas’ unexpected arrival disturbs them little. Julia, even after declaring that her father is at the door, notices that “Frederick [is] listening with looks of devotion to Agatha’s narrative, and pressing her hand to his heart...in spite of the shock of her words, he still [keeps] his station and retain[s] her sister’s hand” (137). This particular scene follows Inchbald’s stage direction in Act I, scene i: “Frederick with his eyes cast down, takes her hand, and puts it to his heart” (qtd. in Stabler, “Introduction” xxv). This demonstrates that, right from the very beginning of the play, Henry and Maria are completely enamoured of each other. If Sir Thomas had not arrived their relationship would have sunk deeper.

Like her brother, Mary, who is cast in the role of Amelia Wildenhaim tries to tempt Edmund, who remains firm in his objection to participating in the performance, so that she can flirt with him. She wishes Edmund to take the role of Anhalt, Amelia’s lover. When, at first, the role of Anhalt is left unfilled, Mary cries, “Who is to be Anhalt? What gentleman among you am I to have the pleasure of making love to?” (113). She directs her rhetorical question at Edmund who is the only one not joining the

play. Suddenly Mr Rushworth announces that he is to be Count Cassel and Mary “with a brightened look” replies, “You chose very wisely...Anhalt is a heavy part” (113). Having heard that Tom is considering having his neighbour perform Anhalt, Mary makes use of the news to persuade Edmund. Reacting to Tom’s plan, she appears to be uneasy about performing with a stranger when in fact she, arguably, has no difficulty acting with the neighbour, Charles Maddox, with whom she once dined. She has to pretend that she is uncomfortable in order to attract Edmund’s attention and sympathy. She has to show Edmund that he is the cause of her uneasiness because his decision has forced her to act with another person. When it becomes certain that Edmund will not act and Tom has had his neighbour take the role of Anhalt, Mary “[looks] apprehensively round at Edmund in full expectation that he must oppose such an enlargement” (117). She appears to resign herself to her fate and calmly concludes, “Let *him* be applied to, if you please, for it will be less unpleasant to me than to have a perfect stranger” (117). Fanny is able to perceive Mary’s attempt at beguiling Edmund into the play and, once Edmund finally agrees to take the role, Fanny is convinced that “it [is] all Miss Crawford’s doing” since she “[has] seen her influence in every speech” (123).

The private theatrical that the Crawfords use to stage their love affairs, though spanning a short period of time, has destructive consequences. The play strengthens Edmund’s infatuation and almost leads him to propose to Mary, had the scandalous elopement of Henry and Maria not occurred. Edmund, who is at first uncomfortable with the play, appears to be one of those who is completely absorbed in his role, as Fanny, who is obliged to be a “judge and critic” (133) of their rehearsal, is “inclined to believe their performance would, indeed, have such nature and feeling in it” (134). Afterwards, Edmund is “in spirits of the morning’s rehearsal, and little vexations

seemed everywhere smoothed away” (134). For Edmund, the arrival of his father changes the atmosphere of the house. It is reported that “[u]nder his government, Mansfield was an altered place. Some members of their society were sent away and the spirits of many others saddened, it was all sameness and gloom, compared with the past” (153). This statement is, arguably, the author’s indirect report of Edmund’s thoughts. He tells Fanny how “[w]e are sometimes a little in want of animation among ourselves” (153) and Fanny reminds him that the place is not altered but he is. He admits it: “Yet, how strong the impression that only a few weeks will give! I have been feeling as if we had never lived so before” (154). Edmund is altered because he is now attached to Mary and his relationship with her develops thenceforth largely from the theatrical episode. Mary, as an urban character, uses the theatrical performance to achieve her plan of making Edmund fall in love with her and, hence, make easier the exercise of her influence over his choice of profession.

When he is on the verge of proposing to Mary, Edmund is brought back from his delusion by Mary’s response to the news of Henry and Maria’s elopement that reveals her triviality, amorality and carelessness. At the end of the novel, she opines about Henry and Maria’s elopement, calling this an act of “folly”. Instead of attacking the immoral nature of elopement, Mary “reprobate[s] her brother’s folly in being drawn on by a woman whom he [has] never cared for” and puts the blame more on “the folly of poor Maria” for “sacrificing such a situation, plunging into such difficulties, under the idea of being really loved by a man who had long ago made his indifference clear” (357). In addition, what Mary considers as their supreme folly is that they are so careless in their arrangements for the elopement that they get caught, primarily because Maria puts herself in the power of a servant. Edmund is horrified by her opinion and realises

that Mary is not the right woman for him. Mary is, indeed, very superficial and amoral in her way of thinking and viewing the world. Fanny, earlier in the novel, at one time passes a judgment upon her character, saying that she is “careless as a woman and a friend” (204). As Tanner has interestingly remarked, “[s]he is not a conscious villain, more a product of her world” (20); the urban world reigning supreme in folly and moral degradation.

Henry and Maria’s elopement represents the ultimate rural disruption precipitated by urban intrusion. Regardless of his knowledge of Maria’s engagement to Mr Rushworth, Henry advances his courtship and Maria returns it. Similar to Edmund and Mary’s relationship, theirs is heightened by the theatrical rehearsal as discussed. After the dissolution of the theatrical, Henry leaves for Bath and Maria, realising the frivolous nature of his courtship and the implausibility of her union with him, appears as if she were not affected at all by his departure. She instantly marries Mr Rushworth, convincing herself that wealth will make her happy. While Maria enters into matrimony, Henry seems to embark upon a transformation. Initially having planned to stage a courtship with Fanny for his amusement but later finding himself seriously in love with her, Henry appears to be a new and better person. Fanny even acknowledges his improved character but still rejects his courtship for she continues to believe that “he can feel nothing as he ought” (178). After his several attempts have been rejected, he sets off for London where he meets Maria. In London, Henry reverts to his true self and relapses into adultery (Tanner 21). He elopes with Maria whose suppressed desire is finally rekindled and their elopement results in their eternal banishment from Mansfield Park. Although the sinners are punished and eliminated, Mansfield Park’s members are ruined by the Londoners.

To put the entire blame upon the Crawfords as the urban influence causing ruin to Mansfield Park does them injustice when the rural people themselves have a share in their own destruction. If the Crawfords are the havoc caused from without, the Bertram members are the rot caused from within. Lady Bertram, in spite of her humorous and amiable portrayal, is in fact “useless as a guardian of Mansfield Park and positively culpable as a parent” (Tanner 17). She is totally passive and incapable of making any independent judgement. As Tomalin suggests, Lady Bertram might be a comic character but “her extreme placidity [is] not comic” at all (228). She is obviously an ineffectual mistress to the house and mother to the children. Likewise, Tanner argues that Lady Bertram’s incapability of child rearing reveals that “the Mansfield values” have “run to seed” (17) and Mrs Norris takes care of this maternal business. Under Mrs Norris’s superficial tuition, the Bertram daughters are misguided and spoiled. Although they are accomplished, they are vain and elegant, a term which, according to Jane Nardin, refers to “the more superficial aspects of social convention” and carries “no moral overtones whatsoever” (13). They have been informed that they are “charming” but never been taught to see “the charm in action” (Tomalin 230). Even Sir Thomas is a part of Mansfield Park’s destruction. He is an ineffectual father who does not understand his children. He not only lets Mrs Norris spoil his daughters but also allows Maria to marry Mr Rushworth, whom he knows is a fool. At the end of the novel, when his two daughters elope, he achieves realisation:

Too late he became aware how unfavourable to the character of any young people, must be the totally opposite treatment which Maria and Julia had been always experiencing at home, where the excessive indulgence and flattery of their aunt had been continually contrasted with his own severity...[he] clearly

saw that he had but increased the evil, by teaching them to repress their spirits in his presence, as to make their real disposition unknown to him, and sending them for all their indulgences to a person who had been able to attach them only by the blindness of her affection, and the excess of her praise. (363)

Sir Thomas is able to stop the private theatrical and seems to put an end to the danger of the relationship between Maria and Henry. Maria's elopement is not the sole consequence of her participation in the private theatrical but is partly a result of bad child-rearing. Neither Julia nor Maria, with the tutelage of Mrs Norris and the negligence of their parents, has been raised to morality and that makes them vulnerable to temptation and destruction.

It is clear that the crumbling moral standards existed at Mansfield Park before the arrival of the Crawfords (and Mr Yates) whose urban values necessarily encourage vice in partially corrupted minds. The Crawfords enter the countryside to threaten what has already been rotting from the inside and is thus vulnerable to external destruction. Once Julia and Maria, whose morality has eroded ever since the Crawfords' arrival, go to London where they are far from parental control and where society encourages all forms of freedom, they are finally destroyed; as Tomalin indicates "Maria and Julia Bertram are led astray by vanity and greed, unable to resist temptation; their corruption is completed by moving from their father's house in the country, where outwardly correct standards are maintained, to London, where anything goes" (225).

By making the Bertram family in part responsible for their own destruction, Austen partially redeems the Crawfords, thus lending a complexity to the urban representation. The Crawfords' urban power, which is of great significance in William Price's career advancement, also suggests the more complex or even positive portrayal

of the Crawfords' arrival in the country. While a number of critics agree with the reading of *Mansfield Park* by Tanner, who associates the Crawfords with destructive urban force, very few acknowledge the Crawfords' arrival in the country as a benefit to William whose naval promotion is brought about through manipulation by urban power. It is Henry who asks his uncle, Admiral Crawford, in London to exert his influence in order to help William. In other words, without the arrival of the Crawfords at Mansfield Park, without Henry's acquaintance with William and finally without Henry's plea for his uncle's assistance, William would be going nowhere in his profession. It is Austen's complex treatment of the Crawfords' urban intrusion which leaves a legacy of not only disruption but also benefit.

Giving William no obvious naval education or connections, Austen makes Henry's assistance crucial to the advancement of William's career. William is well aware of his own insecure situation, calls himself a "poor scrubby midshipman" (192) and does not enter the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth. In the early nineteenth century, Naval Academy "scholars" were at an advantage since they were classified as "College Volunteers", "a privileged category whose commissions were assured by Admiralty orders" (Southam 188). However, historically speaking, it was still very difficult for these College Volunteers to get a commission when the competition for commissions was fierce. As Southam explains,

a commission [was] an appointment to fill a Lieutenant's vacancy on a named vessel. The rapid expansion of the Navy in the early years of the war meant that by 1812—the very year Midshipman Price returns to England—a log jam had built up throughout the system. So many lieutenants were already in post that vacancies were becoming more and more difficult to find. This left stranded an

increasing number of ‘young gentleman’, almost two thousands of them, having ‘passed for Lieutenant’, satisfying the Admiralty Board ...waiting for commissions to arrive. In many cases, these never came (188).

Fanny tries to convince her brother that Sir Thomas will “do everything in his power to get you made” (195). Although Sir Thomas is a baronet, his influence is limited. This is because of his status as a “country rather than a borough MP, belonging to the group of so-called ‘country gentleman’—independents, without a party affiliation—his ‘interest’ was distinctly limited and unlikely to reach the Admiralty” (Southam 202).

The use of influence, interest and patronage are of greater significance in William’s career and he gets promoted due to Admiral Crawford’s interest. When Henry is to introduce him to his uncle Admiral Crawford, William appreciates the meeting because he sees the chance of promotion. Sir Thomas also sees it in the same light for he believes that William’s “introduction to Admiral Crawford might be of service. The Admiral he believed had interest” (209). The point of the meeting is that William “[who returns] to England with official despatches [can report] a great victory at sea [and thus] would be honoured with promotion or a commendation” (Southam 202). This introduction is also necessary for the Admiral since a No Flag officer like the Admiral runs the risk of damaging his reputation by recommending someone unknown to him and this introduction then will allow the Admiral “to judge if Midshipman Price is really officer material” (Southam 202). However, it should be noted that exerting influence on William’s behalf is not easy for the Admiral who hates “trouble, and scorns asking favours” (285) and it also involves the task of troublesome persuasion. In the end, Henry proudly informs Fanny: “He is made. Your brother is a Lieutenant” (233). Henry thus represents the positive influence of the urban power here.

Indeed, to get William made is a manipulative process and a manoeuvring of power which is not at all attacked by Austen. Somerset Maugham states that Austen “was quite satisfied with the conditions that prevailed” (77) and she “found it natural that...young men obtained advancement in the service of the King by the influence of powerful relations” (78). Her brothers, Charles and Francis, undoubtedly got promoted through their naval connection¹⁷. However, it should be acknowledged that they were outstanding students at the Royal Naval Academy and then accomplished sailors; their career advancement was a mixture of the use of influence and their own merits (Jones, “Appendix D” 387). Austen further shows that, whether in fiction or in reality, having no connections leads a young man to nowhere. She explores this in the character of Fanny’s father, Mr Price, a retired marine lieutenant¹⁸. Southam explains that Mr Price’s career failure largely results from his lack of connections. On average, promotion from Second to full Lieutenant was normally achieved within the first year and to Captain within seven or eight years later. Mr Price was a Lieutenant at the time of his marriage in the early 1790s and, at the time of the novel, 1813, he still is. Although Austen does not provide any details about Mr Price’s service, it is clear that he was at sea for a considerable length of time since he is acquainted with the old

¹⁷ The Austens’ first naval connection came from marriages by which they were related to Captain James Gambier, a future Lord of Admiralty, Charles Middleton who, according to the history record, had “the whole machinery of naval administration under his hand” and Captain Thomas Williams. After leaving the Academy, Charles Austen, under Captain Williams’ patronage, was transferred directly to his cousin’s ship the *Daedalus* (Southam 36-7).

¹⁸ “[U]nder Admiralty Control, the Corps of Marine, largely composed of sea-going infantry, was seen as a subordinate and inferior branch of the Navy...Marines were regarded as ignoramuses, ‘idlers’ ...Marine officers were their inferior—professionally, socially and in rank” (Southam 208-9).

method of punishment, namely, “the rope’s end” and “a little flogging¹⁹” (345) but he is quite silent about his time at sea. It is unlikely that he has been injured and thus rendered inactive because he has never mentioned his injury. In addition, although he is an irresponsible father, the novel does not suggest that he is an irresponsible sailor as well. It is reported, rather, that he is an enthusiastic marine since he reads all about Navy affairs. Mr Price is not entirely to be blamed for his failure since he has no naval connections to advance his career hopes.

While the novel makes it clear that Henry’s assistance to William in obtaining his commission is not a surprise—he clearly wishes to please Fanny with whom he has fallen in love — it can be argued that, on the other hand, it is an act of friendship between Henry and William. That fact that Henry used to be a sailor plays a significant role in his decision to help William:

He [Henry] longed to have been at sea, and seen and done and suffered as much. His heart was warmed, his fancy fired, and he felt the highest respect for a lad [William] who, before he was twenty, had gone through such bodily hardships and given such proofs of mind. The glory of heroism, of usefulness, of exertion, of endurance, made his own habits of selfish indulgence appear in shameful contrast; and he wished he had been a William Price, distinguishing himself and working his way to fortune and consequence with so much self-respect and happy ardour, instead of what he was! (185)

¹⁹ The rope’s end refers to a traditional method of severe punishment which was not sanctioned by law but by custom. It was given to lazy seaman. It was abolished in 1809 by the Admiralty but still carried on. Flogging was a ceremonial and deterrent punishment administered in front of the whole crew and was not recorded in the ship’s log (Southam 212).

To be a sailor is Henry's unfulfilled wish. It is aroused when he meets William who embodies his past desire and whom he thus sincerely admires. In addition, they truly like each other and their bond is quickly established. There is a genuineness in their friendship. Henry must have overheard William calling himself "poor scrubby midshipman" in his conversation with Fanny because he then takes steps to help William. If it succeeds, his act of kindness will earn Fanny's gratitude which Henry believes will lead to a romantic ending and of course will do to his good friend, William, a service. It should also be noted that, after he is rejected by Fanny, Henry neither asks for a debt of gratitude to oblige Fanny to accept him nor does he regret this fruitless attempt to help William.

Henry's wish to be a sailor is of great interest since his wish connects in some ways with Portsmouth, the city that is positively portrayed in this novel. As the thesis has argued, the city owed its emergence and development to the pursuit of culture and pleasure, the prosperity of trade and commerce and warfare and the expansion of the Empire. The last two factors contributed to the emergence of port towns, amongst which was Portsmouth, not only the home of the navy but also one of the largest dockyards in England. Portsmouth thus is able to create for those who visit the city, including Henry, a sense of national pride and inspires many to become sailors. A possible argument for the origin of his wish lies in his upbringing by Admiral Crawford who must have recounted to his nephew his sea experiences which gradually fuel his dream. However, Mary tells us that the Admiral is not a good model at all whether as a guardian or an Admiral. He is so lecherous and what they have heard or learned from their uncle mostly consists of the negative side of the Navy; as she states, "my home at my uncle's brought me acquainted with a circle of admirals. Of *Rears* and *Vices* I saw enough" (48). In

addition, Henry “wished he had been a William Price” not his uncle. It can be argued that entering the Navy was one of the male professional choices which were respectable and fashionable. Henry, while being attracted to those distinct qualities, also acknowledges “[t]he glory of heroism, of usefulness, of exertion, of endurance” (185). Henry might not get his impression of the Navy from his uncle but instead from his frequent visits to Portsmouth because, as the author says, he “[has] seen the dock-yard again and again” (316). He probably has accompanied his uncle to Portsmouth or gone there alone and, every time he is there, he certainly goes to the dock-yard which fascinates him, arouses his sense of national pride and fuels “his fancy” of being a naval officer.

Whereas there is no textual evidence indicating whether William’s inspiration to become a sailor is similar to Henry’s, the Prices’ young son, Sam, is the epitome of the influence of Portsmouth on a young man’s choice of the naval profession. Sam, the fourth son of the family, is “clever and intelligent” (307). He was born and raised in a family in which ships and naval matters were the predominant topic of family conversation. For instance, the moment Fanny arrives at her home in Portsmouth coincides with the time the Thrush departs from the harbour. The destination of the Thrush is “now pre-eminent interesting” (300) to the family and Fanny is quite forgotten. Were they not in Portsmouth, the subject of family conversation would be different and thus some of them would not be inspired to become naval officers. All family members, Sam in particular, are so enthusiastic about the Thrush.

[A] fine tall boy of eleven years old, who rushing out of the house, pushed the maid aside, and while William was opening the chaise door himself, called out,

‘you are just in time. We have been looking for you this half hour. The Thrush went out of harbour this morning. I saw her. It was a beautiful sight...’ (296)

[Sam] made no objection to her kissing him, though still entirely engaged in detailing farther particulars of the Thrush’s going out of harbour, in which he had a strong right of interest, being to commence his career of seamanship in her at this very time. (296)

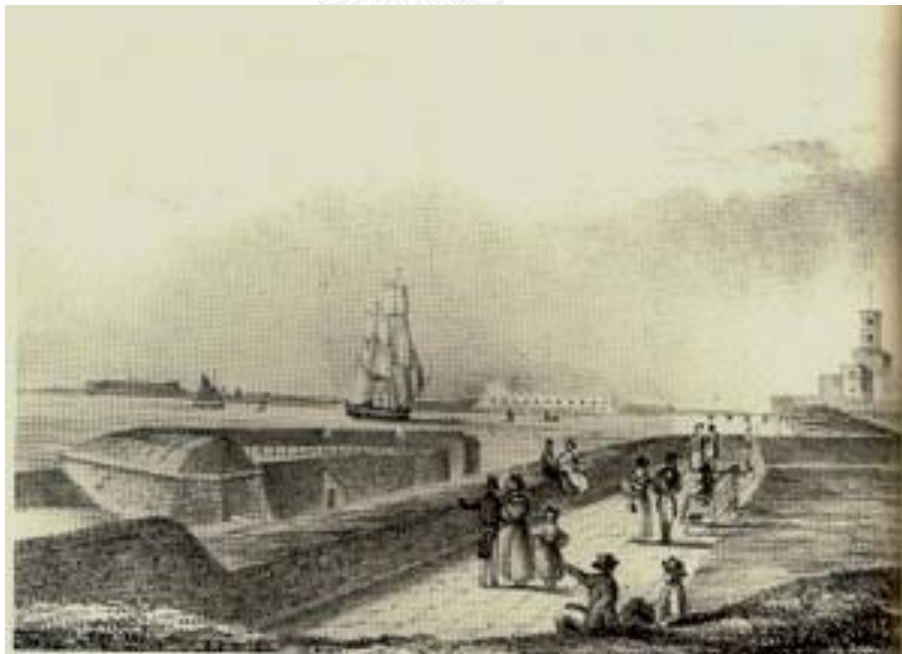
We can assume that William, when he was young, must have been similar to Sam. He must have been a “clever and intelligent” naval-aspiring enthusiast. This is because, as mentioned above, Admiral Crawford would not risk losing his reputation by securing someone a promotion unless he was competent. So, Portsmouth, to a certain degree, influences William’s and Sam’s career choice.

Portsmouth does not merely inspire those young men to become naval or marine officers but it also invokes in a number of people, visitors and inhabitants alike, a sense of national pride. Stabler suggests that “[u]nlike the decadent Regency resort of Brighton, Portsmouth is at the hub of naval action...is home to the technological improvements in ship design and construction which safeguard English commercial prosperity...a tour of the naval dockyard is a source of national pride and excitement” (“Introduction” xxxiii). It is indeed exciting for visitors to see Portsmouth. This is why Fanny is surprised to learn that Henry “should be come down to Portsmouth neither on a visit to the port-admiral, nor the commissioner, nor yet with the intention of going over to the island, nor of seeing the Dock-yard” (315). Henry’s intention in visiting Portsmouth is the reverse of what people normally do when coming to Portsmouth, that is visiting the dockyard or “the island” (the Isle of Wight). According to Southam, King

Gorge III's and the royal family's visit to Portsmouth to review the Fleet and to honour Lord Howe's victory in 1794 made a visit to Portsmouth fashionable and attracted a number of visitors, many of whom were relatives and friends of naval officers. One of these distinguished urban visitors was William Wilberforce who noted the spectacle performed at Portsmouth Point, where sailors landed after months or years at sea. Many tourists also flocked to Portsmouth throughout the year to view the ships. Other auspicious occasions such as the King's birthday in June also drew a number of visitors, including friends of the Austens, to see a great naval display as part of the royal celebrations (Southam 128-9). Portsmouth is portrayed as the home of the powerful British Navy where people come to see the greatness of the ships and the dockyards, thus increasing the feeling of patriotism in them.

Having learned that Fanny's acquaintance from the city is visiting Portsmouth, Mr. Price, an enthusiastic retired mariner, loses no time in guiding Henry to the attractions of Portsmouth which he is sure will impress Henry. They go to the dockyard where Mr Price tells Henry about "the number of three deckers now in commission" (317). The introductory subject Mr Price chooses to talk about to initiate an acquaintanceship with Henry enables readers to hear, albeit vaguely, about the greatness of the British Navy since "three deckers" refers to "ships with three decks of guns, the largest and most impressive fighting ships in the fleet" (Stabler, "Explanatory Notes" 471). He also introduces some of the improvements to Henry, probably the fireproof Pay Office at the dockyard gate which William has also wanted to show Fanny (Southam 221). However, little is said about the dockyard although *Portsmouth Guide of 1775* reported that the dockyard was "esteemed the largest and most superb in the known world" (qtd. in Southam 221). Emperor Alexander and his sister, the Duchess

of Oldenburg, also came to Portsmouth in 1814 and an observer, Jane H. Adeane, remarked that they “occupied themselves in visiting the Dockyards” (qtd. in Southam 221). William has also longed to show Fanny the dockyards. The party is only described as seating themselves “on board a vessel in the stocks” (317) or a ship under construction without any further description of the dockyard itself. It is rather odd, as B C Thomas notes, to climb aboard a ship under construction only to find seats (“Portsmouth in Jane Austen’s Time”). Their clamber up the ship is led by Mr Price, who is enthusiastic to secure them a more picturesque view and the scene is meant by Austen to show how fortunate Fanny and her guest are to see the vibrant dockyards and, as Southam suggests, to have “the opportunity to see ships under repair and in construction” (221). Both Fanny and Henry are probably as overwhelmed by the sheer size of the dockyards as those royal personages were.



(Portsmouth Rampart (1820s) by James Calcott, Portsmouth City Museum, from Southam’s *Jane Austen and the Navy*)



(Fanny Price in Portsmouth, *Mansfield Park* (1959), Folio Society, illustrated by Joan Hassall retrieved from janeaustensworld.wordpress.com)

The next day, the Price family and Henry take a walk on the ramparts. The weather outside is described favourably:

The day was uncommonly lovely. It was really March; but it was April in its mild air, brisk soft wind, and bright sun, occasionally clouded for a minute; and everything looked so beautiful under the influence of such a sky, the effects of the shadows pursuing each other, on the ships at Spithead and the island beyond, with the ever-varying hues of the sea, now at high water, dancing in its glee and dashing against the ramparts with so fine a sound, produced altogether such a combination of charms for Fanny, as made her gradually almost careless of the circumstances under which she felt them. (321)

Though Fanny is physically frail, “[t]he beauty of the weather” saves her from being “knocked up” (321) and lends her cheerfulness. We see both Fanny’s physical and emotional happiness as she is walking on the ramparts for two hours. The beautiful ramparts are both a place of weekly meeting for Portsmouth people and an attraction for visitors. According to the *Portsmouth Guide of 1775*,

The Ramparts are a beautiful elevated walk, of a mile and a quarter round, edged with elm trees, kept in the most regular order. From this eminence, the unbounded prospect of the sea, contrasted with the landskip, which the neighbouring country affords, forms one of the most striking variegated scenes imaginable. Indeed it has always been an object of highest admiration to strangers, and we may venture to say ever will be so, as long as the beauties of nature and art continue to merit our attention. (qtd. in Southam 222)

Although Austen does not provide a detailed description of the ramparts or provide pictures of what draws sightseers to them, Fanny and Henry are charmed by their greatness. In addition, the fact that they “often stopt...to look and admire” (321) what are implied to be the prospects of the sea, an array of ships or those unmentioned spectacles, suggests that Austen has not failed to give her characters the feeling of being charmed by the beauty of the place and the greatness of the British ships.



(*Portsmouth Point* (1811) by Thomas Rowlandson, retrieved from *National Maritime Museum, Greenwich Official Website*)

Portsmouth Point in 1811 by Thomas Rowlandson perfectly sums up every aspect of Portsmouth's life in Austen's time. If the Prices' household portrays a scene of domestic chaos and impropriety, the outside is one of drunkenness, excess and flirtation. It is easy to imagine Fanny's contempt of the city life of Portsmouth. On the other hand, caught among these scenes is a moment of farewells, a fleet of powerful ships, the English flag and the same direction of all eyes towards the sea and ships. Portsmouth may appear dirty, confused and chaotic due to its role as a hub of dockyards and a centre of naval industry, all of which draw a number of visitors whose national pride is elevated when viewing those achievements but, in addition, it is Portsmouth, home to the navy, which safeguards England, providing peace and safety to the urban world of the Crawfords and the rural one of the Bertrams. Portsmouth plays a crucial

role in defending against the international intrusion that is threatening to invade the nation. Within the nation itself, one form of intrusion is also taking place. In a century when the expansion of the metropolis in particular and towns in general as well as other processes of urbanisation were breathtakingly fast, urbanism or urban values were inevitably spreading to the countryside. *Mansfield Park* captures the change that was happening in the country, showing that urban invasion was not only inevitable and but also beneficial to the countryside in one way and deleterious in another.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Samuel Johnson famously asserted that “when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford” (qtd. in Porter 198). His declaration suggests the remarkable variety London and other cities offered. The provision and expansion of public entertainments such as theatres, assembly rooms, pleasure gardens and promenades were novel urban features of which a man could never find his fill in life. Less and less associated with dissipation, the participation in various forms of urban entertainment was increasingly considered to be a necessity through which ones’ manner could be polished and refined. Obviously, the ideas of politeness and sociability, so prominent during the eighteenth century, were essentially associated with the city. The city offered opportunities for social mixing and social performance by which one could benefit a great deal for one’s improvement and maturation. For Enlightenment thinkers, the city promised learning, progress, profit and civilisation.

These positive images emerged to challenge and contest the negative ones which, nevertheless, could not be eradicated. For many, the city was a cradle of vice, crime and disease. The picture of the prosperous city was, in fact, employed to disguise all forms of urban deformity, as John Coakley Lettsom remarked in 1774: “Great cities are like painted sepulchres; their public avenues, and stately edifices seem to preclude the very possibility of distress and poverty; but if we pass beyond this superficial veil, the scene will be reversed” (qtd. in Porter 218). The city, therefore, was characterised by diversity, complexity and contrast. Some found the city confused and dirty but some

found it lively and energising. If the city boasted of its magnificent squares and streets, it was also a place of squalor and slums. If it were a place of social liaison, it was also a place of strangers and danger. If urban entertainment could offer pleasure, it also could lead people to intrigue, seduction and financial ruin.

The city became an inspiration for writers, be it as a source of celebration or condemnation. Jane Austen found herself writing in a period when the city was becoming highly complex. Her works therefore capture the complexity of the city and the urban experience of the gentry, the class of people to which she belonged. Having discussed *Sense and Sensibility* against the sentimental novel, the genre which the novel satirises, this thesis has shown the complicated and quite favourable representation of London in Austen's novel in contradiction to the clear-cut country-city opposition that shaped London narratives in the sentimental novel. Unlike the rural heroine of the sentimental novel who enters urban society only to be ruined, Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility* is educated into maturation. Marianne's experiences, ranging from the set of disagreeable urban relatives with whom she associates and the unpleasant urban landscape where she finds herself trapped, ultimately prove to be constructive in her life, suggesting that an urban trip is necessary for young women. London, in Austen's novel, turns out to be, as Celia A Easton calls it, the city of "moral neutrality" (121). If it can corrupt, it also can improve people.

While *Sense and Sensibility* engages with the representation of London as both a place of vice and education, *Northanger Abbey* presents a similar scenario of the city as much of as a place of entertainment as that of rural mockery and deception. The narrative of a rural character entering into urban society, in which a series of dangers lurks, had long consolidated the rural-urban opposition. While the late eighteenth-

century novel, such as Burney's *Evelina*, blurs the anti-metropolitan rhetoric with its "frank assessments of the pleasure and shortcomings of the city's various attractions" (Jones, "Introduction" xvii), *Northanger Abbey* also constitutes the impartial assessment of the urban dangers, particularly those that a rural character has to encounter. The dangers, obviously looming the city and simmering beneath Bath's polite society, threaten every step of the rural character who is usually innocent and ignorant. Because of their vulnerability and susceptibility to being menaced, rural people, once in the city, are prone to mockery, deception and ruin. Catherine Morland represents a rural person who places her own life in peril because of her inability to follow the ways of the urban world. The condemnation the city has received as a place of vice and moral corruption is partially redeemed while rural people themselves are blamed for becoming victims of the city. Catherine's education and maturation suggests that, after all, contact with the city, is more beneficial than destructive, provided that the individuals involved possess moral strength.

In *Mansfield Park*, the city is not a physical space within which a rural character is placed but is presented as a form of urban encroachment represented by two characters from London. Their arrival in the country causes disruption and even near ruin to Mansfield Park, which represents the country and its values. The Crawfords, as deleterious urban intruders, clearly present a disruptive threat to the country, yet Austen complicates this intrusion by revealing, at the same time, the crumbling moral standards of Mansfield Park which make its members particularly vulnerable to contamination, thereby partially lifting the blame from the Crawfords for the moral corruption inflicted upon Mansfield Park. Austen's positive portrayal of their intrusion is obvious in her acknowledgement of their urban power or the great service that they render to William

Price's naval profession. Whilst the urban encroachment is destructive of the rural way of life in some ways, it is also beneficial in others. Since William Price's profession is the navy, this chapter also touched upon the depiction of Portsmouth, a city that is both a naval hub and dockyard, showing the positive portrayal of the place which is directly associated with the national pride it awakes in people.

Among the cities—London, Bath and Portsmouth—discussed here, Bath is the most important to Austen and her literary creation. Her frequent visits to Bath were largely responsible for the inception of *Northanger Abbey* and her five years in Bath influenced her decision to move the Elliots in *Persuasion* to Bath. It is worthwhile to discuss, in brief, the depiction of Bath in *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. These two novels, written at such different periods of Austen's life, are crucial to our understanding of her attitude toward Bath, both in her youth and adulthood or before and after her Bath residency, and her literary representations of Bath at different stages of her life. *Northanger Abbey* was first to be drafted whereas *Persuasion* is her last novel, representing a large gap of approximately twenty years between the composition of the former (circa.1789) and the latter (1815-1816). Indeed, critics have noted the different depictions of Bath in *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*: in the former, Bath is vibrant and joyous because it is viewed from the teenage heroine's perspective while in the latter it is grim and gloomy from the perspective of the oldest and least lively heroine of Austen's novels. In addition, biographers and critics usually identify Catherine with young Austen, who was writing *Susan* (which eventually became *Northanger Abbey*) after her first visit to and during the course of her subsequent visits to Bath whose vibrancy must have thrilled Austen, whereas Anne Elliot is compared to the adult Austen who was saddened by the news of the move to Bath. Both Anne and

Austen are unwilling residents of Bath (as has often been pointed out). However, this thesis argues that, in spite of Austen's preference for the country, she did not find her life in Bath so dull and depressing as the depiction of Bath in *Persuasion*. Although one can find a drab and grim portrayal of Bath, it is also presented as a place of hope and the romantic city where the hero and the heroine are reconciled.

Anne Elliot's unwillingness to become a resident of Bath, which is similar to Austen's, greatly contributes to the negative portrayal of Bath. Anne is clearly attached to the country and as Austen writes: "She disliked Bath, and did not think it agreed with her" (17). She talks about the unfavourable weather of Bath when she is "dreading the possible heats of September in all the white glare of Bath" (32). Maggie Lane has visualised Bath in the 1790s for the modern reader, "The heat and bad air of the summer months, in a city hemmed in by hills, where people, animals and noxious trades were in close proximity, were notorious" (39). The fact that Anne feels that "it [is] almost enough to spread purification and perfume all the way" clearly indicates the amount of dust and smell that Bath generates (Lane 40).

On the other hand, in spite of being a place of sickness and invalidity, Bath, in *Persuasion*, can also be seen as a place of hope. As stated in the Introduction, Bath was renowned for its medicinal waters which were believed to be able to cure gout and other ailments, resulting in a number of unhealthy people travelling to Bath for treatment, Admiral Croft and Mr Allen included. Mrs Smith, Anne's old friend, is a clear example of one of those patients. She comes to Bath to cure her serious rheumatic fever which has paralysed her legs and finally turned her into a cripple. A series of misfortunes has also reduced her to a state of poverty. Mrs Smith, on the other hand, is a representation of hope, which is the central theme of the novel. In spite of her extreme poverty and

deteriorated state of health, Mrs Smith tries to be cheerful and Anne, struck by her lively countenance, expresses her surprise: “here was that elasticity of mind, that disposition to be comforted, that power of turning readily from evil to good, and of finding employment which carried her out of herself” (125). Unlike the hypochondriac Mary Musgrove and the melancholic Captain Benwick, Mrs Smith tries to make the best of her situation, earning a living by knitting. It is in Bath where she finally meets Anne who, through Captain Wentworth’s intercession, helps her to recover her lost fortune later in the novel.

The reconciliation of Anne and Captain Wentworth, moreover, re-generates the positive image of Bath as a romantic place. Celia A Easton concurs by suggesting that the reunion of Anne and Captain Wentworth confirms Austen’s positive attitude toward the city (134). In the reconciliation scene in which they retire to the quiet gravel walk and agree to marry Austen’s positive portrayal of Bath can be seen. According to Deidre Shauna Lynch, the gravel walk is “a path...skirting the garden behind Gay Street, climbing from Queen Square to the Royal Crescent” (249). She further suggests that their “gradual ascent” (194) of the walk, in a sense, presents the past that is gradually being left behind (194). What can be assumed from Lynch’s reading is that it is in Bath where “the happiest recollection of their future” (193) is discussed and planned although they do not plan to live in the city. This couple must have been similar to Mr and Mrs Austen who met and married in Bath and who must have talked of their future before moving to the country.

Austen’s last novel *Sandition* (1817), which was unfinished, is particularly interesting. The novel is no longer about “3 or 4 Families in a Country Village” but those at a seaside. It opens not with a conversation heard in the drawing room of a

country house but with an enquiry about a physician who is expected by the developer, Mr Parker, to provide a service at a seaside town. Indeed, it is not inappropriate to call *Sandition* an “urban novel” because it is about Sandition, a seaside village which is being transformed into a fashionable urbanised seaside resort. In the novel, a typical attack upon spa/seaside towns is heard, notably from Mr Heywood who opines that they “[b]ad things for a country” (10) whilst still allowing his daughter Charlotte Heywood, the heroine of the novel, to accompany the Parkers to Sandition. It is in Sandition that human interaction is portrayed as being increasingly commercially-orientated. When the inhabitants meet, their conversations always turn to Sandition business. However, it is also at Sandition that Charlotte meets a younger brother of Mr Parker, Mr Sidney Parker, who, as critics speculate, is possibly to emerge as the hero. *Sandition* is left unfinished at chapter 11 with the arrival of Mr Sidney.

From Austen’s first to her very last novel the city, through being analysed in the socio-historical context of the long eighteenth century, is shown to be complex in its representation, either as the city as a physical setting or the city as represented by its people. London in *Sense and Sensibility* not only differs from the city found in the sentimental novel but also represents the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century London which is characterised by complexity. Bath, the city in *Northanger Abbey*, is not as dangerous as it is normally thought of if one is accustomed to urban life. The urban intrusion in *Mansfield Park* does not only bring destruction but also benefit to the countryside and Portsmouth is not only dirty and chaotic but also energetic and vibrant with the arrival and departure of ships, a scene which can generate a sense of national pride. Although her novels present beautiful countryside, the city and its people

are not heavily painted with vice. Indeed, the city in Austen's novels is to be read about and understood, not feared.



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