**JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY of NORTH AMERICA**

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## DISCOVERIES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

*...their eagerness of conversation when occasionally forming into a little knot of the navy...*

Two hundred years ago this summer, Captain Vancouver met Dionisio Alcala Galiano off Point Grey. Both the British and the Spanish explorers were charting the coastline and searching for a possible passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic. The last realistic possibility was the Strait of Juan de Fuca, mostly unmapped.

Vancouver sent boats into Burrard Inlet, to Howe Sound and up to Jervis Inlet. Galiano's men explored to the end of what is now Indian Arm. Before they sailed on to Nootka they exchanged information - any idea of a viable sea route from the Pacific Coast to Hudson's Bay had to be abandoned.

Such a passage, and its value to Britain for trade with the west of North America and the Pacific regions, was the subject of much speculation and rumour in the last decades of the 18th century. A Major Rennell wrote in 1788 to Sir William Pepys (a collateral descendant of the diarist, Samuel Pepys:

Captain Vancouver's Ship Discovery

*You may recollect the News I sent you about the N.W. or rather N.E. Passage from the Pacific - altho' I gave it up soon after, for want of such authority as might have been expected from the public notoriety of such a discovery, in Spain, had it been made; yet the recent discoveries made on the N.W. side of America, by the British Fur Traders from the East Indies, shew that there is a very deep Inlet or Gulf, pointing towards Hudson's Bay. Until the Journal of the Ship is forthcoming, I will not venture to say what the depth of the Inlet is; but I am credibly informed by a Person just returned from China, that the opening hitherto known by the name of De Fucas (and situated between California and Nootka Sound) has been traced to a point within 400 miles of Hudson's House (the westernmost of the Hudson's Bay Compy's Factories) and the Gulf or Inlet did not end there, the vessel returning for want of provisions. I understand that Hudson's House has a communication by water with the Bay of that name, its general position is about midway between Lake Superior and Nootka, and the absolute distance between the two latter may be 1600 miles more or less. Another capital discovery is, that the broken line of Coast viewed by Cook, is nothing more than a vast chain of large islands, with a wide Channell between it and the next line of Coast; and which for aught we know, may be Islands also; at least the Continent is, in idea, removed much farther to the East than was supposed. I confess I have expectations that the discoveries of De Fuca and De Fonta, which it has been the custom to scout in the 18th century because we, forsooth, have not been able to find what was very apparent in the 17th, will be realized by British Navigators. Whether there may be a Passage thro' the Continent or not, so deep an Inlet might prove of vast advantage to the civilization and happiness of the future inhabitants of America...*

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BOOK REVIEW: Eileen Sutherland

THE LANGUAGE OF JANE AUSTEN: MYRA STOKES

London: Macmillan, 1991. 198 p.

It is tempting to quote passage after passage from this study of JA's vocabulary. Stokes is able to explain lucidly, and quote aptly, from the letters and novels, discussing some of the ways that language has changed since JA's time. We can understand the novels, but for a full appreciation of some of the nuances of meaning, we need this guide.

Stokes begins rather simply, with explanations about times of day - "morning" lasted until dinner, for example, and dinner hours varied with city or country, rich or poor, early or late in the period; "afternoon" was the remaining daylight hours after dinner - and verbal mannerisms: what was truly elegant language, and what was vulgar or ignorant? What does their language tell us about characters who use meaningless emphatics like "monstrous" or "prodigious", or fashionable cant, like "beau", "famous" or "quiz"?

JA inherited a literary scheme of describing character in terms of head and heart, usually in pairs: temper (meaning "temperament") and understanding, disposition and abilities, sense and sensibility. To these are often added qualities that affect one's response - whether or not a person has "spirits" (liveliness, cheerfulness) and "address" or good manners, which can imply courtesy, or a relaxed ease of manner. These four points are valuable to assess both personal and social relationships, and JA uses them to evaluate characters in all the novels.

"Manners" has a more restricted meaning today - referring to punctilious social rules. In JA's writing the word more often means "general manner", an attitude of pleasing ease in social conduct. The word "gentleman", too, had a stronger, more serious meaning then, distinguishing the gentry from the non-gentry, and also implying a certain financial status, honourable and moral qualities, and a well-bred manner. Stokes points out where these standards become important distinctions in the novels. Other words, like "elegance", "exertion", "propriety" and "decorum" are very precisely used by JA in connection with her characters.

"Impertinence", "insolence" and "impudence" today have much the same meaning - cheekiness. JA carefully discriminates in her usage, keeping their meaning closer to their Latin roots. "Impudence" carries overtones of shamelessness or immodesty: after Lydia's marriage, Mr. Bennet says, "I will not encourage the impudence of either, by receiving them at Longbourn". "Impertinence" refers to what does not "pertain" or belong, and is used of behaviour that is intrusive in some way: in her letters, JA writes to her sister, "It is rather impertinent to suggest any household care to a housekeeper...", and Darcy calls his efforts to separate Bingley and Jane, "absurd and impertinent". "Insolence" is the rudeness that "looks down on" others, from true or assumed superiority.

The opposite of "insolence" is "affability", a word used of social superiors. To be affable, according to Dr. Johnson, was to be "accostable" or easily approached: not haughty or reserved to social inferiors. Charles Austen found the Duke of Sussex, visiting his ship, "fat, jolly and affable". Using this word of another, implies one's recognition of the other's social superiority - Lucy Steele finds Mrs. Ferrars "exceeding affable", and Mr. Collins often refers to Lady Catherine's "affability". This also is the way Harriet sees Miss Woodhouse, on their first meeting.

JA divided the characters in her novels (and probably the people in her real world!) into two groups - the intelligent and the fools. "Abilities", "powers", "talents" and "understanding" are all terms she uses to refer to superior mental powers. Natural abilities must be supplemented by education, by the true "accomplishments" in the arts or languages that are so often satirized in their mock fashionable attire.

"Good sense" usually carries a moral connotation, often in combinations such as "good sense and merit" (Sanditon) , "good sense and moral tendency" ("opinions" of M.P.) and "good sense and good breeding" (NA). "Clever" is morally neutral: JA uses it of Lucy Steele and Mrs. Clay - both artful, scheming women - and also of Captain Benwick and Darcy. "Sensible" implies a capacity for moral awareness which "clever" does not; Mr. Elliot moves, in Anne's thoughts, from being sensible to being merely clever.

Words referring to feelings - to the heart rather than to the head - often have slightly different meanings than in today's usage. "Generous" is much like magnanimity: all that is opposed to self-interest. "Delicacy" implies sensitivity to the feelings of others: Fanny Dashwood is "indelicate" when she arrives at Norland so soon after Mr. Dashwood's death; and Mrs. Dashwood's "delicacy" prevents her asking Marianne questions about Willoughby. Consideration for others is also part of being amiable, as Mr. Knightley explains to Emma with regard to Frank Churchill. It was commonly used in novels of the time, and JA burlesqued the word in the Juvenilia, writing of "the amiable Alice" (who was drunk); and Byron also used it mockingly in Don Juan: "Three fireships lost their amiable existence..."

Stokes points out that the word "interesting" is one that could trap the unwary reader, thinking of its current meaning of "not boring". In JA's usage, it means to engage the feelings as well as the attention, changing the tone of a passage: Elinor finds Edward Ferrars "interesting", i.e. she is concerned about him; Sir Thomas's return will be "an interesting event", after his long, and potentially dangerous trip. This nuance of meaning is still current in two expressions: a pregnant woman is said to be "in an interesting condition", and a type of beauty might be "pale and interesting" - in both cases, they rouse our feelings, not our curiosity.

Most of the words which Stokes discusses are dangerous for a reader today, as the modern meaning makes sense enough to be accepted, but can be quite misleading in tone, and subtle nuances of meaning are lost.

For someone so concerned with precision of vocabulary, however, it is surprising to find in this book a carelessness that allows Stokes to call Captain Wentworth "Frank" in almost every instance she mentions him by his first name. And surely it is never necessary to descend to the use of such vulgarisms as "when John Dashwood wants to suck up to Colonel Brandon", "Willoughby is sweet on Marianne", or Jane Fairfax is "a really classy piece".

Generally, however, Stokes gives an excellent lesson on how the language has changed since the 18th century in subtle minute ways. She is especially good in contrasting the word usage of the sophisticated characters and the common or naive ones, the different manner of speaking of the intelligent and the foolish. A careful study of this book will greatly enhance one's understanding, and consequently one's appreciation and enjoyment, of Jane Austen's novels.

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EDUCATION

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (late 18th c.) giving advice on the education of her granddaughter:

> *Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting ... The second caution to be given her and which is most absolutely necessary is to conceal whatever learning she attains with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness; the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy and consequently the most inveterate hatred, of all he- and she-fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of all her acquaintance.*

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NOVELS - Jack Grey, New York.

I finally dived into Fanny Burney's last novel, The Wanderer. I say "dived" because it's in five volumes, over 2,000 pages long. I'm half way through and it certainly lives up to its subtitle: "Female Difficulties". The heroine has not had a minute's peace; worse, her true identity is still unknown, which leaves this reader rather unsettled, also. Obviously Mme. D'Arblay was not a master of the third person narrative, with under/overtones, as was at least one other of her contemporaries.

Although published in 1814, The Wanderer was probably started late in the previous century, put down during Fanny's sojourn in Paris 1802-12 and picked up on her return to England. Jane Austen mentions it in Letter 84, to Cassandra, dated 23 September (1813): "...Poor Dr. Isham is obliged to admire P.& P. - & to send me word that he is sure he shall not like M^de^ Darblay's new Novel half so well." There must have been some pre-publication hoopla, as might be expected concerning the new work of such a famed author.

Cassandra has told us that the original version of Northanger Abbey was written "about the years 98 & 99." It was sold to a publisher in 1803 and bought back in 1816. In 1817 JA tells her niece that "Miss Catherine is put upon the Shelve for the present." From that comment and from other interior evidence such as the mention of Maria Edgeworth's Belinda (published in 1803), we know that she did some revision of the manuscript.

On reading the "Introduction" to The Wanderer I was struck with the similarity of sentiments expressed (so floridly) by the one author and echoed by the other in her famous "only a novel" passage. By 1816, JA must have read The Wanderer.

Northanger Abbey - Chapter 5:

Yes, novels;- for I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom so common with novel writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number of which they are themselves adding - joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust. Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? I cannot approve of it. Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure that those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers. And while the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of England, or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope, and Prior, with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogized by a thousand pens,- there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them....'And what are you reading, Miss...?' 'Oh! it is only a novel! ' replies the young lady; while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame.- 'It is only Cecilia, or Camilla, or Belinda;' or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language.

Introduction to The Wanderer:

Such, therefore,- if any such there be,- who expect to find here materials for political controversy; or fresh food for national animosity; must turn elsewhere their disappointed eyes: for here, they will simply meet, what the Authour has thrice sought to present to them already, a composition upon general life, manners, and characters; without any species of personality, either in the form of foreign influence, or of national partiality. I have felt, indeed, no disposition,- I ought rather, perhaps, to say talent,- for venturing upon the stormy sea of politics; whose waves, for ever either receding or encroaching, with difficulty can be stemmed, and never can be trusted...

I should leave all discussions of national rights, and modes, or acts of government, to those whose wishes have no opposing calls; whose duties are undivided; and whose opinions are unbiassed by individual bosom feelings;...

Nevertheless, to avoid disserting upon these topics as matter of speculation, implies not an observance of silence to the events which they produce, as matter of fact: on the contrary, to attempt to delineate, in whatever form, any picture of actual human life, without reference to the French Revolution, would be as little possible...

Is a Novel the vehicle for such considerations? such discussions?... Divest, for a moment, the title of Novel from its stationary standard of insignificance, and say! What is the species of writing that offers fairer opportunities for conveying useful precepts?...And is not a Novel, permit me, also, to ask, in common with every other literary work, entitled to receive its stamp as useful, mischievous, or nugatory, from its execution? not necessarily, and in its changeless state, to be branded as a mere vehicle for frivolous, or seductive amusement?...

'Tis the grandeur, yet singleness of the plan; the never broken, yet never obvious adherence to its execution; the delineation and support of character; the invention of incident; the contrast of situation; the grace of diction, and the beauty of imagery; joined to a judicious choice of combinations, and a living interest in every partial detail, that give to that sovereign species of the works of fiction, its glorious pre-eminence...

In nothing is the force of denomination more striking than in the term Novel; a species of writing which, though never mentioned, even by its supporter, but with a look that fears contempt, is not more rigidly excommunicated, from its appellation, in theory, than sought and fostered, from its attractions, in practice..."

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*FARD* - FOR YOUR SUNBURN

*"Take two ounces of oil of sweet almonds, ditto of spermaceti: melt them in a pipkin over a slow fire. When they are dissolved and mixed, take it off the fire, and stir into it one table spoonful of fine honey. Continue stirring till it is cold, and then it is fit for use." (For taking off sunburnings, effects of weather on the face, and accidental cutaneous eruptions. It must be applied at going to bed. This is excellent for almost constant use).*

The Mirror of the Graces: By a Lady of Distinction (1810)

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FAMILY CONNECTIONS - Kathleen Glancy

*Without any alliances but in trade...*

Thus Emma, fuming over Mr. Elton's temerity at addressing her, on his family connections. How different from her own. "He must know that the Woodhouses had been settled for several generations at Hartfield, the younger branch of a very ancient family". True, "the landed property at Hartfield was inconsiderable", but the Woodhouses had "fortune, from other sources". Uh huh. You know what all that says to me? Mr. Elton wasn't the only one whose family had had alliances in trade - only his were more recent.

The founder of Emma's branch of the Woodhouses was a younger son. That argues against his inheriting the massive amount of money which would be needed to provide an income to run a comfortable house, carriages, excellent furniture, good food, general easy living, and enough spare money to dower daughters on the scale of £60,000 or so. (Emma's dowry is £30,000 and it is hardly feasible that Isabella's was less). All of this, too, was provided without the buttress of income from land and tenants. Younger sons, as Colonel Fitzwilliam would tell us, were not provided for on such a scale. The family land and most of the family money went to the eldest son, the daughters were dowered, and the younger sons were trained for a suitable profession.

Furthermore, the professions regarded as suitable were not generally of a nature that would enable a younger son to earn a vast fortune for himself, especially when you consider that Emma's ancestor was several generations back and therefore likely to have lived before the Navy was a respectable option - and indeed before the introduction of prize money made it a profitable or potentially profitable option. (Even so, the most successful sailor we know, Captain Wentworth, is not going to be able to give his daughters £30,000 dowries - his own fortune is less than that). Of course, a younger son could earn big money if he left Britain for the Colonies, or if he forgot about suitability and went into trade. We must assume, however, that the founding father Woodhouse did not become declassé in this manner or Emma would have been aware of it.

So, there was one more way for a younger son to obtain a great deal of money. He could marry an heiress. But the ancestral Woodhouse must have married a whopping heiress, and that argues against her having been of equal birth to him. A great heiress of an impeccable lineage did not, or was not allowed to, marry an impecunious younger son. Consider the young ladies we encounter in Jane Austen's novels who combine birth with money. Isabella Knightley has married a younger son, it is true. But plainly that was a love match, and John Knightley is intelligent and able and no doubt was doing well in his profession before he offered for Isabella. Mr.Woodhouse wouldn't have wanted her to marry anyone, of course, but he would also want her happiness above all, and he still had Emma and Miss Taylor and if Isabella must marry then John Knightley, whose roots were in the same place and who would bring her home often, would be better than some stranger. Isabella, in any case, was not an heiress on such a grand scale as her putative ancestress. The further back in time you go, the less likely it was that the heiress' feelings would play much part in the arrangement of her marriage. The parents or guardians of a well-born heiress tended to be looking for a title and/or another great fortune.

Consider now the case of Georgiana Darcy. Her brother, in the marriage he would have liked to arrange for her, undoubtedly put the quality of the man and Georgiana's likely happiness first. The gentle and sweet-tempered Bingley would indeed have been a good match for Georgiana, and because of his personal qualities Darcy is not concerned about his less than aristocratic ancestry. However, the fact remains that Bingley also has a fortune of his own and no real need of Georgiana's money. Darcy must be acquainted with dozens of well-born younger sons - his own cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam and any younger brothers he had, for example - but doesn't seem to regard them as possible matches for his sister.

Now consider Anne de Bourgh, an heiress on a grander scale than her cousin, and indeed the only one in Jane Austen's books whose fortune is on the same level as my theoretical ancestral heiress. Anne's mother would have liked her to marry a man of good birth and large fortune - unfortunately for Lady Catherine the man in question was blind to the advantages of the match. Again, Lady Catherine does not seem to regard her even better born but fairly impecunious nephew Colonel Fitzwilliam as a candidate.

There was one circumstance in which the father of an heiress might look for a younger son of good family - if he had an estate which he wanted to be kept as an entity, not subsumed into his daughter's husband's own estate. Then he might look for a younger son of good family who understood the running of an estate but would not inherit his own family's and who might even be prepared to take his wife's name. That, however, didn't happen with the Woodhouses - the heiress had a lot of money but no land.

A lot of money but no land usually means one thing - Trade. Now let us imagine a very wealthy merchant with one child, a daughter. She must be settled in life, and of course she can't possibly inherit the business and run it when he dies. She must be married, and he would like her to marry up and become a lady. He has educated her to this end and launched her into society. He would of course really like a title and/or a fortune, but as it happens there are no financially embarrassed peers available that particular year and the fortunes are offering for well-born heiresses or sometimes girls of impeccable birth but small dowry. (The latter group are of course mostly the self-made fortunes). Along comes the younger son of a very ancient family, however, and he makes an offer and our merchant snaps it up. His daughter's dowry is enough to buy the young couple a pleasant house and, invested on the merchant's advice, gives them a good income which is enhanced when he dies and the business is sold up and added to their capital.

Perhaps it would be pushing my case too far to suggest that Emma's vitality and wit are more likely to come from her mercantile ancestor than her noble one?

It remains only to add that the kinds of Trade which produced immense fortunes in the late 17th or early 18th century weren't usually very nice sorts of Trade. They were likely to involve slaves or opium or both, or the exploitation of and (not to put too fine a point on it) theft from the natives of the Colonies, especially India. Perhaps Emma can be excused for forgetting about her ancestress, who would undoubtedly have played down her family background as much as possible.

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*A little vegetable rouge tinging the cheek of a delicate woman, who, from ill health or an anxious mind, loses her roses, may be excusable; and so transparent is the texture of such rouge, (when unadulterated with lead) that when the blood does mount to the face, it speaks through the slight covering, and enhances the fading bloom. But though the occasional use of rouge may be tolerated, yet, my fair friends must understand that it is only tolerated.*

*Penciling eyebrows, staining them, etc., are too clumsy tricks of attempted deception, for any other emotion to be excited in the mind of the beholder, than contempt for the bad taste and willful blindness which could ever deem them passible for a moment."*

The Mirror of the Graces: By a Lady of Distinction (1810)

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MRS. RADCLIFFE'S "MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO" - Eileen Sutherland.

"Oh! I would not tell you what is behind the black veil for the world!" exclaimed Isabella Thorpe kindly, to Catherine Morland in Northanger Abbey.

Do you know what is behind that evocative veil? I won't tell you either, but I have just found out for myself, by reading Mrs. Radcliffe's famous novel. In spite of her parody, Jane Austen herself enjoyed these Gothic novels all her life: she wrote to Cassandra of another book, the Heroine, "It is a delightful burlesque, particularly on the Radcliffe style".

Anne Radcliffe was born in London in 1764, of parents of respectability but engaged in "trade". She received the usual education of the time, but was introduced into a literary society by relatives. Mr. Bentley, an uncle,of the firm of Wedgwood and Bentley, was a great favourite, and at his home she met such notable figures as Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Piozzi, and other literary women. Shy and retiring with strangers, she always maintained a formal and polite manner, but quietly enjoyed herself in this group.

She married Mr. Radcliffe, a former student of law, who became the proprietor of The English Chronicle periodical. Encouraged by her husband to try writing, she soon published her first romance, The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, in 1789. This work showed strong talent but is not the equal of her later writing. The next year saw the appearance of The Sicilian Romance, whose exuberance of imagination attracted much attention. It was followed the next year by The Romance of the Forest, and in 1794, The Mysteries of Udolpho, considered her most popular work. This attracted not only the usual readers of romances, but such notable figures as Fox, Sheridan and Sir Walter Scott, who gave the book great praise.

In the same year the Radcliffes went on a tour through Holland and Germany, and down the Rhine, seeing for the first time the scenes she had so vividly described in her novels. This trip, together with a later tour to the Lakes, formed the basis for her next work: A Journey through Holland, and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return down the Rhine; to which are added, observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland". Her fifth and last romance, The Italian,1797, was as popular as the earlier ones but in a new style including the horrors of the Inquisition.

After this period, the Radcliffes led a quiet secluded life, not going much into company, but making frequent excursions in southern England. Anne Radcliffe kept a Journal during her travels in which she vividly described the scenes: "...the surprising appearance of the sea, which seemed to rise so high, that it could scarce be distinguished from the sky. Ships looked like birds in the sky. Nothing seen but great and simple objects - the round sea, the uncultivated headlands". She describes a walk along the shore: "Large blocks of granite imbedded on the shore, and extending to the waves, which maze and foam over them, giving one dreadful ideas of shipwreck... Tide almost out; only sea in front; white cliffs rising over me, but not impending, strand all around, a chaos of rocks and fallen cliffs,far out into the waves; sea-fowl whirling and screaming..."

Sir Walter Scott wrote, "the praise may be claimed for her, of having been the first to introduce into her prose fictions a beautiful and fanciful tone of natural description and impressive narrative, which had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry". During the last years of her life, she suffered from asthma, which undermined her strength, and left her subject to colds and inflammation of the lungs. She died peacefully at home in 1823, aged 58.

Mrs. Radcliffe's talent was for interesting descriptive narrative, rather than delineations of feelings or character. All her heroines are alike, "lonely, gentle, and distressed". Most of her works are seldom read now, but The Mysteries of Udolpho can still charm a reader today.

Emily St. Aubert, the heroine of "Udolpho", has been reared by gentle, refined and intelligent parents, taught cultured tastes and strict moral values. At her

parents' death, Emily is taken in charge by her father's sister, Mme. Cheron. If Mrs. Bennet is an unusual sister for the sensible and cultivated Mr. Gardiner, Mme. Cheron is even more a contrast to her brother - she is coarse, frivolous, mean and malicious. When she subsequently marries the ruthless, ambitious and sadistic Signor Montoni, Emily's fate is sealed. Her aunt dies, and the heroine is left completely in the evil Montoni's power - isolated, friendless and helpless.

The title uses the word mysteries, and Castle Udolpho has many: who is the shadowy figure on the ramparts, watching Emily's window? from whence comes the ethereal music in the middle of the night? what is inside the old locked chest in Emily's chamber, too heavy to be moved? and, especially, what is behind the black veil in the long gloomy gallery?

Most of the scenes and events are depicted through Emily's eyes and thoughts, but occasionally Mrs. Radcliffe deliberately teases her readers. When Emily is obeying her dying father's instructions to burn his papers without reading them, one sentence inadvertently leaps to her eyes,"a sentence of dreadful import". Emily immediately recalls her duty and burns the papers and tries to banish the words from her mind whenever they occur to her, and we are left in doubt about this "terrible and mysterious subject, to which she had seen allusion".

Later, at the castle, she nerves herself to lift the black veil, "but instantly let it fall - perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture, and before she could leave the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor". Again, her horror is so great that she shudders to think of it - and we remain mystified.

Other mysteries tantalize Emily as well as the reader throughout the story. Who is the lady of the miniature that St. Aubert wept over and kissed, and that distressed the old housekeeper Dorothée (the old housekeeper recalled by Henry Tilney to tease Catherine) when she saw it? What is the story of the deserted castle that the French peasants are afraid to approach? Who are the rowdy strangers Montoni gathers around him at Castle Udolpho?

In the end Mrs. Radcliffe gives a plausible explanation of all these mysteries - to Coleridge's regret - but there is no sudden let-down to banality, and while we are in suspense the story catches and keeps the reader's attention.

At times the prose is vivid and beautiful: "From Beaujeu the road had constantly ascended, conducting the travellers into the higher regions of the air, where immense glaciers exhibited their frozen horrors, and eternal snow whitened the summits of the mountains. They often paused to contemplate these stupendous scenes, and, seated on some wild cliff, where only the ilex or the larch could flourish, looked over dark forests of fir, and precipices where human foot had never wandered, into the glen - so deep, that the thunder of the torrent, which was seen to foam along the bottom, was scarcely heard to murmur. Over these crags rose others of stupendous height, and fantastic shape; some shooting into cones; others impending far over their base, in huge masses of granite, along whose broken ridges was often lodged a weight of snow, that, trembling even to the vibration of a sound, threatened to bear destruction in its course to the vale. Around, on every side, far as the eye could penetrate, were seen only forms of grandeur - the long perspective of mountain-tops, tinged with ethereal blue, or white with snow; vallies of ice, and forests of gloomy fir".

Or Emily's first view of Udolpho: "...though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign".

Try Udolpho, if you have not already read it. But don't read it with condescension or feelings of superiority. Enter wholeheartedly into the mood of the past, and walk at the side of Emily St. Aubert through those gloomy passages, sharing her terrors and her courage. Like Catherine Morland, you will be "left to the luxury of a raised, restless, and frightened imagination...lost from all worldly concerns of dressing and dinner".

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DROUGHTS HERE, AND THERE

What good is a canal without water in it? The extremely dry year in the south of England has proved disastrous for the newly-opened Kennet and Avon Canal.

Constructed in 1810, and running 80 miles from Bath to Reading, the Canal was an example of the excellence of 19th century engineering, and must have been the subject of much interest to the local people along the way, as well as the merchants who intended to make use of this convenient waterway. The Austens would still have been in Bath when its construction was first considered, and would have continued to follow the progress of its development when they moved away.

With the coming of the railways, however, canals lost their significance, and the Kennet and Avon, along with many others, was allowed to disintegrate and be abandoned. But last year, after decades of restoration and repair, the Kennet and Avon Canal was re-opened with great fanfare. The weather, however, has caused problems. Expected to be well exploited with recreational boat traffic, marinas, and other waterside attractions, the canal in many sections has had to be closed because of low water levels, where boats could not pass. Pumping water from elsewhere is expensive and not considered practical.

For more reasons than one, that section of the country is hoping for some weeks of good steady rain.

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LIMERICKS

Don't forget to hand in your limericks - to be judged and read out at the December meeting:

The contest calls for a limerick:<br>
You'd better hurry - p... d... quick.<br>
The rules are plain:<br>
The topic is Jane -<br>
Concise, or biting, or slick.

You can do better than this! Don't delay, don't be left out.

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*This Newsletter, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society Of North America, comes out four times a year: February, May, August and November. All submissions on the subject of Jane Austen, her life, her works and her times, are welcome. Mail to the Editor: Eileen Sutherland, 4169 Lions Avenue, North Vancouver, B.C. V7R 3S2. Price to non-members: $4.00 per year.*