JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Vancouver Region

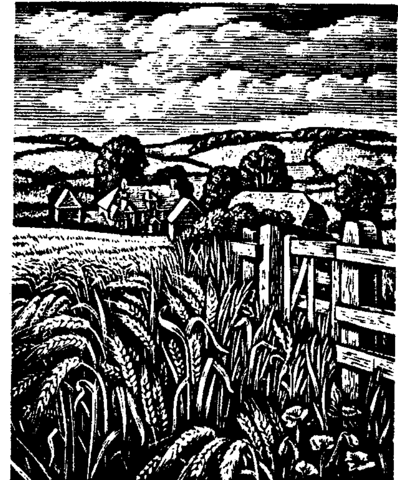
NEWSLETTER NO. 94   MAY 2006

Looking at the Landscape in Jane Austen:
Rosemarie Bodenheimer: *Studies in English Literature*, #21 (1991).

There is little writing specifically about nature in Jane Austen's novels. In *Persuasion,* Anne Elliot's musings on the "last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges" on the way to Winthrop, and the descriptions of Pemberley in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Donwell Abbey in *Emma*, are some that come to mind. But Jane Austen consistently uses responses to landscape to further characterization. Her ways of viewing the landscape in the novels has been more fully and wittily weighted with metaphorical value than has been recognized by critics or readers.

Look at Austen's treatment of characters in landscape as her art develops - the language of response to nature reflects a condition of character. There is a great range and flexibility, and also limitations, in her approach. Both political and historical issues come into it: in *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility,* she is a satirist of the picturesque; in *Mansfield Park*, a critic of radical theories of estate improvement, considering it a violation of the proper relationship between nature and artifice. Therefore, the "good" estates, Pemberley and Donwell, are used as keys to the social virtues of their owners. In *Persuasion,* she reveals a developing sensitivity to a more romantic, meditative relationship with nature.

The explicit use of Gilpin's theories of beauty and culture in landscape viewing, as in *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility,* was fashionable late in the 17th century. Criticisms were never really levelled against the aesthetic pleasures of picturesque practice itself; it was a kind of vocabulary, even a fiction, understood or abused by the speakers. Henry Tilney "talked of fore-grounds, distances, and second distances - side-screens and perspectives - lights and shades and Catherine was so hopeful a scholar that . . . she rejected the whole city of Bath, as unworthy to make part of a landscape." (NA p.111), Marianne pays a farewell tribute to Norland: "Dear, dear Norland! . . . And you, ye well-known trees! - but you will continue the same.- No leaf will decay because we are removed" (S&S p. 27), and rhapsodizes about Barton valley: "Look up it, and be tranquil if you can. Look at those hills! Did you ever see their equals?" (S&S p.88). And Edward refuses the words of the picturesque: "I shall call hills steep, which ought to be bold . . . and distant objects out of sight, which ought only to be indistinct through the soft medium of a hazy atmosphere." (S&S p.97).



Marianne is not invoking unity with nature - she is really berating the house and trees for not caring; like most people in her world, they are unmoved audiences for the performance of her superior powers of feeling. Elinor should be portrayed as a positive alternative, but her silence is probably meant to signify a deeper sensibility; however, it leaves her private self a blank. Austen never properly balanced or resolved the opposition of character between effusive self-expression and dignified propriety.

After *S&S,* Austen continued to focus on the language of response, but shifted to a positive presentation of sensitivity to nature, which in Fanny Price and Anne Elliot guaranteed the quality of their inner lives. Elizabeth Bennet and Emma are not directly concerned with the issue of 'sensibility' in character. Austen writes with a non-satirical mode in these novels, using metaphors for enlarging the moral perspectives of her heroines.

Austen also makes use of the view of the estate as an indicator of social worth. On her visit to Pemberley, Elizabeth (and the reader) receive a new view of Darcy - a model of perfection. The metaphorical resonance and spatial terms function as perceptual and emotional clues widening Elizabeth's vision of Darcy and increasing the intensity of her feelings. Darcy's character, "expansive, intricate, and occasionally abrupt" like the hills, is also implicit in the unobtrusive handling of conventional picturesque terminology.

At Donwell, the group of guests walk to a point where they can view the farm. The passage (*Emma* p.360) should be read dramatically: the avenue of limes seems at first to lead to nothing; the wall and pillars seem a mistake, falsely announcing an approach with no object; the pillars become a frame for the true subject - the landscape beyond the viewers. Gradually the picture comes into focus, the narrator's eye moves outward, down a picturesque slope, down again to rest on the centre of composition, the farm which "rises" into view to take its rightful place in the landscape. This metaphor for the process of mistake, misdirection, and eventual clarification, is the drama of Emma's mind in the novel. It mirrors the stages of Emma's education: she goes through a series of social fictions, ignoring the evidence around her; finally she gets the picture straight, everyone in the appropriate social place.

Mansfield Park extends the use of nature description into a series of passages which mark stages in the psychological development of the heroine. If we give full attention to the whole sequence of Fanny's response to landscape, we see the changes in them making a strong argument for the complication and deepening of Fanny's emotional and imaginative life. We find a gradual integration of thought and feeling, and the development of conscious self-definition through values and feelings, which have been there all along: the growth of Fanny's character does not depend on mistakes and corrections of opinions or judgment.

Fanny's early observations, even the most effusive ones, are notable for their almost scientific objectivity and generality; the objects of her attention are at a great distance from her actual feelings. The star-gazing scene demonstrates the drama of the split between the feelings she suppresses and her determination to be "carried out of herself." Fanny parrots the moralizing texts she has been reading; Edmund responds as to a good pupil. The speech is meant to be parody. The scene is rendered according to the picturesque principles of contrasting masses of light and shade; it is a scene fit for painting, or at least for looking at. But Fanny leaves visual observation behind, and rejects painting and music for the moralizing power of poetry. We feel the comic pathos of the tension between Fanny's sexual and social feelings and the way those suppressed feelings come out in a speech which she thinks of as unselfish enthusiasm.

By Volume III, Fanny stops talking about nature and begins to respond to it - there are no longer those spoken "set-pieces"; the narrator merges (not completely) with Fanny's inner life. The Portsmouth walk with Henry Crawford is "one of the most sensuous pieces of descriptive

writing in Jane Austen" - easy, animated, sensory images, attention to light, colour, surface, and the play of the water equals the aesthetic love of effect in the picturesque experience - this is Henry's style, not Fanny's.

The final description of the pleasures of spring on the journey back to Mansfield Park, integrates Fanny's faithful, meditative nature with her newly-concrete imaginative sensitivity. Fanny's awakened self-knowledge is shown in terms of pleasurable responses and feelings.

In *Persuasion,* Anne's emotional life is described in the image of her "bloom," and characters are judged according to their attitudes toward natural processes. Sir Walter Elliot,with his phobia about physical aging, considers that he and Elizabeth are "as blooming as ever, amidst the wreck of the good looks of everybody else." He is a social snob, expressed in terms of a larger folly, his denial of time and its changes. This is comic villainy of a new kind in Jane Austen.

Wentworth has taken the risks of life, but is guilty of judging Anne's first refusal too impatiently. His "hazel nut" speech shows his genuine trust in time. The speech is rather ridiculous - he has not tested the characters of either Louisa or Anne - but his choice of images reveals his values. His admiration for outliving storms and trust in the potential beauty of the "November of life" place him firmly as a deserving hero.

Two passages of actual landscape writing show the tensions which mark the limits of Jane Austen's absorption of romantic diction and feeling. In the description of Lyme, beginning "a very strange stranger it must be, who does not see charms in the immediate environs of Lyme," the narrator includes an emotionally charged description of nature in her own voice; the aura of romantic and lonely meditation recalls Wordsworth and Coleridge. It reveals Austen as a transitional figure awkwardly bending picturesque description to the romantic themes of a beloved, revisited, private place that reveals the touch of time. The other passage is Anne's musings as she walks the fields to Winthrop, lonely feelings turn to nature for pleasure and communion. The description of Anne's thoughts sounds uncomfortable - in a long, inelegant sentence, it is not clear just what the tone should be. The narrator is usually close to Anne's mind; here, she is more distant, draws back and generalizes. The author disapproves of Anne's reliance on poetry: the autumnal poetry offers indulgence in despair.

"The ploughs at work" - here the contrasting images in Anne's own imagination, assure us of her ability to counteract her own despair and to control her metaphor-making. The notion of poetry as "danger" (as in the illness of Marianne), is still a controlling one in Jane Austen's imagination. The image is a little declaration of optimistic purpose; but it seems a slight betrayal of Anne's "elegance of mind," and feels like a retreat to earlier habits of satire, an evasion of some direct writing about sad feeling that Austen was clearly unable or unwilling to do.

Even in *Persuasion,* Austen retains a self-conscious comparative stance toward the languages of response to nature, never entirely developing from a parodist to a practitioner of descriptive prose. *Persuasion* depends on metaphors of the natural process, but adheres to the early dichotomy between seeing nature through poetry and seeing it as an image of optimistic human activity. Austen gives a muted and moral version of the circular romantic relationship of nature and self: going out to the landscape, the self is reassured of its own virtue and of its faith in the process of living.

Bodenheimer has made a thorough and deeply thought out analysis of Austen's use of nature writing. It needs a careful re-reading to appreciate the nuances of all she has said, and of the interpretations she makes. I enjoyed what she wrote, and shall go back to the novels to look at them again with this in mind. - Eileen Sutherland.

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Jane Austen Day Programme. April 8, 2006.

"Women Travellers in Jane Austen's Time" - Barbara Hodgson.

Biographers have sometimes written of Jane Austen's life as being "devoid of interest." If so, it was certainly a great contrast to that of the women Barbara told us about. Before trains, travel was slow, difficult and uncomfortable, in the coaches and carriages of the time. Roads were narrow and poorly surfaced, horses had to be periodically changed or rested before they could go on, and meals and beds at stopping places were uncomfortable and very often dirty. Travelling on the Continent was even worse, because it was strange, unfamiliar, and possibly dangerous. When Frances Trollope asked, "What is that smell", the reply was, "It is the smell of the Continent." This reminds us of Jane Austen's warning: "Beware the Stinking fish of Southampton."

Europe was divided into kingdoms, duchies, principalities - a lot of borders to cross, and passports required everywhere. All personal items were subject to duty. Inns and post houses were poorly furnished and dirty - no clean linen; cutlery was commonly licked and wiped, and used again. Consequently, most travellers brought their own things, and servants to help carry the trunks and bags. Bribery was a common practice, which meant lots of money was required. There was little paper money; bags of gold and silver coins had to suffice. Later, a "letter of credit" could be obtained ahead of time, and cashed at a local bank.

Travellers either brought their own carriages, hiring horses along the way, or went in the public "diligence" or stage coach, seating six to eight people. This had to be shared with strangers, unless one was rich enough to pay for all the seats. At the inns, single travellers had to share a room with several strangers. There were few guide books until about 1820, when a useful one was published for Italy, and later for the rest of the Continent.

Clothing for women travellers was neither comfortable nor suitable - they wore stays, petticoats, buttoned boots, meticulous hairstyles. By the early 19th century, however, more adaptable styles were optional. Most travellers were interested in art galleries, artists' studios, private museums. In Paris, one favourite entertainment was going to the morgue, to see dead bodies which had been pulled out of the Seine. At Versailles, they could walk past the dining room and watch the King and the Royal Family eating. To cross the Alps, tourists had to go over Mount Cenis or before the tunnel was built. There were no roads, and local people were hired to help: coaches were dismantled and dragged or pulled. Women were carried, men walked.

It was no gastronomic holiday, the English found the food dreadful - too much garlic. The great benefit of travel in France was the excellent Paris fashions - worth any troubles and hardships.

[The Vancouver Museum has a current exhibition, until October 1, 2006, called "No Place for a Lady", based on Barbara's book, about adventurous women travellers.]

Luncheon. As usual for our "special" day, Barbara Phillips organized a group to cater a delicious "collation" for us - red and white wine, roasted chicken pieces, mixed salads of various kinds, and delectable little goodies for dessert. We relaxed and regaled ourselves.

Jane Austen Day Programme. April 8, 2006. Continued.

Soup and Snobbery: the Role of Food in Jane Austen's Novels - Tanya Lewis.

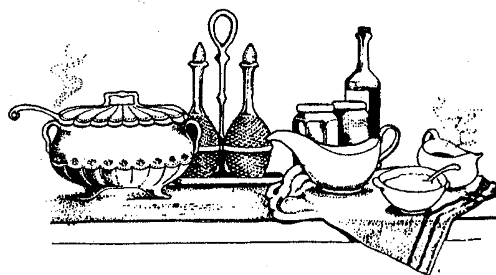
Many of the stories we have heard and loved all our lives, dating back to fairy-tales, tell about food in connection with heroes and anti-heroes. The ogre is a glutton, but it is gluttony that makes him an ogre. Hansel and Gretel sacrifice food, e.g. bread crumbs, for a good purpose: to find their way home. The bad step-mother is bad, because she won't sacrifice her own needs. The witch wants to eat the children; the giant wants "the blood of an Englishman". Our sympathies and antipathies are established in our childhood. Tanya traced this theme of goodness versus greed and gluttony through Jane Austen's novels.

Snow-White's step-mother has an apple, which is bad news, as it was for Eve. Jane Fairfax refuses the arrowroot - she has read her folk-tales. The food is not real, it is metaphorical. This is the on-going nature of stories: modern ones have the same basis. They teach us to look at Jane Austen in a different way.

Edward Ferrars, in *S&S*, sacrifices his "cow" for Elinor - in the end he gets his cow and Elinor, too: "pasture for their cows." Marianne's spirituality -"food is not important"- is from fairy-tale land, it is not real life. The anti-heroes are Lucy and Mrs. Ferrars, who wants to control everything - she is consuming her own children. Lucy was "secretly resolved to avail herself of Col. Brandon's cows and his poultry." Elinor thinks she is evil.

In *MP*, the child Fanny has no concerns with food - she cries constantly. Edmund's words give her nourishment, magically. She is morally virtuous because of these characteristics. At Portsmouth, she is a princess among paupers; she is not being finicky, she is naturally better and above this life. She is too delicate to eat home-made food - thus, it is all right to be fussy. Mrs. Norris sponges everywhere, at the Park, at Sotherton - even if she is not eating, she is hoarding. Mrs. Norris is shown as a problem, Fanny is good.

Anne, in *Persuasion*, has no bodily needs; just like a heroine, she never talks about food. Mary Musgrove is a "foil". She is obsessed with her own body - she is hungry all the time, for attention as well as food. These martyrs escape our problems. In *NA*, Catherine Morland's morality is: she eats because she must, but doesn't like it. General Tilney is too interested in food - he offers it out of selfishness.



In *P&P* the characters are not interested in food, but are keen on conversation, as at Pemberley. They want to make others comfortable. If ladies eat, they are not ladies. Mrs. Bennet is objectionable, especially about food. She is proud of dining with twenty families, keeping a better table than her neighbours. She talks about food constantly. She is a silly, silly woman - Jane Austen doesn't give her attention or credit.

Emma shows us that "eating is bad, not eating is good". Mrs. Elton is gluttonous, voracious - she devours Jane Fairfax. Miss Bates should be as ridiculed as Mrs. Bennet, but she is not all that bad - we like her. Emma is not as selfless as thinks she is; she makes herself look good, but her goodness is not as good as fairy-tale goodness. Emma is the heroine, but she has to learn to be a fairy-tale heroine.

The message of the fairy-tales and of Jane Austen - "thin is better than fat."

. . . .

Both speakers presented lively, informative talks, with flashes of humour, giving us increased knowledge of life in JA's time, at home and abroad, and a new insight into the novels. We echoed *The Beautiful Cassandra:* "This was a day well spent."

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Harmonizing Polarities: An Analysis of the Eighteenth Century Critique of Rationalism and the Moral Sense, and Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility". Mathew McNeeley.

Mathew McNeeley, a 4th year student at UBC, specializing in 18th century Philosophy and English Literature, was this year's winner of the JASNA Vancouver Essay Contest. He presented his paper at the meeting on March 11. The chosen title is rather daunting, but Mathew's talk was interesting and stimulating. He began by pointing out that the 18th century was "an age of polarities", divided between sentimental nature and the faculty of reason. Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* recreates the philosophical arguments while also stressing the value of morality. Marianne and Elinor represent "sentiment" and "rationality". However, Austen describes them both as being "sensible" and having "strong feelings."

Elinor is able to control her feelings with her good judgment. Marianne has no moderation in her passions - "she was every thing but prudent." It is Elinor who best fits the description of prudence, and she "saw, with concern" the excesses of her sister's "sensibility". Mathew found the fundamental difference between the two characters in how they "place importance on their faculties of feeling and reason." The men they love match their characters: Edward lacks the romantic attraction but excels in understanding and principles. To Marianne, Willoughby is a man who is passionate, and who could satisfy all Marianne's ideas of perfection.

Morality, in the 18th century, was based on the philosophical problem of ethics - knowing Good from Bad, truth from fiction. In this connection, Mathew briefly discussed Hume's "Principles of Morals", and Hutcheson's belief in an "intuitive moral sense without a rational basis but grounded in benevolent impulses." Literature's purpose is to delight and to guide: it situates readers in certain places and offers a guiding hand for their conduct if they might be in that situation. "Romances" were dangerous because they "taught the reader to engage in immoral activities" by placing him in such a situation. Kant wrote that "good will is the only source of moral worthiness." The John Dashwoods are faced with a moral choice when his father dies - how much must he assist the widow and daughters? He questions the extent of his obligations. According to Kant this is not moral - "They are misusing reason for selfish ends."

Mathew cited *A Simple Story* (Inchbald) and *A Sentimental Journey* (Sterne) as examples of the limits of reason and sentiment: either alone is "prone to ill-use and misdirection." But "Austen restores reason and sentiment in harmony . . . leading to a moral, practical and happy life." Reason is limited - it cannot be used to interpret moral direction. But sentiment without reason is lost and unguided. The tension between the two leads to their harmonization. Marianne discovers "her own moral responsibility, the danger in grounding her conduct in sentimentality . . . her own judgment must direct her . . . She learns to control her sentiment in prudence." When Edward at last opens his heart to Elinor, she "discovers that sentiment is the final 'key' to her doubt."

Mathew summed up: "The sentimental and rational or practical are often very separate faculties - as Austen suggested by her two characters, Marianne and Elinor. But every individual possesses both - the capacity to feel as well as the capacity to reason . . . Only when the two faculties work together to contain one another, and when the individual has been educated to use both, *nothing could exceed the harmony in which they all lived together*."

Mathew read his paper with great expression, in a clear conversational tone, with gestures, side glances and eye contact, making almost a personal connection with members of the audience. We found his paper well prepared and instructive.

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Sir Walter Scott.

In a letter of September, 1814, to her niece Anna, Jane Austen complained : "Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones . . . . He has Fame and Profit enough as a Poet and should not be taking the bread out of other people's mouths." Scott wrote his novels anonymously. How did Jane Austen know?

"Scott did not want people to know that he was the author of novels, which was why the books were published anonymously. Scott's ability to continue writing incognito, however, was ultimately compromised by his dogs. Given the success of his historical novels, it became a great challenge to the literary world to uncover 'the author of *Waverley*.' People began to look for clues in the books and compare them with other written works, and Scott was already a well-known writer based on his ballads and poems. The literary sleuths tracking the anonymous author concluded from the novels that the man must be Scottish, interested in history and ballads, an avid reader (perhaps a bibliomaniac), a poet, a man of the law or at least one with legal training, a lover of outdoor sport, and a veritable expert and admirer of dogs. How many men would that description fit? One critic announced proudly, 'Then what other hand but that of the author of *Marmion,* the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and the *Lady of the Lake* [all Scott poems and ballads] could have drawn Bevis, Roswal, Fangs, Wasp, Juno, the famous Mustard and Pepper terriers, and a dozen other dogs who bark, gambol, and fight in the pages of the anonymous novels?'

Once these sleuths had set their suspicions upon Scott, only a bit more detective work was needed. They quickly found that he owned not only dogs with the same names as many of the *Waverley* author's four-footed heroes, but also dogs of the same build, colour, and description. The secret was clearly out. At the Theatrical Fund Dinner in March , 1827, Lord Meadowbank made a speech in which he gathered all of the data about *Waverley's* unknown author. Scott sat and listened, shaking his head 'No' as Meadowbank repeatedly pointed to him with each successive fact. However, when Meadowbank began to list the canine evidence - the names, descriptions, and behaviours of Scott's dogs and those depicted by *Waverley*'s author, Scott broke into a broad smile. He leaned his head forward, and with arms widespread and palms up, he rose from his chair and bowed. His own dogs had helped to sniff out his best-kept secret."

The Pawprints of History. Dogs and the Course of Human Events, Stanley Coren.

But how did Jane Austen know, in 1814?

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Inexcusable Error in Story-Tape

On a recent car trip, we listened to a "story tape" of *Emma.* Although it was severely abridged, it was quite well read, and made a pleasant way of passing the time. It was from a well-known taping company, and was read by a young woman who has worked extensively for major theatre companies, and also reads *Mansfield Park* and *Northanger Abbey* for tapes. But there was one mistake which I found amazing .

Emma arranged evening parties of some of Mr. Woodhouse's old friends. Mrs. Bates, Miss Bates and Mrs. Goddard were the most *come-at-able.* The word is spelled in this way in the Chapman edition, and the meaning is very plain. (My dictionary adds a stress mark on the *a* of *at*, so there is no doubt). It can also be spelled with no breaks: *comeatable*, and I can only think that this was the case in the book used for the story tape, because the reader pronounced it *cómĕtāble*, with the accent on the first syllable, and the *e* treated as a separate syllable, and the *a* as in able or ape. I cannot imagine what she thought it meant, or why she didn't clarify it when she first read over the script.

(This word is not one of Austen's inventions: the OED reports it in use since 1687).

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Second Chances.

Life's Second Chances in Austen's Novels is the title of a talk in Wisconsin by Elisabeth Lenckos, of JASNA - Greater Chicago, in April. "Dr. Lenckos explains that from *S&S* and *P&P* to *Persuasion*, Austen's novels celebrate the idea of reversal, recovery, and regeneration, perhaps because Austen herself became a published author only at a second attempt. The realization that one is able to make up for a missed opportunity and even a lost youth pervades Austen's works, especially those written after 1811. The idea of 'starting over' is perhaps the most romantic notion of all, and Austen celebrates it repeatedly in her finest stories."

From: *The Wire*, Wisconsin.

It has been announced that Princess Beatrice, daughter of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson, will celebrate her 18th birthday in August by hosting a *Pride and Prejudice* theme party, with guests dressing as their favourite characters in the novel.

Jane Austen and the Chinese Zodiac - Kathleen Glancy, Edinbourgh.

The recent celebrations as we pass into the Year of the Dog set me to wondering which Jane Austen characters are most like the animals of the Chinese Zodiac. I should say that I have not sufficient knowledge of the symbolic meanings involved (anyone who has is welcome to try this game themselves and assign their own characters) to use them, so I have gone with the actual or proverbial characteristics as we in the Western world interpret them.

Rat - Willoughby, who treats two young women badly and abandons his child by one of them - if he lived today the tabloid press would surely brand him a love rat.
Ox - Mr. Knightley, strong, patient, and associated with agriculture.
Tiger - General Tilney, handsome and graceful (he made Catherine the most elegant bow she had ever seen) but with a very fierce temper which makes him dangerous.
Rabbit - Mr. and Mrs. Morland, for obvious reasons.
Dragon - Lady Catherine de Bourgh, for even more obvious reasons.
Snake - Wickham, a low creature which crawls out from behind stones and spits poison.
Horse - John Thorpe, as the character who takes the greatest interest in the beasts.
Goat/Sheep - There seems to be some doubt which of these is correct. If Goat, then I choose Mr. Rushworth - 'acts the goat' especially when appearing in amateur dramatics and has (symbolically) horns. If Sheep, it must be Harriet Smith, as innocent as a lamb and as easily led.
Monkey - collectively, the Middleton children, the younger Musgroves and Harry Dashwood.
Rooster - Sir Walter Elliot, struts about all day thinking how beautiful he is.
Dog - Well, it ought to be Pug. But Bingley has always put me in mind of a dog, friendly, affectionate, and all too apt to go to heel if Darcy whistles.
Pig - Dr. Grant, on the basis of his fondness for food.

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What Fun!

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, around the year 1700 the noun *fun* meant a cheat, a trick, or a practical joke. By 1755, it earned Dr. Johnson's condemnation as a 'low cant word' to describe 'high merriment' and 'frolicsome delight'. Later it came to mean a somewhat familiar word for 'diversion, amusement, sport, or boisterous jocularity.' In *Tom Jones*, Partridge was 'a great lover of what is called fun.'

It was a relatively new word in Austen's day, and she uses the term only in association with vulgar, coarse or crude characters. As you may imagine, it is used mostly by Lydia Bennet, in *P&P*: [To Charlotte Lucas, after Elizabeth has refused Mr. Collins' proposal] "I am glad you are come, for there is such fun here." And [when meeting Elizabeth and Jane and Maria Lucas, coming home from Hunsford and London] "I am glad I bought my bonnet, if it is only for the fun of having another bandbox." "Lizzy had better have taken Mr. Collins, but *I* do not think there would have been any fun in it." "Dear me, we had such a good piece of fun the other day at Colonel Foresters'. We dressed up Chamberlayne in women's clothes, on purpose to pass for a lady - only think what fun!" [Later, at home] "Oh! Mary. . . I wish you had gone with us, for we had such fun!"

The only other character who uses the word - as you may guess - is in *Northanger Abbey*. Catherine advises John Thorpe to read *Udolpho*. He replies: "Not I, faith! No, if I read any, it shall be Mrs. Radcliffe's; her novels are amusing enough; they are worth reading; some fun and nature in them."

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Errors in new edition of Oxford Dictionary of National Biography .

"As a writer who prided herself on accuracy, Jane Austen would not have been amused to see that this inflated account is nevertheless riddled with factual errors. Correct facts regarding Jane Austen's biography have been available in print since at least 1989, hence these errors are all the more reprehensible.

There are some seventy factual errors - wrong names, wrong dates, wrong family relationships, wrong dating of events - as well as omission of useful information. Perhaps the most surprising error is Marilyn Butler's statement that the MS fair copy of *Lady Susan* is missing, whereas it has been safe in the Pierpont Morgan Library since 1947. It is also surprising that Dr. Butler repeats the latest theories put forward by the owners of the so-called Rice Portrait in an endeavour to substantiate their claim that the sitter is the young Jane Austen, since these theories are based on an entirely false premiss caused by inadequate research.

Lawrence Goldman, in his letter to you, promises that corrections and revisions will be made to the online version of the DNB, and I look forward to seeing an accurate entry for Jane Austen appear as soon as possible; the longer this entry remains uncorrected, the more readers will be misled by it." - Deirdre Le Faye. Letters. *Times Literary Supplement*, January 2005.

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"Impel me not, I supplicate, to the abyss of desperation; emancipate me from the tortuosities of agonizing dubitation; nor drive me, O cogitation pre-eminently terrific, to seek on the ramifications of a tree or in the voraginous profundity of a stream, the privation of my vitality."
- *Emily, A Moral Tale*, by Rev. H.Kett (1809). Quoted in *Ideas and Innovations*: Kathleen Jones.

[A good example of why Kett is not a big seller today. E.S.]

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The Jewel in Edinburgh's and Scotland's Literary Crown.

"The National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh is a national treasure that houses over ten million volumes. It recently acquired the John Murray Archive, [John Murray was a well known publisher in London in the early 19th century. See JASNA Vancouver, *Newsletter #77, Februart 2002.*] which adds a further 150,000 items of immense literary and cultural significance. The Archive is an outstanding collection of letters, manuscripts and business papers relating to some of the most famous names in literature and public life. Authors include William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Jane Austen, Benjamin Disraeli, William Ewart Gladstone, Herman Melville, Sir Aruthur Conan Doyle, Charles Darwin and J.M.Barrie. We dust down the archive, cast an eye at the thriving publishing industry in Scotland, and admire Edinburgh's pride in her new role as UNESCO's first city of literature."

Global Friends of Scotland <friendsofscotland@scotland.gsi.gov.uk> (Thanks to Mary Atkins).

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"Asked whether he ever read fiction, philosopher Gilbert Ryle replied:
'All six of them, every day'."

Quoted in *The Inkwell*, the newsletter of the Victoria JA Society,
Winter, 2006.

The French Revolution: "Nothing stopped in England. There was as much interest in the recent return of King George III to his senses - he had addressed an oak tree as the King of Prussia in Windsor Park and chased Fanny Burney through Kew Gardens - as in the capture by the Paris mob of the Paris prison. Society was as pleased that Mr. Pitt, the Prime Minister, had resisted making the profligate Prince of Wales Regent, as it was that the French were apparently trying to give themselves a British Constitution." *Nelson and the Hamiltons:* Jack Russell, (1969)

JASNA Conference, October 4-7, 2007
"Discovering Emma in Vancouver"
Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

JASNA Vancouver Website:
www.jasnavancouver.ca

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This Newsletter, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, is issued 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. Canada. Subscription price to non-members is $10 per year. JASNA Vancouver Website: <www.jasnavancouver.ca>