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*Jane Austen's Literary Ego  
as Revealed in her Letters:  
References to her Primary Works*

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ANNO II - 2016-2017

## JANE AUSTEN'S LITERARY EGO AS REVEALED IN HER LETTERS: REFERENCES TO HER PRIMARY WORKS

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**ABSTRACT:** This work investigates Jane Austen's collected letters, aiming to map references to her novels in order to understand the writer's literary ego. Firstly, references to *Susan* (or *Northanger Abbey*) are listed; secondly, *Sense and Sensibility* is analyzed, later, the two mentions which have been found of *First Impressions* are explored, along with the references to *Pride and Prejudice*; fourthly, allusions to *Mansfield Park* are studied, and, subsequently, mentions of *Emma* are investigated, followed by a study of *Persuasion*. In all, Austen's main sources are reviewed through her collected letters, coherently linking the references with her biography. Thus, this paper takes a chronological approach to researching her novels.

**RESUMEN:** Este trabajo indaga en el epistolario de Jane Austen con el objetivo de cartografiar referencias a sus novelas para así descifrar el yo literario de la escritora. En primer lugar, se registran las referencias a *Susan* (o *Northanger Abbey*); en segundo lugar se aborda *Sense and Sensibility*, seguidamente se investigan las dos menciones que se han encontrado sobre *First Impressions* junto a las referencias a *Pride and Prejudice*, en cuarto lugar se estudian las alusiones a *Mansfield Park*, después se analizan las menciones a *Emma* y en sexto lugar se explora *Persuasión*. Con todo, se revisitan las fuentes primarias de Austen a través de su epistolario, entrelazando las referencias con su biografía de modo coherente y planteando una investigación de sus novelas en orden cronológico.

**KEY WORDS:** Jane Austen, Austen's Letters, Austen's Novels, Literary Ego.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Jane Austen, Epistolario de Austen, Novelas de Austen, Yo Literario.

**JANE AUSTEN'S LITERARY EGO AS REVEALED  
IN HER LETTERS: REFERENCES  
TO HER PRIMARY WORKS**

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*You must read your letters over five times  
in future before you send them, and then, perhaps,  
you may find them as entertaining as I do.<sup>1</sup>*

Several editions<sup>2</sup> of Jane Austen's letters (1775-1817) have been published – evidencing the interest that exists in their contents. They have also been studied by researchers such as Carol Houlihan Flynn.<sup>3</sup> The reader who delves deeper into Austen's collected letters will most likely note episodes from her life that influenced her novels. The aim of this article is to find references to her main works inside her letters in order to revisit some aspects which have already been considered by experts, and with the aim of shedding light on other data or details that have not been sufficiently pointed out in specialized studies on the author.

One element revealing the international interest in Austen's letters is the edition of said letters published in 2012 by the Spanish publishing company, dÉpoca, under the direction of Susanna González and coordinated by Bernardo García-Rovés. The 746 pages of this work are translated by Eva María González Pardo, with the introduction and footnotes by Susanna González. It should be noted that, upon completion of this paper, the publishing company was contacted and the aforementioned edition had already sold out.

The first novel to be discussed shall be *Susan*, which was the origi-

- 1 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, Ed. R. W. Chapman, London, Oxford University Press, 1952, p. 48.
- 2 Some examples are: Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her sister Cassandra and others*, cit.; Jane AUSTEN, *Selected Letters*, ed. Vivien Jones, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004; Jane AUSTEN, *Letters*, ed. Deirdre La Faye, Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 3 See Carol HOULYHAN FLYNN, *The Letters*, in Edward COPELAND & Juliet McMASTER (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 100-114.

nal title of *Northanger Abbey*.<sup>4</sup> Austen<sup>5</sup> began to write this work in April 1798 and finished it in May of the following year.<sup>6</sup> The work would be published after her death at the end of December 1817, along with *Persuasion*. The first reference to *Susan* that has been found dates back to April 5, 1809. More specifically, this reference was made in a letter addressed to Crosby. The letter began as follows:

In the Spring of the year 1803 a MS. Novel in 2 vol. entitled Susan was sold to you by a Gentleman of the name of Seymour, 1 & the purchase money £10. reed at the same time. Six years have since passed, & this work of which I avow myself the Authoress, has never to the best of my knowledge, appeared in print, tho' an early publication was stipulated for at the time of Sale.<sup>7</sup>

According to Doody, «an [...] attempt to publish *Susan* (evidently the ur-text of *Northanger Abbey*) in 1803 had come to nothing, and the family were obliged to buy back the manuscript in 1816».<sup>8</sup> Austen was writing to the editor to which Henry Austen's attorney, William Symour, sold the manuscript of *Susan*, while also stating its authorship and mentioning that it had been sold for ten pounds. While swift publication was agreed upon, the author confirmed that the novel had not been published and attributed the reasons for this to the possible loss of the original («I can only account for such an extraordinary circumstance by supposing the MS by some carelessness to have been lost»), after which she offered to provide another

4 The novel was published posthumously along with *Persuasion*, towards the end of December 1817.

5 In order to establish the value of Austen's correspondence, it is helpful to keep in mind the idea presented by Marilyn Butler in her introduction to Isabel Oyarzábal's Spanish translation, under the heading «Writing Process 1798-1817» (written in 1994 and translated by Inga Pellisa for Penguin Clásicos). The idea is taken from a letter that Austen wrote to her sister: «*Northanger Abbey* was the first novel that Austen considered complete and ready for publication [...]. According to the note sent to Cassandra Austen, *Susan* (as the work was initially entitled) was written between [17]98 and 99» (Marilyn BUTLER, *Prólogo* to Jane Austen, *La abadía de Northanger*, Madrid, Penguin Clásicos, 2015, p. 1).

6 This information has been specified by Deirdre LA FAYE, *Chronology of Jane Austen's Life*, in Edward COPELAND & Juliet MCMMASTER (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 5.

7 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 264.

8 Margaret Anne DOODY, *Introduction* to Jane AUSTEN, *Sense and Sensibility*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. vii.

manuscript within four months' time, provided that the other party would make a commitment to publish the novel («am willing to supply You with another Copy if you are disposed to avail Yourselves of it, & will engage for no farther delay when it comes into Your hands»). Austen ended the letter by saying that if she didn't receive a reply, she would consider herself to be free to publish the work with another publishing company. The last part of Austen's letter asked for said reply to be sent to Mrs. Ashton Dennis (Post office, Southampton), which was Jane Austen's pen name.

Three days later, Richard Crosby signed his response and sent it to Southampton, acknowledging receipt of the aforementioned letter and confirming that he did indeed buy the manuscript of *Susan* from Mr. Seymour, paying him the sum of £10, although Crosby did make it clear that no date had yet been established for its launch; nevertheless, if someone were to publish it, he would take the opportune measures to avert its sale. To finish, he explained to the author that if she wished to recover the manuscript, she would have to reimburse him for the same amount that he had paid for it.

*Sense and Sensibility* was the first Jane Austen novel published. Its writing began in 1797 and it was printed in 1811, totaling 896 pages. The cover indicated only that it was written, «By a Lady». The first volume contained 317 pages, the second volume had 278, and the third, a total of 301. Doody confirms that «this work would have been written in the 1790s, about the time in which the author produced *First Impressions*, later to be reworked into *Pride and Prejudice*».<sup>9</sup>

S&S (called so in the letter to Austen's sister Cassandra, while *Pride and Prejudice* was written on numerous occasions with the abbreviation P&P) was the abbreviation used for *Sense and Sensibility* and it was mentioned for the first time in correspondence dated Thursday, April 25, 1811, with the words, «I am never too busy to think of S&S. I can no more forget it, than a mother can forget her sucking child; & I am much obliged to you for your enquiries. I have had two sheets to correct».<sup>10</sup> On January 29, 1813, another letter was written to Cassandra, and it again mentioned *Sense and Sensibility*, to be purchased with the second volume of *Pride and Prejudice*, which had been published in London on January 28 of the same year. The writer stated that the second volume was shorter than she would have liked, noting that the difference was not as much as it seemed

9 *Ibid.*

10 JANE AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 272.

because that volume included a greater proportion of narration that, nevertheless, had been cut and pruned so well that she thought it would end up being a bit shorter than *Sense and Sensibility*. In another letter dated July 3, 1813 the novelist expressed with joy to Francis Austen the good news that all the copies of *Sense and Sensibility* had been sold, detailing that 140 pounds had been obtained, plus the author's rights, which came to a total profit for her of 250 pounds:

You will be glad to hear that every Copy of S. & S. is sold & that it has brought me £140 besides the Copyright, if that shd\* ever be of any value.- I have now therefore written myself into £250-which only makes me long for more.-I have something in hand-which I hope on the credit of P. & P. will sell well, tho' not half so entertaining.<sup>11</sup>

These examples of how publication worked reveal a writer worried about the sale of her work – about pecuniary matters – and they provide «the most poignant evidence of Austen's professionalism».<sup>12</sup> Related with the financial aspects were success amongst readers and the fact as to whether literary magazines received the work well. In this case, the novel received applause from critics in «Critical Review» and in «British Critic», which highlighted three main noteworthy aspects of the work, «the effects on the conduct of life», the «discreet quite good sense», and «an overreferred and excessive susceptibility».<sup>13</sup>

On September 16 of the same year, Jane expressed her interest in sending the novel to third parties, such as Warren Hastings, in a letter to her sister Cassandra. Nine days later, the writer placed her signature at the end of a letter to her brother Francis, confirming that there would be a second edition of *Sense and Sensibility* because Egerton had recommended it. Therefore, how well this novel had been received can easily be deduced. The following month, on the 11th, she wrote another letter to her sister Cassandra alluding to the second edition of *Sense and Sensibility*, «I dined upon Goose yesterday, which I hope will secure a good Sale of my 2d\* edition».<sup>14</sup> The writer made her family circle aware of the publication

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>12</sup> Jan FERGUS, *The professional woman writer*, in Edward COPELAND & Juliet MCMAS-TER (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> In the edition of May 1812. Reproduced in Park HOMAN, *Jane Austen: Her Life*, London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1987, p. 288.

<sup>14</sup> Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit. p. 346.

of the second edition of her novel and of her desire for its sale. On November 3, she again wrote to Cassandra stating that she owed her beloved Henry a little money for the printing, which tells us that the author herself covered the costs of this second edition. Three days later she sent another letter in which she again mentioned the second edition of *Sense and Sensibility*, reflecting her interest in many of her friends feeling obliged to buy the book.

*Sense and Sensibility* appeared in other letters in a similar way; for example, when she alluded to the development of *Mansfield Park* and mentioned that it was by the same author as *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* in a letter dated March 21, 1814 and addressed, probably, to her brother Francis. The next year, on October 18, Jane confessed the following about Murray to Cassandra, making her opinion clear about the editor and his fees:

Mr. Murray's letter is come. He is a rogue of course, but a civil one. He offers £450 but wants to have the copyright of *M. P. & S.* included. It will end in my publishing for myself I daresay. He sends more praise however than I expected. It is an amusing letter. You shall see it.<sup>15</sup>

Austen was criticizing Murray because he had offered her 450 pounds and wanted said sum to include the rights of *Mansfield Park* and *Sense and Sensibility*. The writer was negotiating *Emma's* publication and, likewise, alluding to the second edition of *Mansfield Park*.

*First Impressions* was the original title of *Pride and Prejudice*, whose first sentence is quite memorable: «It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife».<sup>16</sup> In the work, «the moral and social dilemmas that face the characters [...] match the aesthetic and literary choices confronting the author».<sup>17</sup> Brian Southam, likewise, notes that this novel was probably a «novel in letters».<sup>18</sup>

Austen used a proverb written in *British Apollo, or, Curious amusements for the ingenious* (1708): «That who eats goose on Michael's Day / Shan't money lack, his debts to pay». St. Michael's Day is celebrated on October 11.

15 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 425.

16 EAD., *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. James Kinsley, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 1.

17 Fiona STAFFORD, *Introduction to Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice*, cit., p. vii.

18 Brian SOUTHAM, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts*, Oxford, Oxford University

An early reference to *First Impressions* is found in the letter sent to Cassandra on January 9, 1799. Firstly, something that stands out is the delight with which the writer reads and writes letters – more specifically, «You must read your letters over five times in future before you send them, and then, perhaps, you may find them as entertaining as I do. I laughed at several parts of the one which I am now answering».<sup>19</sup> After speaking about what she would wear that night at the dance and revealing other personal matters, Austen mentioned *First Impressions* at the end of the letter, before wishing her sister a happy birthday. Jane stated to Cassandra that her desire to reread *First Impressions* did not surprise her, as she had done so few times and quite a while ago; that is to say, the writer was making reference to Cassandra's desire to begin again with the work that she had finished in August of 1797 and which represented the start of *Pride and Prejudice*.

*Pride and Prejudice* was published on January 28, 1813. On November 30, 1812, Austen confirmed in a letter to Martha Lloyd that *Pride and Prejudice* had been sold. In fact, just a day after its publication, Jane wrote to Cassandra mentioning the novel as her «darling child»:

I want to tell you that I have got my own darling child from London; on Wednesday I received one copy sent down by Falknor with three lines from Henry to say that he had given another to Charles, & sent a 3d\* by the coach to Godmersham-just the two sets which I was least eager for the disposal of.<sup>20</sup>

In this document, she reflected on the length that, compared with *Sense and Sensibility*, was shorter than *Pride and Prejudice*.<sup>21</sup> Austen clarified that she had abbreviated the contents<sup>22</sup> of the second volume so that it wouldn't be any longer.

On February 4, 1813 the writer wrote to her sister Cassandra about the work's philosophical depth and literary novelty, stating that the «novel reflects a century of literary experiment and philosophical debate».<sup>23</sup>

Press, 1964, p. 62.

19 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 48.

20 EAD., *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, cit., p. 297.

21 The *editio princeps* of *Sense and Sensibility* comprised 896 pages, whereas the *editio princeps* of *Pride and Prejudice* had 27 pages less.

22 The first volume consisted of 307 pages, the second of 239 and the third of 323. In total, this work contained 869 pages.

23 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, cit., p. 203.

In the same letter, Jane talked about a misprint on page 220 of the novel's third volume in which the passages in relationship with the dinner at Longbourn became one. Five days later, she again wrote to Cassandra and indirectly alluded to the new publication by stating that Ms. Benn had had dinner with them the prior Friday and that there was still a night's worth of work left; that is to say, they still had some of the novel to read out loud. The Friday she was referring to was the day when the writer received the book and, in accordance with the aforementioned letter, they had read the first half of the first volume out loud during the night of dinner with Ms. Benn.

On May 24 of that year, in another letter to Cassandra, Jane made reference to the characters based upon her attendance (with Henry) to the Spring Gardens Watercolor Exhibition where she noticed a small portrait of Ms. Bingley, the inspiration for the character Jane Bennet. Jane explained details about how the sizes matched up, as well as the oval shape of the face, likewise mentioning the similarities between Bingley and her painting in terms of its general appearance and gentleness. Thus, she was proving herself to be a detail-oriented author who took pride in, and valued, exactness between the original and the copy. Additionally, Jane stated her regret that she had not found any portraits of her sister Darcy (Jane's sister), who was going to marry Mr. Darcy.<sup>24</sup> This attests to the interests of the writer, while also revealing her uncanny knack for representing her characters.

The following references to *Pride and Prejudice* are indirect, being related with other novels or commenting more upon the opinions of readers. In the letters which shall be dealt with next, a literary ego fully aligned with the job of a writer appears: sometimes following up on the path of her novel, while at other times worrying about her audience's opinion. On July 6 of that year, Jane made reference to *Pride and Prejudice* comparatively to say (in the postscript to her brother Francis) that she hoped to successfully sell the work that was being reviewed at that time (*Mansfield Park*). On September 16, she again named (in a letter to her sister Cassandra) *Pride and Prejudice* when she asked her sister to gather the opinion of Mr. Hastings, who had evaluated the prior nov-

<sup>24</sup> The writer hoped to find this portrait in The Great Exhibition, organised by the Academy of Somerset House, which she had planned to visit. Jane discarded the idea of finding it in any other exhibition by Joshua Reynolds, which she was going to attend to in Pall Mall.

el positively, while likewise making reference to Lady Roberts's favorable opinion. Two years later, Jane alluded to the opinion of Mr. H. – he preferred *Mansfield Park*: «Mr. H. is reading *Mansfield Park* for the first time and prefers it to *P. and P.*».<sup>25</sup>

On September 25, 1813, Jane mentioned the opinion of Dr. Isham and made comparative reference to *The Wanderer, or, Female Difficulties* by Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay), believing that it would be less well received than her work. Jane likewise acknowledged the favorable comments received in Scotland from Lady Robert Kerr and from another woman while stating her regret that Henry had revealed the works' authorship, although she ended up detracting this regret. Two years later the novelist confessed to James Stainer Clarke how worried she was about her fourth published work (*Emma*), as she was aware that readers had preferred other novels: «I am very strongly haunted with the idea that to those readers who have preferred *Pride and Prejudice* it will appear inferior in wit, and to those who have preferred *Mansfield Park*, very inferior in good sense».<sup>26</sup>

On August 18, 1814 Jane sent a letter to Anna advising her on a novel she had written which would be called *Enthusiasm* or *Which is the Heroine?* More specifically, she advised her to dispense with the postscript from one of the letters in the work, as she considered it to be an imitation of *Pride and Prejudice*, and she advised her to modify a scene (between Devereux F. and Lady Clanmurray and her daughter).<sup>27</sup> Amongst the work's strong points, she noted its compelling use of language.

When Austen began to publish her third novel, she had already obtained a certain degree of success with the prior ones. In fact, Jane Stabler concludes that Austen «completed [*Mansfield Park*] in the knowledge that she could command a sizable audience».<sup>28</sup> On July 3, 1813, Jane Austen was reviewing *Mansfield Park*, which would be published in May of 1814. On March 21, 1814, the writer mentioned<sup>29</sup> that perhaps by the end

25 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, cit., p. 437.

26 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 443.

27 There is no written evidence that Anna's novel actually exists. It has been concluded that this novel must have been lost but, at least, it can be cited thanks to the letters of Jane Austen to Anna.

28 Jane STABLER, *Introduction to Mansfield Park*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. vii.

29 This letter, of which little content remains, could have been addressed to her brother, Francis Austen. The letter can be read in Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre La Faye, cit..

of April *Mansfield Park* could see the light of day, noting – in the third person – that it was by the same author as *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*.

The year before, more precisely on July 6, Jane had mentioned the development of the new novel *Mansfield Park* to her sister Cassandra, hoping it would sell well thanks to the fame she had received from *Pride and Prejudice*. She confessed that she enjoyed it less than the prior one, and asked for permission to mention the ships that Frank had been on, which were the *Cleopatra*, the *Elephant*, and the *Endymion*. She asked her sister a question and concluded the letter by saying that she would take said references out of the novel if he did not agree with her using them, despite the fact that she had already mentioned the ships in another work. The inclusion of scenes and episodes which were known to the author –near to her life – proves that her social realm «was limited to a series of families that lived in the English countryside» and that «she thought that an author should reflect the environment that was familiar thereto».<sup>30</sup>

*Mansfield Park* reveals the «intersection between private and public life» and «moves from the apparently tranquil rural parishes of Northamptonshire to fashionable London society, to the tumultuous energies of the Portsmouth dockyards».<sup>31</sup> *Mansfield Park* was published in three volumes in 1814 and it was «the most controversial Jane Austen's book» containing an «undeniably [...] moral tone [...] within that tradition [...] of the *country house* being synonymous to lifestyle», explicitly defending «traditional Christian morals».<sup>32</sup>

As on other occasions, the writer took interest in the opinion of her circle of friends, as she mentioned to Cassandra on June 14, 1814. In the following extracts, the opinions given on the novel and their importance for the author – who does not forget to include said opinions in her family letters – are established:

In addition to their standing claims on me they admire *Mansfield Park* exceedingly. Mr. Cooke says “it is the most sensible novel he ever read,” and the manner in which I treat the clergy delights them very much. Altogether, I must go, and I want you to join me there when your visit in Hen-

30 Estefanía VILLALBA, *Jane Austen: el microcosmos de Emma*, in *Claves para interpretar la literatura inglesa*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1999, p. 155.

31 Jane STABLER, *op. cit.*, p. vii.

32 Pilar HIDALGO & Enrique ALCARAZ, *Jane Austen: Mansfield Park*, in *La literatura inglesa en los textos. Teoría y práctica*, Alcoy, Marfil, 1998, p. 91.

rietta St. is over. Put this into your capacious head.<sup>33</sup>  
 Make everybody at Hendon admire *Mansfield Park*.<sup>34</sup>  
 Mrs\*\* Creed's opinion is gone down on my list; but, fortunately, I may excuse myself from entering Mr\*.<sup>35</sup>

Another noteworthy piece of criticism was received by Austen in mid-November<sup>36</sup> of 1815, when the Prince Regent's librarian confirmed to her that the Prince Regent had read and admired all her publications, especially praising *Mansfield Park* for its principles. The librarian valued the author's wit, the energy of her creative mind, and her judgment.

On August 18, 1814, Jane sent a letter to Anna Austen in which she made reference to a long episode in *Mansfield Park*, published three months prior. This example portrays a writer who reads and rereads her work, as is evidenced in this reference to Thursday night, after having had tea at Great House:

We finished it last night, after our return from drinking tea at the Gt\* House. The last chapter does not please us quite so well, we do not thoroughly like the Play; perhaps from having had too much of Plays in that way lately<sup>37</sup>.

On November 20, 1814, the author expressed good news to her niece Fanny Knight, in reference to the first edition of *Mansfield Park*, noting her interest in the farther-reaching sale of the work and showing once again her interest in the criticism<sup>38</sup> she was receiving on said piece. The second extract recorded can be found in a letter dated ten days later, also for Fanny Knight, in which Jane speaks of a possible second edition, confirming that readers ask to borrow the books instead of buying them:

33 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 390.

34 Of interest too is this example, which can be read in a letter to Anna Lefroy dated on November 22 (*Ibid.*, p. 413).

35 Two days later, Jane makes allusion to Mrs. Creed's opinion in another letter to the same addressee, Anna Lefroy (*Ibid.*, p. 422).

36 It is a letter of James Stainer Clarke dated on November 16, London, 1815.

37 Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 395.

38 Another example of interest can be read in a letter to Anna Lefroy dated on November 22, in which she claims «Make everybody at Hendon admire *Mansfield Park*» (*Ibid.*, p. 413). Two days later, in another letter to the same addressee, Jane states that «Mrs\*\* Creed's opinion is gone down on my list; but fortunately I may excuse myself from entering Mr\*». Mrs. Creed prefers the two previous novels.

You will be glad to hear that the first Edit: of M. P. is all sold.-Your Uncle Henry is rather wanting me to come to Town, to settle about a 2d\* Edit:-but as I could not very conveniently leave home now, I have written him my Will and pleasure, & unless he still urges it, shall not go.-I am very greedy & want to make the most of it;-but as you are much above caring about money, I shall not plague you with any particulars.-The pleasures of Vanity are more within your comprehension, & you will enter into mine, at receiving the praise which every now & then comes to me, through some channel or other.<sup>39</sup>

Thank you-but it is not settled yet whether I do hazard a 2d\* Edition. We are to see Egerton today, when it will probably be determined. - People are more ready to borrow & praise, than to buy-which I cannot wonder at; - but tho' I like praise as well as anybody, I like what Edward calls Pewter too.<sup>40</sup>

On December 11, 1815, the writer sent the revised manuscript of *Mansfield Park* for the printing of the second edition.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the second edition of the novel went to press on February 19, 1816, edited by Mr Murray.

Meanwhile, Jane Austen had finished writing *Emma* on March 29, 1815, going to London in August to negotiate its publication,<sup>42</sup> with the book being launched around the end of 1815. *Emma* is noteworthy because of its narrative voice and its «vigorously trochaic rhythm» in «the opening words – ‘Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clear and rich...’ – a confident, energetic and commanding voice».<sup>43</sup> Likewise, this novel is a good example to illustrate «the meaning of the restricted world, to thus present the conflict between what is real and imaginary and end up tackling the relationship with the individualistic ideology of its time».<sup>44</sup> The novel «populate[s] ‘the Highbury world’ and give[s] it apparent depth».<sup>45</sup>

On October 21, 1815, the writer's brother, Henry Austen, drafted a letter for John Murray acknowledging the criticism that Murray made on *Emma* and disagreeing with the fees received, as said fees were not those list-

39 *Ibid.*, p. 411.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 419-420.

41 Jane confirms that «*Mansfield Park* [is] ready for a 2d\* edit: I believe, as I can make it» (*Ibid.*, p. 447).

42 This information has been specified by Deirdre LA FAYE, *Chronology of Jane Austen's Life*, cit., p. 11.

43 John WILTSHIRE, *Mansfield Park, Emma, Persuasion*, in Edward COPELAND & Juliet MCMASTER (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 66.

44 Estefanía VILLALBA, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

45 John WILTSHIRE, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

ed in the documents that were in his possession, said documents proving that the amount offered by Murray for the rights to *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* were not the correct amounts. On November 3 of that same year, the writer sent another letter to Murray explaining that, due to the illness of her brother, she would deal with the novel's financial matters directly herself:

My Brother's severe Illness has prevented his replying to Yours of Oct. 15, on the subject of the MS of *Emma*, now in your hands-and as he is though recovering, still in a state which we are fearful of harassing by Business & I am at the same time desirous of coming to some decision on the affair in question, I must request the favor of you to call on me here, any day that may suit you best, at any hour in the Evening, or any in the Morning except from Eleven to One.-A short conversation may perhaps do more than much writing.<sup>46</sup>

Twelve days later, the author wrote a letter to James Stainer Clarke, the librarian of the Prince Regent, to confirm that she wished to dedicate *Emma* to the Prince Regent. The librarian graciously answered the next day, granting her permission to do so and indicating that this great honor needed no further authorization in the future:

I must take the liberty of asking you a question. - Among the many flattering attentions which I recd\* from you at Carlton House on Monday last, was the information of my being at liberty to dedicate any future work to HRH. the P. R. without the necessity of any solicitation on my part.<sup>47</sup>

On November 23, 1815, Jane Austen sent another letter to Murray urging him to publish the novel, showing her disappointment and dissatisfaction with the slowness of its printing and requesting him to do what he could to accelerate the process. Austen thought that at the current rate it would not be ready by the end of November – nor even by the end of December. More specifically, she pressured him for the printers to be more diligent and timely, especially taking into account that the novel was to be dedicated to the Prince Regent.<sup>48</sup> The next day, in a letter to Cassan-

<sup>46</sup> Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 432.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

<sup>48</sup> In this series of letters to the editor, we can observe the immense interest of the Austens in Walter Scott's publications. For instance, in a letter, Austen thanks Murray for having lent Scott's *The Field of Waterloo* to her brother. In this very letter too,

dra, there was mention of the three first volumes of the work. Two days later, in another letter to Cassandra, the author mentioned that the printers were working quite well and again made reference to the third volume, pointing out a spelling error in the noun «arrowroot», more specifically in the ninth chapter of the third volume – chapter number 45.

The writer again mentioned the matter of the work's dedication to the Prince Regent in yet another letter, dated December 2 (to Cassandra), regretting that until that time she had not thought to order a special binding for the Prince. Nine days later, the novelist gave instructions to Murray as to how the book's dedication was to appear. It is thought that the dedication was printed in a more elaborate way than what was stipulated by Jane;<sup>49</sup> in fact, in another letter dated that same day, the 11th, the author thanked the editor for the corrections made on the dedication, confessing that she was pleased to have a friend who would help her to avoid the negative consequences of her clumsy mistakes. That same day, Jane Austen also wrote to Stainer to confirm the regard it would have with the Prince:

My *Emma* is now so near publication that I feel it right to assure you of my not having forgotten your kind recommendation of an early copy for Carlton House, and that I have Mr. Murray's promise of its being sent to His Royal Highness, under cover to you, three days previous to the work being really out. I must make use of this opportunity to thank you, dear Sir, for the very high praise you bestow on my other novels. I am too vain to wish to convince you that you have praised them beyond their merits<sup>50</sup>.

On December 21, Stainer Clarke thanked the writer for sending the book for the Prince and for the copy which she had also sent to him, making note of the excellent and natural description of the characters emanating from the first few pages that he had read. Six days later, the author received another thank you letter. In this case, from the Countess of Morley, likewise thanking her for having sent a volume that included the new novel. F. Morley stated having formed a friendship with the Woodhouse fami-

Jane asks for Scott's *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*; therefore, Jane Austen is portrayed as a writer that moves with the literary trends of the time. Moreover, she gave the copy of *Waterloo* back to the editor. In a letter to Cassandra dated on November 24, she explains that thanks to Mr. Murray they had met Helen Maria Williams (1761-1827), author of *A Narrative of the Events which have lately taken place in France*, 1815.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 566.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 442.

ly, believing that they would give her as much pleasure as the Bennet family (that is to say, *Pride and Prejudice*), the Bertram family, and the Norris family (that is to say, *Mansfield Park*). Nevertheless, days later the Countess wrote to her sister-in-law (Theresa Villiers) telling her that she found *Emma* to be inferior to *Mansfield Park* and *Pride and Prejudice*<sup>51</sup>. The last day of the month, the writer acknowledged receipt of the letter from the Countess; she thanked her for her words and stated that she was glad that she hadn't overly adorned her style, as was typically the case with very prolific writers as their literary career advanced. At the beginning of January of 1816, Jane sent a letter to Anna Lefroy with a copy of *Emma* that she could borrow for whatever time necessary in order for her to read it. The writer received special thanks from the Prince Regent, who showed his gratitude for «the beautiful copy» through a letter written by the librarian, Stainer, said letter having been written, in this case, as of March 27, 1816.

Additional criticism has been found in specialized publications, especially in *Quarterly Review*, which included an anonymous review of the new novel. Jane acknowledged the review but regretted that it did not make reference to *Mansfield Park*. Said review was written by Walter Scott and was included in volume 14 (October 27, 1815) published in March of 1816, additionally mentioning the success of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*.<sup>52</sup> A later reference to *Emma* was found in a letter dated February 21, 1817 and addressed to Fanny Knight. This letter mentioned the praise coming from different individuals, such as Mrs. C. Cage, the writer of *Opinions of Emma*.<sup>53</sup>

The last novel written by Jane Austen is *Persuasion*. The first draft was written in July of 1816, and the work was finished around August 6.<sup>54</sup> *Persuasion* was later published, along with *Northanger Abbey*, at the end of

51 *Ibid.*, p. 574. In a letter from the Countess Morley dated December 29.

52 On the December 11 of the same year, Austen makes a reference to the announcement of publication on the following Saturday. This advertisement appeared in «The Observer» on the December 16, although the publication was delayed until December 23, as announced in the «Morning Chronicle». This information is taken from Susanna GONZÁLEZ, in *Introducción y Apéndice* to Jane AUSTEN, *Cartas*, Llanera, d'Época, 2012, p. 582. The letter is dated in Pavilion. Its recipient was John Murray, whom Austen thanks for having lent her the magazine in question («Quarterly Review»), which she returns to him with the letter.

53 Cage praises the depth in Austen's presentation of the characters, as well as the clarity of her writing. Susanna GONZÁLEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 616.

54 Deirdre LA FAYE, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

1817 in a four-volume edition. *Persuasion* was «conspicuous for its tender and underisive treatment of its heroine's affections»,<sup>55</sup> something which contrasted with the earlier novel *Northanger Abbey* – a novel that was put together in her youth, being full of «satires of sentimental romances and their readers». Previously, Austen had written the other early work *Love and Friendship*,<sup>56</sup> which parodied sentimental romance.<sup>57</sup> The transition observed from her beginnings to her maturity reflects the writer's evolution.<sup>58</sup> *Persuasion*, likewise, recreated Anne Elliot who «had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older, the natural sequel of unnatural beginning».<sup>59</sup>

Jane Austen confirmed, on March 13, 1817, in a letter to her niece Fanny Knight, the preparation of a new novel that would be published shortly. Specifically, she explained to her, «I have a something ready for Publication, which may perhaps appear about a twelvemonth hence. It is short, about the length of Catherine [Catherine Morland is the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey*]. - This is for yourself alone. Neither Mr. Salusbury nor Mr. Wildman are to know of it».<sup>60</sup> A few days later, she sent her another letter in which she again commented that she had a text [*Persuasion*] ready for publication – something which her uncle Henry already knew.

55 Claude RAWSON, *Introduction to Jane AUSTEN, Persuasion*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. vii.

56 Only one (indirect) reference to the work has been found in a letter to her sister Cassandra dated August 24, 1814. It refers to a coach journey which the author undertook: «It put me in mind of my own Coach between Edinburgh & Sterling» Austen is referring to the coach that she mentions in the fourteenth letter of *Love and Friendship* (Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 397). For the reference to the primary text: Jane AUSTEN, *Love and Freindship*, in *Catherine and Other Writings*, Margaret Anne Doody & Douglas Murray eds., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 99.

57 Austen wrote *Love and Freindship* [sic, the manuscript contains this error] when she was 14 years old. Essentially, it is an exchange of letters between a Spanish girl, Laura and Marianne. The subtitle hints at its parodic subtext: «Deceived in Friendship and Betrayed in Love». There is a reference to the work in Austen's correspondence. Three notebooks of Austen's, which the author used as a young woman, have been preserved. One is in the Bodleian Library; the other two are in the British Museum.

58 Upon completing *Persuasion*, Austen began to write *Sanditon*, a satire against the cult of sensitivity developed during the height of Romanticism.

59 Jane AUSTEN, *Persuasion*, ed. John Davie, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 33.

60 EAD., *Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and Others*, cit., p. 484.

According to Houlyhan Flynn, the legacy of «[the] letters provide an excellent vehicle for such formidable observation», describing «the minute details of everyday life». <sup>61</sup> The reading of Jane Austen's collected letters reveals a «texture of domestic life» <sup>62</sup> and acts as a reliable pretext to corroborate many of the references made throughout her novels.

We may therefore conclude that Jane Austen presented a dual dimension in terms of her letter writing. On the one hand, the writer exchanged <sup>63</sup> dozens of messages with family members and friends; and, on the other hand, some of her principal characters were directly influenced or determined by her personal letter writing. These include Catherine (*Northanger Abbey*), Laura (*Love and Friendship*), Mr. Darcy (*Pride and Prejudice*), Miss Fairfax (*Emma*), and Miss Bates (*Persuasion*). According to Henry Austen's biographical note:

The style of her familiar correspondence was in all respects the same as that of her novels. Everything came finished from her pen; for on all subjects she had ideas as clear as her expressions were well chosen. It is not hazarding too much to say that she never dispatched a note or letter unworthy of publication. <sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Carol HOULYHAN FLYNN, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>63</sup> This element brings Jane Austen into the company of great writers who dedicated a large part of their time to the exchange of letters in first person, such as Charles Dickens and George Eliot.

<sup>64</sup> Henry AUSTEN, *Bibliographical Notice of the Author*, in Jane AUSTEN, *Persuasion. An Annotated Edition*, ed. Robert Morrison, Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011, p. 325.