



Love and Marriage in the Novels of Jane Austen

著者	Mallett Peter J
著者別名	Mallett Peter J
journal or publication title	Journal of the Faculty of Letters, Kobe Shoin Women's University (JOL)
volume	3
page range	29-40
year	2014-03-05
URL	http://doi.org/10.14946/00001426

Love and Marriage in the Novels of Jane Austen

ピーター J. マレット

神戸松蔭女子学院大学文学部

Author's E-mail Address: peter@shoin.ac.jp

Love and Marriage in the Novels of Jane Austen

Peter J MALLETT

Faculty of Letters, Kobe Shoin Women's University

Abstract

ジェーン・オースティンの小説6作品は、主に理想的な夫選びについて描かれている。『高慢と偏見』、『分別と多感』、『エマ』における結婚および結婚と財産との関係について分析。

Jane Austen's six novels, written at the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries, are mainly about the search for a suitable husband. This paper will discuss marriage and its connection to money and property in three of Austen's novels: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*. I will also contrast Austen's portrayal of love with that of Emily Brontë's in *Wuthering Heights*.

Key Words: Marriage, property, Romantic Movement, social status, passion

Jane Austen's six novels, written at the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries, are mainly concerned with the search of the main characters for suitable husbands. In this search, Austen's heroines' characters develop while, at the same time, they discover much about themselves. This paper will discuss marriage and its connection to money and property in three of Austen's novels: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*. I will also contrast Austen's portrayal of love with that of Emily Brontë's in *Wuthering Heights*.

According to the words of a well-known Frank Sinatra song, *Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage... you can't have one without the other.*¹ In Jane Austen's period, however, the

situation was often very different: rather than love and marriage, it was frequently *money* and marriage that went together. Marriage without love was a distinct possibility.

Austen writes about the upper-middle classes and aristocracy for whom, in this period, marriage was customarily a financial and social arrangement, rather than the result of romance. Perhaps unrealistically, however, Austen's heroines do always marry for love. Also, somewhat unrealistically, is the fortunate fact that the men they fall in love with are always rich. Austen's women never marry outside their class or, at least, never marry someone of a lower class. In fact, their husbands are frequently of higher social standing.

Finding a suitable husband was a very serious problem in this period for women of the middle class who usually had very little money of their own, unlike those of a higher social position. Land, property and money were normally all left to the eldest son. Sometimes, as in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, the money and property were entailed to a male relative. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the Bennet's property at Longbourn was to be given to a male cousin, Mr Collins, after the death of Mr Bennet. Mr Bennet's widow – if she survived her husband – and his daughters would have nowhere to live. Therefore, it was not just important but *essential* that at least some of the five daughters married – and married well if they were to maintain the position in society they had occupied until then.

Work opportunities for women like the Bennet girls were also very limited. The lower classes, of course, had to work in factories, on the land, or as servants. Women of the upper classes usually had independent income and so did not need to work. But the women that Austen mainly writes about were in a very difficult position. They were generally not highly educated: those who were could possibly get jobs as governesses – as Emily and Charlotte Brontë did – though this put them in a social position not much better than a servant. One other source of income for talented women of this class was from writing – Jane Austen herself being such an example.

The central problem of Austen's novels is that the heroines have to find husbands – preferably ones they truly love – despite their lack of money. We find in the novels, therefore, much discussion of *money* and *property* with regard to marriage, although this should not come as any great surprise as the English word 'husband', from the Old Norse *husbondi*, means 'the master of a house'.²

Pride and Prejudice

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the connection between marriage and property is established in the very first paragraph of Chapter 1:

IT is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

In the opening line of the novel, money ('good fortune') is linked to marriage ('wife'). This is emphasized in the following sentence: 'he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.' Here 'property' is connected to husband-hunting spinsters – ironically as, in fact, women (and everything they owned) became the *property* of the men they married at that time, rather than the other way round. The 1995 BBC televised version of *Pride and Prejudice* very cleverly emphasized the importance of property in relation to marriage with its opening scene showing two rich young men on horseback with a large house in the background.

Jane Austen introduces Mrs Bennet by telling us 'The business of her life was to get her daughters married...' In pursuit of this aim, Mrs Bennet plans that their new neighbour, Mr Bingley, should marry one of her daughters: 'I am thinking of his marrying one of them,' she tells her husband. She thinks 'he *may* fall in love with one of them...' even though they have never met and she knows nothing about him, apart from his fortune – she has already discovered *exactly* how rich Mr Bingley is: 'A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year.'

It is Mr Bingley's income which is of most interest to Mrs Bennet; his looks, character, education and intelligence (or lack of it) are of no importance. While she says 'he *may* fall in love,' love actually has very little to do with the situation. She does not care whether the young man is in love with one of her daughters, only that he should be rich and reasonably respectable. Love and marriage have little connection for her.

This becomes even clearer when Mr Collins, the cousin who is to inherit the Bennets' property, comes on a visit with the intention of marrying one of the girls. Jane Austen, with characteristic frankness, tells us directly that 'Mr. Collins was not a sensible man.' This does not trouble Mrs Bennet, however, who is determined that he should marry one of her daughters.

MR. COLLINS was not a sensible man, ...

... Having now a good house and very sufficient income, he intended to marry; and in seeking a reconciliation with the Longbourn family he had a wife in view, as he meant to chuse one of the daughters, if he found them as handsome and amiable as they were represented by common report. This was his plan of amends – of atonement – for inheriting their father's estate; and he thought it an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitableness, and excessively generous and disinterested on his own part. (Chapter 15)

For Mr Collins too, love has little to do with his reasons for marrying: he has a 'good house and very sufficient income' so, as Jane Austen stated in the opening sentence of the book, he is 'in want of a wife'. He has a very practical plan to achieve his aim: the Bennets have five daughters and he presumes they will be grateful to him if he marries one of them. His choice of daughter, however, is quite arbitrary: first he thinks he will marry Jane, the eldest, but, when Mrs Bennet informs him that Jane is likely soon to be engaged to Mr Bingley, he quickly makes a new choice:

His plan did not vary on seeing them. Miss Bennet's lovely face confirmed his views, and established all his strictest notions of what was due to seniority; and for the first evening she was his settled choice. The next morning, however, made an alteration; for in a quarter of an hour's tête-à-tête with Mrs. Bennet before breakfast, a conversation beginning with his parsonage-house, and leading naturally to the avowal of his hopes that a mistress for it might be found at Longbourn, produced from her, amid very complaisant smiles and general encouragement, a caution against the very Jane he had fixed on...

...Mr. Collins had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth – and it was soon done – done while Mrs. Bennet was stirring the fire. Elizabeth, equally next to Jane in birth and beauty, succeeded her of course. *(Chapter 15)*

When he makes his proposal to Elizabeth, he begins by giving his reasons – which have nothing to do with love:

“My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly – which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. *(Chapter 19)*

Unsurprisingly, the high-spirited and independent Elizabeth refuses Mr Collins. Her parents react in different ways – Mrs Bennet is furious with Elizabeth for not accepting a man who will help solve a financial problem; Mr Bennet respects the sensible decision of his beloved daughter:

Mrs. Bennet rang the bell, and Miss Elizabeth was summoned to the library.

“Come here, child,” cried her father as she appeared. “I have sent for you on an affair of importance. I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true?” Elizabeth replied that it was. “Very well – and this offer of marriage you have refused?”

“I have, Sir.”

“Very well. We now come to the point. Your mother insists upon your accepting it. Is not it so, Mrs. Bennet?”

“Yes, or I will never see her again.”

“An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. – Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do.” *(Chapter 20)*

Undeterred, Mr Collins quickly looks for another person to marry and chooses Elizabeth's friend,

Charlotte Lucas, who, despite having only just met him, accepts his proposal. Charlotte explains her decision to Elizabeth:

“I see what you are feeling,” replied Charlotte, “you must be surprised, very much surprised, so lately as Mr. Collins was wishing to marry you. But when you have had time to think it all over, I hope you will be satisfied with what I have done. I am not romantic, you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins’s character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state.” (Chapter 22)

Elizabeth is distressed that her friend has sacrificed herself by choosing a man who cannot make her happy. But Charlotte’s decision is practical and realistic: she asks only for ‘a comfortable home.’ The truth is, that for many women of Charlotte’s position in the 19th century, that was *all* they could ask for. The happy ending Elizabeth and Jane Bennet enjoy in *Pride and Prejudice* by marrying the men they love (who also happen to be rich) was more likely to happen only in a romantic novel.

Elizabeth discovers through the course of this book that her true love is the handsome, aristocratic and extremely rich Mr Darcy. Though at first she dislikes him intensely because he has hurt her pride, and even refuses his first offer of marriage, she gradually understands his true character. This understanding begins when she visits Darcy’s huge estate of Pemberley in Derbyshire. After Elizabeth’s acceptance of Darcy’s second proposal of marriage, her sister Jane asks how long she has been in love with him. Elizabeth replies:

“It has been coming on so gradually, that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley.” (Chapter 59)

Elizabeth is, of course, joking that she has fallen in love with Darcy because of his huge house and beautiful grounds: we know her well enough by now to understand that she would not marry someone, however rich or important, if she did not respect him. There is, however, some truth in her jest because it is during her visit to Pemberley that Elizabeth begins to understand Darcy’s real character and to learn what a good man he is. She hears nothing but praise of him from his servants and sees for herself how well-managed the estate is under his direction. His beautifully kept grounds at Pemberley are, in fact, a reflection of his character.

When Elizabeth’s parents learn of her engagement to Darcy, their reactions are, once again, very different. Mr Bennet worries only that Elizabeth will be happy:

“I know that you could be neither happy nor respectable, unless you truly esteemed your husband; unless you looked up to him as a superior. Your lively talents would place you in the

greatest danger in an unequal marriage. You could scarcely escape discredit and misery. My child, let me not have the grief of seeing you unable to respect your partner in life. You know not what you are about.”
(Chapter 59)

Mr Bennet, of course, has experienced the grief of being unable to respect his partner, married as he is to a very stupid and irritating woman.

Mrs Bennet, on the other hand, does not even question her daughter about her feelings towards a man she is well-known to have disliked on first meeting: her mind is occupied with money, jewels, carriages and a second house in London:

“Good gracious! Lord bless me! only think! dear me! Mr. Darcy! Who would have thought it! And is it really true? Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! Jane’s is nothing to it – nothing at all. I am so pleased – so happy. Such a charming man! – so handsome! so tall! – Oh, my dear Lizzy! pray apologise for my having disliked him so much before. I hope he will overlook it. Dear, dear Lizzy. A house in town! Every thing that is charming! Three daughters married! Ten thousand a year! Oh, Lord! What will become of me. I shall go distracted.”
(Chapter 59)

While we may laugh at Mrs Bennet’s preoccupation with money and status, however, if we are to be fair it has to be said that Mr Bennet has shown complete indifference to the problems his daughters will face after his death if they are not suitably married.

Pride and Prejudice ends happily with the marriages of Jane to Bingley and of Elizabeth to Darcy. But Jane Austen has one more ironic stab at Mrs Bennet on the day of her daughters’ marriages:

HAPPY for all her maternal feelings was the day on which Mrs. Bennet got rid of her two most deserving daughters.
(Chapter 61)

Mrs Bennet has been so eager for her daughters to marry that it seems she wants to ‘get rid of them’ – an interesting choice of a verb usually reserved for disposing of garbage.

Sense and Sensibility

The situation of Mrs Dashwood and her three daughters, Elinor, Marianne and Margaret, in *Sense and Sensibility* is similar to that feared by Mrs Bennet after her husband dies. The Dashwood’s home, Norland Park, is entailed and has to be passed to the son of a previous marriage. When Henry Dashwood dies at the beginning of the novel, his widow and three daughters are left with little money and no right to remain in their country estate. They are forced to leave their large home with many

servants to live simply in a small house in Devonshire.

This novel has two contrasting heroines, Elinor and Marianne, who represent different attitudes to love. Elinor represents ‘sense’ – she is ruled by her head. She does not show her feelings. Marianne represents ‘sensibility’, which has little to do with possessing good sense, but rather with being *sensitive, aware of the senses and emotions*. Marianne is very emotional, she is ruled by her heart, not her head. The novel shows how the two women change as a result of their experiences.

Early in the novel, Elinor meets and falls in love with Edward Ferrers. Her sister Marianne likes him, but at first can’t really understand why Elinor should want to marry him:

“Perhaps,” said Marianne, “I may consider it with some surprise. Edward is very amiable, and I love him tenderly. But yet – he is not the kind of young man – there is something wanting – his figure is not striking; it has none of that grace which I should expect in the man who could seriously attach my sister. His eyes want all that spirit, that fire, which at once announce virtue and intelligence. And besides all this, I am afraid, mamma, he has no real taste. Music seems scarcely to attract him; and, though he admires Elinor’s drawings very much, it is not the admiration of a person who can understand their worth. It is evident, in spite of his frequent attention to her while she draws, that in fact he knows nothing of the matter. He admires as a lover, not as a connoisseur. To satisfy me, those characters must be united. I could not be happy with a man whose taste did not in every point coincide with my own. He must enter into all my feelings: the same books, the same music must charm us both...

...Elinor has not my feelings, and, therefore, she may overlook it, and be happy with him. But it would have broken *my* heart, had I loved him, to hear him read with so little **sensibility**. Mamma, the more I know of the world, the more am I convinced that I shall never see a man whom I can really love. I require so much!” (Chapter 3)

This conversation shows Marianne’s romantic expectations of a husband. Edward, Elinor’s choice, lacks ‘sensibility.’ After the family moves to Devonshire, they are introduced to Colonel Brandon, a quiet man of about thirty-five, whom Marianne thinks too old and boring to be a suitor, despite his kindness to her. Colonel Brandon seems to be interested in Marianne but she is not attracted to him at all. Elinor and Marianne have very different opinions about him:

[ELINOR] “My protégé, as you call him, is a **sensible** man; and **sense** will always have attractions for me. Yes, Marianne, even in a man between thirty and forty. He has seen a great deal of the world; has been abroad, has read, and has a thinking mind. I have found him capable of giving me much information on various subjects; and he has always answered my enquiries with readiness of good breeding and good nature.”

....“Add to which,” cried Marianne, “that he has neither genius, taste, nor spirit. That his understanding has no brilliancy, his feelings ardour, and his voice no expression.”

(Chapter 10)

For Elinor, Colonel Brandon's attraction is that he is 'sensible' – that is, his actions are ruled by 'sense'. For Marianne, he is not romantic enough; just like Edward, he lacks 'sensitivity', spirit and brilliancy.

While out walking one day, Marianne falls and is rescued by a handsome young man called Willoughby. She very quickly and obviously falls in love with him. Willoughby seems to be in love with her too so that everyone expects their engagement. Despite this promising beginning, however, Willoughby suddenly has to leave for London and we later learn the reason: he has become engaged to a very rich lady on the insistence of his guardian (another example of a marital union formed on financial rather than emotional grounds). Marianne collapses of a broken heart. She subsequently becomes dangerously sick with a fever and on her recovery learns to appreciate Brandon's attentions to her. She has now learned 'sense' and to moderate her 'sensitivity'. She realizes the true characters of Willoughby and Brandon so that when Brandon proposes to her, she accepts him.

Elinor, meanwhile, has become so used to restraining her feelings that her 'sense' has been wrongly interpreted as coldness. When Edward is finally free to propose to her, she is at last able to express her emotions.

Like *Pride and Prejudice*, the novel ends happily with the marriages of the two sisters, despite their lack of position and money, to good, reasonably rich men with whom they are deeply in love.

The Romantic Movement

With Marianne, before she has learned 'sense', Austen comes closest to creating a character representing the Romantic Movement. Although this literary movement took place during Austen's lifetime, it little affected her style except in her first novel, *Northanger Abbey*. This comic work is a parody of the Gothic novel in which Austen mocks the romantic imagination of her young heroine, Catherine Morland, and the essential concepts of early Romanticism: terror, passion and the Sublime.

Despite the high regard in which Austen was held during her lifetime, Charlotte Brontë, who, with her sister Emily, was a key figure in the later stages of the Romantic Movement, did not like her. She complains that in Austen's novels she sees only “a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers—but no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy—no open country—no fresh air—no blue hill—no bonny beck. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen in their elegant but confined houses.”³

The image of the highly cultivated garden is a good one to remember when comparing the writing of Jane Austen with that of the Brontë sisters. The world of Jane Austen's novels *is* like a garden where nature is controlled by man; everything is neat and orderly and the rules of society are important.

Darcy's beautiful estate at Pemberley is upheld as the ideal – it is well-managed and everyone living there is happy.

Austen lived in a beautiful, gentle part of the British countryside with no mountains or great rivers and a moderate climate. She wrote about small villages, not about great cities. London is a place that people visit in her novels, but she never described it. The landscape of Austen is not that of the Romantics.

The Brontës, on the other hand, lived in Yorkshire in just the sort of landscape that was appreciated by the Romantics – wild moors of the North of England. Charlotte recognized that readers, brought up in cities or gentle places, would not understand “the rough, strong utterance, the harshly manifested passions, the unbridled aversions, and headlong partialities of unlettered moorland hinds and rugged moorland squires, who have grown up untaught and unchecked, except by Mentors as harsh as themselves.”⁴

If the world of Austen's novels is like a cultivated garden, that of the Brontës is like the *open country* Charlotte complains is lacking in Austen's work. The characters of Austen's novels are generally products of the ‘garden’ landscape, while those of the Brontës, in particular of Emily in her only novel *Wuthering Heights*, are products of the untamed moorland where nature is wild, sometimes violent, unpredictable and uncontrollable – as exemplified in the many storms.

Marianne aside, no-one in Austen's novels is really unbalanced by a strong passion. This one example from *Wuthering Heights* will show the extreme difference between Emily Brontë's writing about two lovers (whose love, incidentally, is *outside* marriage) and Jane Austen's:

‘Are you possessed with a devil,’ he pursued, savagely, ‘to talk in that manner to me when you are dying? Do you reflect that all those words will be branded in my memory, and eating deeper eternally, after you have left me? You know you lie to say I have killed you; and, Catherine, you know that I could as soon forget you as my existence! Is it not sufficient for your infernal selfishness, that while you are at peace I shall writhe in the torments of hell?’...

... In her eagerness she rose and supported herself on the arm of the chair. At that earnest appeal he turned to her, looking absolutely desperate. His eyes, wide and wet, at last flashed fiercely on her; his breast heaved convulsively. An instant they held asunder; and then how they met I hardly saw, but Catherine made a spring, and he caught her, and they were locked in an embrace from which I thought my mistress would never be released alive: in fact, to my eyes, she seemed directly insensible. He flung himself into the nearest seat, and on my approaching hurriedly to ascertain if she had fainted, he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species...

(Chapter 15)

The language used describes a demented passion; there are references to death and hell; the verbs are wildly physical and violent. It is impossible that Jane Austen could write about love in such a way. Charlotte Brontë, in a letter of 1850 about Jane Austen claimed that ‘the Passions are perfectly unknown to her’,⁵ but Austen has shown with Marianne the bad consequences of passionate love when not tempered by sense and social rules. We can conclude from this that Austen was not unaware of the type of love that the Brontës write about but believed indulging such passions would not result in lasting happiness – and if we consider the fates of Cathy and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, she was probably right.

Emma

The situation and prospects of the central character in Austen’s fifth novel, *Emma*, provides a complete contrast to those in the two earlier novels already discussed. Unlike the heroines of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, Emma Woodhouse, with a large fortune of her own, is quite independent and can choose to marry whomever she wants – or choose not to marry at all.

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her. (Chapter 1)

Emma’s mother died long ago, her father is kind and indulgent, her older sister married. She has an independent fortune, a comfortable home and no worries about her future. She does not *need* to marry unless she falls in love. Furthermore, she believes it unlikely she *will* fall in love, as she says in this conversation with her new friend, Harriet Smith:

“I do so wonder, Miss Woodhouse, that you should not be married, or going to be married! so charming as you are!”—

Emma laughed, and replied,

“My being charming, Harriet, is not quite enough to induce me to marry; I must find other people charming — one other person at least. And I am not only, not going to be married, at present, but have very little intention of ever marrying at all.”

“Ah! — so you say; but I cannot believe it.”

“I must see somebody very superior to any one I have seen yet, to be tempted; Mr. Elton, you know, (recollecting herself,) is out of the question: and I do not wish to see any such person. I would rather not be tempted. I cannot really change for the better. If I were to marry, I must expect to repent it.”

“Dear me! — it is so odd to hear a woman talk so!”—

“I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Were I to fall in love, indeed,

it would be a different thing! but I never have been in love; it is not my way, or my nature; and I do not think I ever shall. And, without love, I am sure I should be a fool to change such a situation as mine. Fortune I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want: I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house, as I am of Hartfield; and never, never could I expect to be so truly beloved and important; so always first and always right in any man's eyes as I am in my father's." (Chapter 10)

Harriet, however, is concerned about Emma's future: "But still, you will be an old maid! and that's so dreadful!"

Emma's reply tells us a lot about society at this time:

"Never mind, Harriet, I shall not be a poor old maid; and it is poverty only which makes celibacy contemptible to a generous public! A single woman, with a very narrow income, must be a ridiculous, disagreeable, old maid! the proper sport of boys and girls; but a single woman, of good fortune, is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as any body else." (Chapter 10)

In other words, rich women can do as they please; no-one will make fun of them for not being married while poor unmarried women are ridiculous and unpleasant.

Rather than look for a husband of her own, Emma entertains herself by trying to find a suitable match for Harriet. She persuades Harriet to reject a very suitable offer of marriage from a farmer called Robert Martin and makes some bad choices of suitors until Harriet, encouraged by her friend to try to marry someone of higher social class, eventually falls in love with Mr Knightley. It is only then that Emma realizes her mistakes and how she has deceived herself, for she is in love with Mr Knightley!

A few minutes were sufficient for making her acquainted with her own heart. A mind like hers, once opening to suspicion, made rapid progress. She touched—she admitted—she acknowledged the whole truth. Why was it so much worse that Harriet should be in love with Mr. Knightley, than with Frank Churchill? Why was the evil so dreadfully increased by Harriet's having some hope of a return? It darted through her, with the speed of an arrow, that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!... (Chapter 47)

Luckily for Emma, Harriet is mistaken that Mr Knightley returns her affections. There is no danger of Mr Knightley marrying her – although Jane Austen treats Harriet's situation with sympathy, she is not going to throw away her leading man to a character of *such* humble origins! Though twelve years older, he is in love with Emma and, as a great friend of the family and a man of similar social position, is a very suitable match for her. Emma, having now learned from her mistakes, has matured and is

ready for his proposal of marriage. In Jane Austen style, so there is no unhappiness at the end of the novel, Harriet once more meets her first suitor, Robert Martin, (a respectable man, but not of *too* high a station) and falls in love with him again.

All Jane Austen's novels end happily with the marriage of the heroines to the men they love. In these novels, love and marriage *do* go together like a horse and carriage, although Austen gives examples of marriages where the partners do not love each other in Mr and Mrs Bennet, Charlotte Lucas and Mr Collins, amongst others.

Jane Austen herself, though, never found love in marriage: whether she fell in love or not, we are not certain. Although she received an offer of marriage, she never did marry. Perhaps the unrealistically happy endings of her novels are the dreams she was unable to fulfil in life herself.

Notes

¹ Love And Marriage lyrics © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.

² Old Norse *husbondi* master of a house from *hus* house + *bondi* occupier and tiller of the soil. *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 1993

³ Extract from letter of 12 January 1848 from Charlotte Brontë to G.H. Lewes, reproduced in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, 1812–1870*, p126, Ed. B. C. Southam. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.

⁴ Brontë, Charlotte, Editor's Preface to the New (1850) Edition of *Wuthering Heights*, reproduced in *Wuthering Heights*, p441, London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

⁵ Extract from letter of 12 April 1850 from Charlotte Brontë to W.S. Williams, reproduced in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, 1812–1870*, p128, Ed. B. C. Southam. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.

Works Cited

Austen, Jane: *Pride and Prejudice*, The Folio Society, Frome, 1957 (based on the definitive text of Prof. R. W. Chapman, O.U.P.)

Austen, Jane: *Sense and Sensibility*, The Folio Society, Frome, 1958 (based on the definitive text of Prof. R. W. Chapman, O.U.P.)

Austen, Jane: *Emma*, Penguin Books, London, 1966

Brontë, Emily: *Wuthering Heights*, London: Oxford University Press, 1976