Imagining a Man "More Exactly what He Ought to Be": Jane Austen's Revolutionary Masculinities

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ABSTRACT

Jane Austen's canon has been expertly combed through for its moral implications, whether radically feminist or extremely conservative. Writing during the Napoleonic Wars, Austen was no stranger to politics, the military, or the implications both had on her life and her role in society. In the paper that follows, I posit that Austen channeled many of her opinions on England's state of affairs through her male characters, who were the acting socio-political agents of the day. Through various caricatures of masculinity, Austen portrays masculine ideals and failures, both of which were rapidly evolving during her time. This research focuses on Austen's portrayal of the "self-made man," a form of masculinity which emerged following the American and French Revolutions, and grew to prominence in England following the Napoleonic Wars. These men quickly made places for themselves in society, particularly through the British Navy. They grew to rank and status through their own merit and skills, instead of high birth and landed title. Their increasing prominence threatened the very foundations of British society as Austen knew it. However, as this paper explores, Austen took care to present these men - and the changes they brought - in a positive light, showcasing the value in their revolutionary social movement. In the following essay, I demonstrate how, in doing so, Austen's later novels, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion,* act as political tools which reveal how Austen's opinions about England's fragile state were revolutionary.

Introduction: Jane Austen, the Revolutionary

While Jane Austen's works have been thoroughly examined for their wide array of female characters, a notably smaller body of research explores Jane Austen's presentations of men and masculinity across her canon. These critics debate how these depictions contribute to her overall philosophies of social order, economics, conduct, and gender, among others. In this study, I plan to focus specifically on how Austen's depictions of masculinity represent her political views, particularly considering the volatile state of England – socially, economically, and politically – during her writing career. Just after the American and French Revolutions and right in the middle of the Napoleonic Wars, the period in which Jane Austen constructed her most significant works was one of crisis, emerging questions, and concern about social class and leadership. The competency of the aristocracy and landed gentry as ruling classes was frequently questioned by public figures and authors alike, including Jane Austen.

Mansfield Park and *Persuasion*, both hallmarks of Austen's later career, most explicitly address these questions. Her depictions of masculinity, specifically that of Michael Kimmel's "self-made man," who rises to distinction through his own personal merit instead of being born into his status, fuelled her critique of the landed classes. In both novels, Austen takes care to present her self-made men, William Price and Captain Frederick Wentworth, as the masculine *ideal*. Simultaneously, she utilizes examples of the flawed gentry to portray the masculinities which have led the landed classes into their fragile state. Each novel includes a senior patriarch who represents the old ways, whose negative depictions reveal the fractured state of the gentry and aristocracy. Even more striking are Austen's considerations of the future. This study delves into Austen's representations of the men of the *next* generation of landed gentlemen: Henry Crawford in *Mansfield* and Mr. William Elliot in *Persuasion*.

In exploring the rise of the self-made man as the masculine ideal, Austen also analyzes how the "self" plays into these concepts. Importantly, both Price and Wentworth are in the British Navy, which gained prominence during the Napoleonic Wars. It created a masculine ideal known for its meritocracy, a system where one's own *self* allows him to rise to distinction. In making these naval professionals the heroes of her novels, Austen explicitly critiques genteel masculine ideals and demonstrates that the self-made man was the way of the future. Ultimately, this paper seeks to prove that Jane Austen's depictions of naval, meritocratic masculinity reveal that her answer to the question of who was fit to rule was a radical one. Jane Austen's self-made men are tools of the revolution, used to show that the aristocracy had failed, and that the rising professionals were the best path forward for the nation.

I. Redefining Manhood: Historical Masculinities of the Regency

Across time and cultures, ideas of masculinity and what constitutes "ideal" masculinity shift constantly. In discussing Austen's works, one must consider them in their historical context. As Michael Kimmel writes, "manhood is neither static nor timeless … it's socially constructed … created in our culture" (4). Kimmel presents the idea of discussing *masculinities*, because "a history of manhood must, … recount two histories: the history of the changing 'ideal' version of masculinity and the parallel and competing versions that coexist with it" (4). One such masculinity is the "self-made man" which emerged in the early nineteenth century (Kimmel 5), during Austen's career. It "set itself in opposition to" the "class-based European imports" of genteel masculinity which pervade Austen's work (Kimmel 5). The self-made man is a "manhood that derives identity entirely from a man's activities in the public sphere, measured by accumulated wealth and status, by geographic and social mobility" (14). Though Kimmel links this ideal to America, he notes that "they had their counterparts in every European country" (14), including in British philosophy and literature. Jane Austen was fully aware of this masculine ideal, and used it in her work to promulgate her opinions on socio-political phenomena in England.

Michael Kramp writes that writers in Austen's era used masculinities to reveal "their plans for the future of the English nation" (18), and Jane Austen was no exception. Kramp argues that Austen's work portrays a modernizing nation "that is nervous about its men" (18). She questions "the security of the nation's ancestral order" by "dramatizing a crisis of English masculinity … a cultural anxiety about both England's future male leaders" (124). Jane Austen's depictions of masculinity are political statements: about the state of the nation, certain classes of people, or opinions on manners and conduct. They are "economic, social and political agents" engaged with many "contentious political issues of the day" ("Austen, Masculinity, and Romanticism" 321), including that of "what men ought to be" (Ailwood, *Jane Austen's Men* 7). For Austen, an exploration of what men, as political and social figures, *ought to be* directly reflects her opinions of what society ideally should look like.

Austen wrote her novels during a time of high political volatility and an increase in social mobility in England. Part of this mobility was facilitated by the increasing prominence of professional gentlemen, who rose to high society through hard work rather than inherited land and wealth. As Woodworth et al. write in *Eighteenth- Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement*, professionalization helped redefine "the gentleman, masculine virtue, and independence, and the effect that this redefinition had on the socio-political development of eighteenth-century Britain" (164). These professionals were the first hints of self-made men in England ("Austen, Masculinity, and Romanticism" 321). Knowing their importance to the current socio-political changes occurring in England, as I will explore, Austen took care to portray these self-made men in a positive light.

In *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, Austen places self-made men directly into the lives of her female protagonists, whether as a brother or romantic interest. In both cases, Austen depicts the self-made man as the hero: honorable, exemplary, and with a bright future. These men are also the objects of most of (if not all) the protagonist's love and admiration, whether fraternal, as with Fanny and William Price in *Mansfield Park,* or romantic, with Anne Elliot and Captain Frederick Wentworth in *Persuasion*. These men both rise to distinction through their naval promotions, as a result of their achievements and skill in their positions. At the time, the British Navy was "the cutting edge of the growing British meritocracy" (Woodworth et al. 171). By including self-made masculinity in her work with such high

favor, Austen spotlights the value of merit in her idea of what a man "should" be, implying that meritocracy is the best direction for England. Simultaneously, Austen explores the "self" of the self-made man, through the concepts of being "nothing," "something," or even "every thing." Her depictions of self-made men imply that one's self, specifically one's qualities and skills, are more integral to a man's virtue than his inherited title or fortune. Further, merit has political consequences, bolstering a "new social economy that rejects entitlement" instead favoring "excellence, worth, and skills …" (Woodworth et al. 138). Austen's depiction of socially mobile men as heroes "constitutes a radical challenge to traditional social and political leadership" (Woodworth et al. 135-6). As a member of the landed gentry herself, lauding these *self*-made men as opposed to her own male authority figures goes directly against the system under which she had been raised.

Notably, these self-made heroes do not exist in a vacuum. Important to my analysis is the background upon which Austen draws these sketches of masculinity: a fragile nation, jeopardized genteel estates, and as foils against unsavory genteel men: Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park* and William Elliot in *Persuasion*. By setting men of merit as up-and-coming or already firmly established against a landed gentry poised to topple, Austen suggests that meritocracy is "the way of the future" (Woodworth et al. 161). As ideas of self-making and meritocracy emerged, the question of who was truly suited to rule became a potent one among the educated classes of the Western World, and Jane Austen was no exception. Her depictions of self-made men like William Price and Captain Wentworth, exemplify how Austen's political commentary was revolutionary. In presenting professional men as the heroes of her story, Jane Austen clearly reveals that she believes that the future of the nation is meritocracy.

II. The Napoleonic Wars: Crises of Leadership, Power, and Masculinity

Jane Austen wrote *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* during a time of significant political, social, and economic change. The novels straddle the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, which created a "crisis of masculinity" in England, producing a "drive to reform the masculine ideal" (Woodworth et al. 136). Further, Marilyn Butler argues that Austen was aware of the wars and the anxiety they produced as she "[rewrote] masculinity through the novel" (Ailwood 13). Moreover, Butler, a known advocate of Austen's *conservatism*, notes that Austen "becomes more severe about the faults of her gentry in the later novels" (106). As a result, *Mansfield Park* is often understood as a "condition of England" novel, which is "a commentary on the moral and religious health of the gentry" and "its chance of pulling through" (Southam, 181). In this way, the novel plots the country's crises in the microcosm of Mansfield Park. For example, Tom Bertram signifies the questionable conduct of the English Prince Regent, while the slow rise to prominence of middle-class professionals is illustrated by naval officer William Price. The English masculine ideal underscores both issues, which continue in *Persuasion*. Where in *Mansfield* the gentry estate becomes *threatened* by the faults of the ruling classes, in *Persuasion* the fate of the estate, Kellynch Hall, seems to be more certain. Its patriarch, Sir Walter Elliot, is more concerned with appearances and luxury than the functional duties that come with estate ownership. The novel *opens* by revealing the consequences of these flaws: the Elliots must lease Kellynch to the naval Crofts. Never does Sir Walter return to Kellynch to resume his role, and the novel's conclusion suggests that he never will. Meanwhile, Anne Elliot, an aristocrat herself, declines to save her family's estate by marrying William Elliot, instead marrying Captain Wentworth, our second self-made man.

The Napoleonic Wars "exposed the potential costs of 'old corruption' – the loss of the war, empire, freedom– while revealing the potential of meritocracy" (Woodworth et al. 169). Although Marilyn Butler contends that Austen writes defensively against these changes (108), I posit that Austen in fact discusses these transformative ideas proactively, singing praise to the ascending naval officers through her positive representation of them in both novels. Paul Cantor argues that in *Persuasion*, Austen "understands how in England a process of *social and economic* evolution accomplished more fully what political revolution attempted to bring about in France" (129), demonstrating the phenomenon through the increasing prominence of the middle class naval officers. While *Mansfield Park* warns the ruling-turned-"leisure" class that its vices risk the security of its power, *Persuasion* provides a sentencing: with the Napoleonic Wars concluded, the middle-class professionals have gained prominence in society. Cantor theorizes that

one of Austen's main critiques with the ruling classes was their abandonment of the "traditional role of military leadership" (131). In *Persuasion* she shows that such a loss "can only result in its gradual loss of power to the middle-class heroes" who can "claim title to rule the country" (Cantor 131). Roger Sales suggests that while *Mansfield Park* questions the validity of the current ruling structure, *Persuasion* "debates the question of who will, and who deserves to, win the peace" after the Wars (172). *Mansfield* serves as a warning – a diagnosis – of the condition of England's ruling class. Meanwhile, *Persuasion* is its prognosis: it does not have much longer left to live. Sales concludes that while *Persuasion* is left open-ended, its "optimistic" ending points to happiness and success for Captain Wentworth, representing the men of the British Navy (199).

As Susan Allen Ford writes, the notion of the "Navy's fundamental importance to … what it means to be British" increased during Austen's time (Ford), because the Napoleonic Wars made the Navy and its virtues visible to the public eye. Because of "the nation's demand for soldiers … and new social leaders in the wake of the declining aristocratic power structure," public sentiment began to understand "the necessity to maximize the potential of its people" (Kramp 19). The Navy was an excellent vessel for this because unlike other military offices of the time, the Navy stood out as a system where "men of merit, whose actions and accomplishments deserved to be rewarded, … could rise out of the class from which they had been born to positions of distinction" (Bertolini). Jane Austen knew this well, as two of her brothers became "made" themselves through their merits in the Navy (Southam 181). The Navy became surrounded by a "cult of heroism" (Ford), which Jane Austen reflects in her novels. William Price and Frederick Wentworth specifically are hailed as up-and-coming gentlemen, with everything admirable about them. Price, as the diagnostic self-made man of *Mansfield*, hints that the future of the nation lies in the hands of members of the rising middle class like himself, whose merits recommend them to ascension. Price is on the path to greatness before he is called out to sea, signifying the Napoleonic Wars' disruption to this journey. However, in the prognostic *Persuasion*, Captain Wentworth has returned from battle. The war is over, and the Naval men are ready to solidify their risen "selves" in the dominant classes of English society, which they have "made" through their accomplishments in the Navy. In doing so, Austen "relocates" her masculine ideal "to the professional working classes" (Ailwood 108). Given the sociopolitical tensions of the era, combined with the emerging "crisis" of masculinity and Jane Austen's interest in that crisis, her depictions of the Navy as a masculine ideal reflect the changing social, economic, and political structures of the day. Jane Austen's representations of self-made men in *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* are revolutionary ones, written in support of the rising professional classes into positions of power to usurp the dysfunctional landed classes.

III. *Mansfield Park*: A Foreboding Diagnosis of the Landed Classes

Mansfield Park is a cautionary tale, serving as a warning from Jane Austen to the upper classes of the impending social change that threatened to take hold, should they not remedy the various issues which Austen highlights in the novel. The titular setting in which most of the novel takes place, Mansfield Park, acts as a microcosm of England as a whole, filled with fractures in its stability which mirror those affecting the ruling classes. Austen plants these seeds in a variety of ways, often through the novel's female characters. However, I intend to explore how Austen reveals these symptoms through her *male* characters, serving as representations of various English masculinities. During Austen's career, masculinity was politicized "as socially-approved models of the desirable man were projected into narratives of civilization, social upheaval and national survival in response to the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the Regency" (Jane Austen's Men 3), and Austen was no exception.

One of the most explicit examples of this is through Tom Bertram, the oldest son of the reigning Bertram family and heir to the estate. Austen writes Tom as exhibiting a *non*-ideal masculinity: he "feels born only for expense and enjoyment" (Austen 14). In addition, Sir Thomas, Mansfield's baronet, is anxious about the future ruler of his estate, as "his eldest son was careless and extravagant, and had already given him much uneasiness" (Austen 17). Importantly, Austen writes this non-ideal masculinity onto a member of the ruling class who represents its *future*. Many critics note that Tom reflects many common sentiments regarding the then-Prince Regent, who criticized his

"debauchery and foolishness" (Kramp 94). Such sentiments were a powerful catalyst for the crisis of masculinity which pervaded the nation during Austen's time (*Jane Austen's Men* 3). Aware of this crisis, Austen writes her male characters to applaud or criticize the masculinities of the day. Through a negative portrayal of Tom, Austen offers direct criticism of the ruling classes. Moreover, this metaphor goes beyond Tom's personality quirks. Toward the novel's end, Tom's carelessness causes him to fall gravely ill. A night of extravagance and drinking leaves him bed-ridden for many weeks (Austen 335). This incident occurs while his sisters have fled the estate to pursue reprehensible romances, creating the paramount episode highlighting the flaws of the ruling classes. Tom becoming sick during this time symbolizes how the vices of the gentry and aristocracy infecting these classes threatens their future in society. Jane Austen's structuring of *Mansfield Park* as a condition of England novel presents a jarring list of symptoms for the landed classes' fragility, especially through its depictions of masculinity. However, Austen's representations of her male characters become *radical* when they move beyond simply displaying the ruling classes' symptoms. *Mansfield Park* also utilizes masculinity to provide a diagnosis.

Jane Austen's diagnosis for the stability of the English social order shown in *Mansfield Park* is not a positive one. The events and ending of *Mansfield* imply England's ruling classes are infected with vices, and if they do not work to cure them, their grip on society will likely fall to the rising professional middle class. To conclude this, Austen provides two additional illustrations of masculinity. One is depicted positively by Austen and through the eyes of her protagonist, Fanny Price, and the other is depicted negatively. The former is William Price, Fanny's older brother who is working his way to distinction as a naval officer. Notably, he is also one of Austen's first self-made men. The latter is Henry Crawford, a foppish, deceptive man of the gentry whose manipulative tactics and scheming lead to his down-fall. Importantly, the majority of these positive or negative perceptions of Price and Crawford come from Fanny. Fanny is one of Austen's more conservative protagonists, whose views represent many of Austen's own. Moreover, Fanny's ultimate choice of man at the novel's conclusion reflects Austen's views about what the ideal man looks like (*Jane Austen's Men* 81); (Woodworth et al. 188). Throughout the novel, Fanny provides moral commentary and judg-ment. Even Edmund Bertram, the character to whom Fanny relies most for moral advice, asks for her opinion on a few occasions, such as on his own romance(Austen 211). Thus, Austen situates Fanny as the oracle of her own moral and political opinions which she includes in *Mansfield Park*. One main way she utilizes her protagonist in this way is through her views and choices concerning the male characters.

Although the object of Fanny's romantic desire is Edmund Bertram, Edmund is not the sole object of Fanny's love or her *admiration*. Instead, the person she admires most, and loves as well, is her older brother, William Price. When Fanny first arrives at Mansfield Park from her Portsmouth home at ten years-old, "it was William whom she talked of most and wanted most to see … [he] was her constant companion and friend" (Austen 13). For the majority of the novel's canon, Price is enlisted in the British Navy, which was well-known to be a thriving meritocracy. During the production of *Mansfield Park*, the "notion of the Navy's fundamental importance to the very existence of the state and to what it means to be British" increased (Ford), creating a "cult of heroism" in the nation, especially as the Napoleonic Wars drew on (Ford). Austen includes evidence of these sentiments through Mary Crawford's opinion that the naval profession "has everything in its favor; heroism, bustle, fashion," and that "soldiers and sailors are always acceptable in society. Nobody can wonder that men are soldiers and sailors" (Austen 87). This viewpoint follows a discussion between Mary Crawford, Fanny, and Edmund about various career paths available for men. Mary notes that "men love to distinguish themselves" and cites the Navy as one of the most "fashionable" ways to do so, reflecting the growing sentiment of the Navy as an ideal profession for men as well as a good way to raise oneself to distinction. However, Austen is careful to note that this opinion is not shared by all. Mrs. Norris expresses her distaste for "the nonsense and folly of people's stepping out of their rank and trying to appear above themselves" (173). Here, in the same way that *Austen's* opinions are shown through Fanny, the opinions of the anxious upper classes become filtered through the voice of Mrs. Norris. However, where Fanny is the honorable and ideal heroine of the novel, Mrs. Norris is widely regarded as one of the villains, constantly belittling Fanny and ensuring that she is always "'the lowest and last'" (Austen 173). Mrs. Norris is also bound by the ways of the social order, always subservient to those Bertrams above her. Importantly, Mrs. Norris' key trait is that she is extremely frugal, representing the anxiety of the upper

classes. Ultimately, Mrs. Norris' harsh opinions are not regarded in the novel – nor by Jane Austen – as the correct or popular ones. Indeed, when William Price visits Mansfield, "an affection so amiable was advancing each in the opinion of all who had hearts to value any thing good" (Austen 184) the longer he stayed with them. Austen describes Price as "warm hearted" and "fond" (184), and he has the whole family enraptured by his tales of seafaring (185). Further, Price, "with his 'open, pleasant countenance, and frank, unstudied, but feeling and respectful manners,' provides a contrast to the actors who have inhabited the Mansfield stage" (Woodworth et al. 184). His presence at Mansfield completely alters Fanny's countenance, showing the value of "fraternal over conjugal love" (Woodworth et al. 184). Additionally, fraternal "brotherliness" was a key component of what made the Navy so successful as a meritocracy (Ford). Woodworth et al. posit that "privileging the fraternal over the conjugal implicitly challenges the patriarchal hierarchy … that has the ordering of Mansfield Park" (187). The first time that readers see Fanny express explicit and genuine love–or any feeling, really–for a man is for William. This highlights that he is the chief recipient of her devotion, even over Edmund. Further, it suggests that Austen includes Fanny's marriage to Edmund as a fleeting, final attempt to save the crumbling foundations of the landed classes ruling *Mansfield Park*. Austen writes her *conservative* protagonist as expressing the fraternal love exemplified in the Navy for someone in the process of rising to power through their position in said Navy. Austen's prioritization of this naval fraternal love over the social-order-sustaining romantic love between Fanny and Edmund suggests that Austen idealizes the values of the Navy more so than the ruling classes. Like her depiction of Tom Bertram, Austen's depiction of Price also hints at the future. "William represents the next generation … exemplified by courage and professional abilities" (Woodworth et al. 187). Austen's presentation of such a self-making man in such a positive light implies that she thought that this path was England's best way forward.

One of William Price's biggest admirers (other than Fanny) is ironically his own foil. Henry Crawford, the visiting genteel Londoner, "was as much struck with" Price's good nature as everyone else (Austen 184). When Price tells his tales of the high seas, the stories have a significant emotional impact on Crawford:

> [Crawford] longed to have been at sea, and seen and done and suffered as much. His heart was warmed, his fancy fired, and he felt the highest respect … . The glory of heroism, of usefulness, of exertion, of endurance, made his own habits of selfish indulgence appear in shameful contrast; and he wished he had been a William Price, distinguishing himself and working his way to fortune and consequence with so much self-respect and happy ardor, instead of what he was! (Austen 184)

This passage serves two functions. First, it notably highlights how pervasive the "cult of heroism" surrounding the British Navy was among the upper classes. Significantly, a member of the landed gentry, born into wealth, expresses a desire to have "worked his way to fortune and consequence" through hard work and with self-respect, instead of his own birth. It is a key example of Austen's presenting these sailors in a positive, ideal light, especially through the use of words such as "glory," "heroism," and "usefulness" – all things which Crawford, in this moment, wishes he possessed – and things which he, as a member of the gentry, admits that he does not have. This raises the second function of this passage: revealing the faults of the ruling classes. While the self-made (or self-*making*) William Price is saturated in honor, heroism, "self-respect," and *usefulness*, the genteel Crawford describes *himself* as selfish and indulgent, implying that he, as a representation of his class, is *useless*. What's more, he lacks self-respect, implying that he is not to be respected by anyone, since he himself cannot seem to find a way to do so. This is quite a radical sentiment to be published amid the Napoleonic Wars, which questioned the roles and functions of the ruling classes, particularly insofar as they "expect adulation for their rank and give nothing in return" (Butler 105). Even Marilyn Butler, a fervent proponent of the idea that Jane Austen was highly conservative, writes that Austen "never has any time for members of the gentry" who act this way (105), and that her last three novels, *Mansfield Park* among them, are highly critical of "the gentry in its performance of its function" (106). To punctuate this sentiment, Austen adds the following to Crawford's praise of Price and subsequent desire to be as heroic as him: The wish was rather eager than lasting. He was roused from the reveries of retrospection and regret produced by it, … and he found it was as well to be a man of

fortune …" (185). Crawford's own money and fortune, as well as the material benefits and power that come with it, pull him sharply out of his reverie of being a self-made man. Although Crawford has this moment of lucidity, valuing the efforts and merits of the rising professional class, it is short-lived. Crawford's conscience is as "shallow and momentary" as the rest of his sentiments (Southam 193) and overtaken by material wealth and power. Austen implies that the ruling classes are always shallow and inconstant, even when they *are* able to find some respect for men of merit. However, the presence of these thoughts in the mind of a man of property are not inconsequential. However fleeting, this moment reveals an "increasing awareness that his social position brings with it a responsibility to help others" (*Jane Austen's Men* 78) that he, nor other members of his class, have been fulfilling. Sarah Ailwood contends that "Henry fixates on Fanny in his desire for self-improvement" (*Jane Austen's Men* 78) by trying to become a man "ideal" to her as well as by helping out with William's self-making. However, as we see, these efforts are purely performative. Crawford is more concerned with "performance and perception rather than with substance" (Woodworth et al. 187), reflecting the deceptive nature of the ruling classes and how any attempts to serve the public and further the meritocracy are disingenuous. Austen reveals this primarily, of course, through the views of her heroine.

As beneficial as it was to Price's depiction, the most damaging aspect of Crawford's representing the landed classes' vices is through Fanny's opinion of him. Completely opposite of the love and admiration our heroine has for her self-made brother, the moralistic Fanny feels nothing but disgust and distrust toward Crawford. She finds it impossible to take his proposal to her seriously after observing his constant flirtation and inconstancy (Austen 236), musing to herself afterward, "how could she have excited serious attachment in a man, who had … flirted with so many, infinitely her superiors–who seemed so little open to serious impressions…" (Austen 239). Fanny's beliefs of his dishonest nature are so strong that they cause her to continue to reject his proposal even when shamed and threatened by Sir Thomas (Austen 248; 277). Because of the importance of Fanny's opinion as a moral judgment of the characters in *Mansfield Park*, scholarship views Crawford's advances onto her as a way for him to improve his own morality. In his own way, it appears that Crawford is trying to become self-*re*made, although some contention lies in whether or not this desire for self-improvement is genuine. Sarah Ailwood thinks that it is: "Self-knowledge is critical to Henry becoming the man Fanny desires and who he believes he can be … . Henry's attempts to forge an independent, authentic sense of self are real" (*Jane Austen's Men* 80). However, like his initial reverie of desiring the heroism and usefulness of being a self-made man such as Price, these efforts are performative. Even Crawford's most chivalric act toward Fanny, which he thinks will win her over at once, is a ruse. The action in question is his appeal to his Admiral Uncle to have William Price promoted. Brian Southam notes in *Jane Austen and the Navy* that Price's appointment–as part of his promotion–is to "the humblest of vessels, which offered none of the opportunities for prize-money and distinction … into which a candidate with powerful interest might expect to be commissioned" (197). Crawford acts as though he has done William, and therefore Fanny, a massive favor by earning his promotion. However, it is superficial, as the appointment which Crawford procures does nothing to further Price's rise to distinction. Austen therefore implies that while Crawford did indeed help get William "made" (234), any actual distinction or continued advancement will indeed be made by him*self* through his own merit and skills. Likewise, as soon as the news of William's promotion turns into a marriage proposal, Fanny sees through Crawford and knows that these efforts are not made with the intention of achieving Price's success but rather Fanny's hand. She refuses his offer despite what he has done for her, and thus rejects what "would have smoothed the trajectory of his upwardly mobile career through a connection to Admiral Crawford" (Woodworth et al. 188). In other words, Fanny rejects the use of familial connections and persuasion to raise William's place, desiring instead to place her faith "in the substance of her brother's merit" as a self-making man (Woodworth et al. 188). In doing so, she reveals "her preference for talent and merit, equality and independence, over the wealth, luxury, and ease" inherent in the gentry and aristocracy that Crawford represents (Woodworth et al. 188). While Price has gone out to sea to perform his "duty defending the nation," Crawford remains at home and "merely performs" (Woodworth et al. 189) acts of "service" that fail again and again to win over Fanny or cause her to consider him an ideal man.

An additional dimension of Austen's diagnosis of the ruling classes in *Mansfield Park* is also seen in the comparison between Price and Crawford. Austen goes beyond Fanny's perspective of what constitutes an ideal man

and applies the perspective, also, of the ruling classes which she criticizes. Through an exploration of what it means to be "nothing" or to have "every thing" – a distinction which Austen fleshes out more completely in *Persuasion* – Austen provides a striking contrast between the popular ideas and her own, further cementing her own status as revolutionary. Beginning with William Price, our self-making man describes himself as "nothing" to his adoring sister, as he stood in his current position as a midshipman (Austen 195). This idea comes to him from perceptions of what it means to be *something* in Regency England, namely, to have some sort of rank and fortune. As a naval midshipman, Price has yet to acquire either. However, Fanny, our Austenian oracle, disagrees. She says, "'It is no reflection on *you*; it is no more than what the greatest admirals have all experienced … you must try to make up your mind to it as one of the hardships which fall to every sailor's share … only with this advantage, that there will be an end to it … When you are a lieutenant'" (Austen 195)! Here, Fanny counter's William's assertion that he is "nothing" because he has yet to achieve rank. She argues that his own merit, his own qualities, are what make him something–because he already is *everything* to her–and are what will raise him into distinction. His value in her eyes has nothing to do with his fortune but rather his endearing qualities and his love for her.

In contrast, Crawford is not *nothing* to the ruling classes. He has been born into wealth, land, and title. In fact, Sir Thomas even tells Fanny that he has "every thing to recommend him; not merely situation in life, fortune, and character, but with more than common agreeableness, with address and conversation pleasing to every body" (Austen 247). The primary things which should "recommend" Crawford to Fanny in the opinion of Sir Thomas are his situation in life and fortune, and his character – his *self* – falls last. Even then, Sir Thomas lauds his character traits, but as already established, Fanny knows they are not genuine. This lecture comes to Fanny after she rejects Crawford's initial proposal, because she in fact believes that his advances are "nothing" (Austen 236) due to her observations and subsequent opinion of him. For Fanny, the moral light at the end of Mansfield's long, dark proverbial tunnel, a genuine and honest character is everything. She cares not for landed fortune but rather the one that William will make through his own merit. While Fanny find's Henry's masculinity to be the opposite of ideal, he "so thoroughly embodies the performative masculinity [Sir Thomas] values." (*Jane Austen's Men* 79). Austen establishes Sir Thomas as the last lingering remnant of the ruling classes, weakening by the day, as his own heir quickly grows incompetent. As such, she presents him and his opinions of ideal masculinity as old, faded, and decaying. The performative, manipulative masculinity that Crawford depicts and Sir Thomas so admires is giving way to that of the professional classes, which values character, merit, and honesty over birthright.

Through these different masculinities, Austen presents her ideal as well as its opposite. Through her depictions of William Price and Henry Crawford, especially insofar as they are understood by Fanny, Austen "foregrounds these men's professional identifications, scope of agency and attitudes to their responsibilities— particularly the exercise of power—as key indices of their worth and value" (*Austen, Masculinity, and Romanticism* 322). However, one must remember that *Mansfield Park* is a Condition of England novel: it provides a diagnosis. The novel provides symptom after symptom of the contagion which plagues the ruling classes, including dishonesty, manipulation, and performativity. Austen provides a foreboding diagnosis of the gentry and aristocracy. Their future, like Tom Bertram, is sick and riddled with vice. However, the actual *prognosis* of the ruling classes has yet to be made. Mid-war, William Price's future and continued self-making is put on hold as he is shipped off to sea. As Woodworth et al. theorize, "... the deliberately unsatisfactory ending of Mansfield Park suggests that Austen wishes to go further in advocating a true meritocracy but is prevented from realizing this radical reorganization of society by the exigencies of war" (Woodworth et al 162). At this time, she is unable to provide a definitive conclusion as to the future of the landed classes. Fanny marries Edmund, seeming to save Mansfield's future. However, the fates of the remaining Bertrams suggest that this is a temporary solution. Instead, the possible cure comes from her representations of masculinity. Her positive depiction of William Price as a self-made man, contrasted with her severely negative one of Henry Crawford's genteel masculinity, indicates that she believed the solution to this social crisis lay in the meritocracy. We see that "merit is the key to Fanny's heart," and, consequently, "to the new social order" because although William is off at sea, "his 'continued good conduct, and rising fame'" promise a bright future (Woodworth et al. 189). The ending is open-ended because Austen did not know how the War would end. Fortunately, Austen did live to see the Napoleonic Wars'

conclusion. In its aftermath, Austen was able to present her faith in the future of meritocracy through the final, concrete *prognosis* of the ruling classes in *Persuasion*.

IV. *Persuasion*: A Decided Prognosis for the Genteel and Aristocratic

Unlike Austen's previous work, *Persuasion* takes place after the Napoleonic Wars have concluded. Those who were away fighting came back home to England. After a time of disorder and confusion, the cracks which had been forming in the stability of the social order finally came to light. With the return of these men – the Navy specifically – public sentiment began to question what their role would be in society and how their masculinity would mesh with the traditional genteel versions. As in *Mansfield*, Austen uses the male characters in *Persuasion* to identify and contrast these masculinities. Austen explores "the question of what men ought to be" by challenging "the very foundation of masculinity as a status created by social prescription and achieved through public display" (*Jane Austen's Men* 7). She challenges the performative genteel masculinity and posits a solution in the form of the genuine, honest, self-made man. As in *Mansfield Park*, part of this exploration is done through exploring what the "self" in self-made means and how one's self contributes to his masculinity. Austen "reconstructs masculinity as an internalized, individual way of understanding the self that is measured by personal authenticity rather than social recognition" (*Jane Austen's Men* 7). In doing so, Austen provides political commentary by using these masculine representations to stand in for different class distinctions, using her analysis of what *men* ought to be to also determine what the *nation* ought to be. Similarly to *Mansfield*, Austen provides this analysis through the lens of her female protagonist as she evaluates the masculinities before her and decides which one is the best – not only for her, but for her *future*. In *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot considers two paths. The first is to marry Mr. Elliot, in order to preserve the future of her family's estate. The second is marrying Captain Wentworth, lowering her place in society to side with the self-made, professional class over her own. Through this question of futurity, Austen considers what the future of England should look like. Will the estate of the genteel and aristocratic persevere, or will it give way to the rising professional class? In this way, where *Mansfield* is a "condition of England" novel, *Persuasion* is a *future* of England novel. *Mansfield* provides a diagnosis of all that is wrong with England's ruling classes, while *Persuasion* sets forth a prediction for their future. As the novel's conclusion indicates, that prognosis strongly disfavored the landed classes, placing the nation's future in the hands of the rising middle class.

As with *Mansfield*, Austen employs a variety of masculinities in *Persuasion* to evaluate the different classes. The first she introduces to the reader is Sir Walter Elliot, Anne's father and the novel's representative of the decaying landed classes, again questioning their competence (Butler 106). Where the Bertrams were unstable and weak, Sir Walter barely tries to uphold the responsibilities of his class, focusing more on image than the land he governs. Austen writes that "vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character … He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy" (10). Importantly, Austen makes a connection between beauty and status. A few pages later, she informs us that Sir Walter "could plainly see how old all the rest of his family and acquaintance were growing" (12). Austen uses this critique from Sir Walter to both show how his priorities, and those of his class, are wrong, as well as to reveal how the landed classes *know* that the clock is ticking. If beauty is near-equal to title in Sir Walter's mind, and the beauty of his high-class circle of acquaintances is fading rapidly, what is to be said of the stability of the social order which keeps them afloat? Further, Sir Walter's representation of the ruling classes as on their last legs extends to his estate, Kellynch Hall. At the novel's beginning, readers discover that Sir Walter's vain and spendthrift ways have driven the Elliot family into debt, and they need to lease the estate. Importantly, those who rent from Sir Walter – Admiral and Mrs. Croft – are a Naval couple which has risen into distinction and fortune enough to inhabit Kellynch Hall. Sir Walter has some qualms with this, due to his distaste for the Navy as a "means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction" (Austen 22), as well as an occupation which destroys one's "youth and vigor" (22) – again hinting at the anxiety which plagued the ruling class surrounding their stability and futurity. However, Anne's first piece dialogue in the novel praises the Navy. She argues that they, "who have done so much for us, have at least an equal claim with any other set of men, for all the comforts and all the

privileges which any home can give. Sailors work hard enough for their comforts" (Austen 21). Like Fanny Price, Anne serves as the moral oracle of Austen's views, juxtaposed against her immoral peers, increasing the power of her first spoken lines in the novel. Austen *immediately* reveals that she believes that the men of the Navy are deserving of equal treatment and privilege because of their hard work, and it is to one such Naval family that Kellynch hall is leased. This foreshadows that, ultimately, the rising professional classes will not only take the power from the landed classes, but they will save their society from ruin. However, this all occurs within the first few chapters of the novel. The more salient metaphor for the impending rise of the self-made man as both the masculine ideal and as the class of people to inherit England comes from the marriage plot which is central to both the novel and Austen's political commentary.

Shortly after Sir Walter professes his qualms with the rising naval profession, the novel's hero enters the picture. Our first glimpse of Captain Frederick Wentworth is as a retrospect, from when he was self-*making* in the same fashion as William Price. Nearly eight years prior to the novel's canon, the young Wentworth had yet to establish himself. Then, he and Anne Elliot had a summer romance. However, persuasion from Anne's aristocratic circle ended the engagement, and the two were left forlorn. These persuasions were founded on sentiments that, because Wentworth had yet to establish himself in society – and because he was not born into fortune, was not likely to – he was "nothing" and Anne marrying him would be extremely risky and degrading. As in *Mansfield*, Austen includes the perspectives of the ruling classes on what it meant for a man's self to be or have "nothing" or "every thing." Further, she shows throughout the course of the story that these views are ultimately wrong, presenting a new set of aspects that value the *self* in self-made man as opposed to other aspects of distinction which the landed classes prioritized. In Wentworth's case, the aristocratic views come from Sir Walter, whose views have been shown to be questionable, and Lady Russell, another aristocrat whose sentiments we eventually find are misguided. Sir Walter says the following of Frederick Wentworth: "You mislead me by the term *gentleman*. … Mr. Wentworth was nobody, I remember, quite unconnected …" (Austen 25). Lady Russell's feelings align with this, describing Wentworth as "a young man, who had nothing but himself to recommend him, and no hopes of attaining affluence, but in the chances of a most uncertain profession, and no connections to secure even his farther rise in that profession" (Austen 27). The most striking phrase in this lament is that Wentworth had "nothing but himself to recommend him." It calls into question what *can* recommend someone, if not their own self? Interestingly, Lady Russell also feels that Wentworth "had too much self-possession" (Austen 79), perhaps suggesting that putting too much faith in one's own self – their characteristics and merits, perhaps – is risky or even dangerous, especially in light of the then-unstable position of the ruling classes. These sentiments indicate that the rich were becoming wary and anxious about their place in society and were attempting to discourage people like Wentworth from rising into distinction, and, even worse, marrying into a landed family, in order to stabilize their own place in the social order. As Brian Southam writes, "the energy and liveliness which appeal so strongly to Anne, only serve to excite Lady Russell's fears… the traits which make Wentworth appear so 'dangerous' to Lady Russell are the very qualities of character which won British Captains mastery of the seas" (266). As a result, in the reactionary eyes of the ruling class Wentworth's self-making masculinity was *nothing*. He had no birthright, no land, no fortune, just his own self to help him make his way into the world. Because of this, Anne drops the engagement despite her "confidence in futurity" (Austen 29), suggesting that Anne believed in Wentworth's ability to rise into distinction through merit. This aligns with her belief that naval officers deserve their status. However, before discussing why Anne's views are correct, we must examine the alternative: someone who has *everything* to recommend him in the eyes of the genteel. As in *Mansfield*, Austen shows how the performative masculinity valued by the landed classes is far from the ideal.

Mr. William Elliot is Anne's cousin, potential suitor, and the heir of the Elliot estate, Kellynch Hall. The character implies futurity as he represents the future of Kellynch – and England – if it were to continue to exist under the rule of the landed classes. Of course, in the eyes of his peers, Mr. Elliot is the ideal man. Indeed, "Lady Russell… could not imagine a man more exactly what he ought to be than Mr. Elliot…" (Austen 131). As with Henry Crawford in *Mansfield*, the language of "every thing" is used to describe him in contrast to the "nothing" describing Wentowrth: "Every thing united in him; good understanding, correct opinions, … He had strong feelings of family-attachment and

family-honour…" (Austen 119). As in *Mansfield*, Anne, like Fanny, considers marrying this "ideal" man, and is urged to do so on the grounds of duty and futurity. Lady Russell's argument is "a reference to the future" which Anne feels she "must submit to" (Austen 120). However, despite all the feelings of obligation and rationale the "safe" option inspires, Anne, like Fanny, knows that they "should not suit" (Austen 129) because she can see through the Mr. Elliot's facade. Anne notes that "his value for rank and connexion" are "greater than hers" (Austen 120) and she can "not be satisfied that she really [knows] his character" after a month of acquaintance (129). Her suspicions arise because he is, truly, over-performative: "Mr. Elliot was rational, discreet, polished, – but he was not open. … This, to Anne, was a decided imperfection" (131). This critique from Anne highlights a key fault of Mr. Elliot's masculinity: it is *lacking* self. Mr. Elliot is all polish and performance, and never reveals a hint of his true self. All Anne knows of him is that he is perfect in every way, that he is agreeable to all and desirable to all. However, that is not enough for Anne, who, like Fanny, is shown to be different and set aside from the rest of her family. She does not share their vanity nor indiscretion, and clearly not their affinity for the performative. Anne sees right through Mr. Elliot's ruse and understands him for the money- hungry liar that he is. Guided by her intuition, she discovers that Mr. Elliot "has never had any better principle to guide him than selfishness'" (Austen 168). Further, insofar as Mr. Elliot represents the *future* of the landed classes, he also demonstrates why that future would not bode well for England. He represents all that is wrong with the current men in charge who are concerned with only power and money. He cares not for the people of the country over which he rules, but only about himself, just like Sir Walter. Anne understands this and also understands that this is not who – or what – the future proprietor of Kellynch Hall should be. She, like Austen, "never has any time for members of the gentry who expect adulation for their rank and give nothing in return" (Butler 105). Instead, Anne values character, morals, and the type of man who is "self-possessed," who knows his worth and uses it to do good and make something of himself. These qualities are embodied in Captain Wentworth, Austen's primary positive depiction of a self-made naval officer.

Although Wentworth was unsuccessful in his romantic endeavors eight years prior, he did become highly successful in his profession. Readers, along with Anne, learn that Wentworth has risen to the rank of Captain and earned a substantial living for himself through his achievements in the Navy, where "men of merit, whose actions and accomplishments deserved to be rewarded, … could rise out of the class from which they had been born to positions of distinction" (Bertolini). Now that he has done so, Anne knows that she may pursue him as a suitor without worry of futurity as far as her own financial security or status was concerned, but she did need to worry if his feelings remained constant. Fortunately for her, they had after all those years, and they marry at the novel's conclusion. Throughout their courtship, Austen takes care to write Wentworth in a *deserving* light. The novel "considers the worth of different classes of people, the worth of any individual, the weight of words, and the grace of earning one's blessings" and "implies that deserving comes from character and actions, and it champions those who, at least, try 'to earn every blessing' (247)" (Bertolini). One way which Austen does so is through exploring who deserves Anne's heart. As previously discussed, those in power think that it is the genteel, titled man who does, in order to preserve the stability of the class order and the ownership of Kellynch Hall. However, Austen proves that it is Wentworth, the self-made naval officer, who deserves her hand. While his merits have resulted in his acquisition of a fortune and estate, this only quells Anne's anxiety about the match. Ultimately, it is his character, his *self*, which grants him the ability to deserve her love, shown by the fact that Anne loved him when he had "nothing but himself to recommend him" (Austen 27), and retained that love for the eight years when they were separated. Additionally, Austen takes care to always portray Wentworth in a positive light, from Anne's perspective, often discussing his "merits" and how they are some of his best features (Austen 136). This serves as a striking contrast to the decidedly negative view that Anne has of Mr. Elliot and the type of masculinity which he exhibits. This said, the only thing that divides Anne and Wentworth is her fear that he has not remained constant. However, once Anne discovers that his feelings, too, have remained unchanged, "the revolution which one instant had made in Anne, was almost beyond expression" (Austen 190). Key to this sentiment is the word "revolution." Austen could have chosen from a wide variety of words to express the change in Anne's feelings, but she decided to use the word *revolution* in a novel written just after the American and French Revolutions had rocked the Western world; a novel written just after the Napoleonic Wars, which brought

England closer to questions of who was fit to rule and who *deserved* power. Anne experiences a revolution in her heart which ends in her resolution to marry Wentworth, choosing the self-made man over the established genteel alternative. The novel gives Anne plenty of reasons to discard Mr. Elliot, namely his performativity, vanity, and greed. Simultaneously, Austen provides several reasons for Anne to choose Wentworth. Anne already has high esteem for the Navy, revealed rather explicitly when she:

> burst forth into the raptures of admiration and delight on the character of the navy – their friendliness, their brotherliness, and their openness, their uprightness … she was convinced of sailors having more worth and warmth than any other set of men in England … . (Austen 83)

Austen boldly has her morally-upright female protagonist claim that sailors have more "worth" than "any other set of men in England," clearly setting forth her own ideas of ideal masculinity and how they relate to socio-political themes. The use of the word "worth" suggests multiple meanings, as well: both the moral and financial. Here, as well as in Wentworth's own name, the meaning seems to apply to the former, suggesting that these self-made men have the most moral worth and thus deserve to shape England's future. Ultimately, these sentiments manifest in the "revolution" which consumes Anne and causes her to choose Wentworth to be part of her future. As a result, Wentworth becomes deserving of Anne, a concept which he himself endorses. He says to her that he has "'been used to the gratification of believing myself to earn every blessing that I enjoyed. I have valued myself on honorable toils and just rewards'" (Austen 199). Just as with his fortune and rank, Wentworth has earned Anne's heart and therefore her future. Simultaneously, he, as a representation of self-made men, has earned the grace to deserve the future of England. Austen's depiction of Wentworth's masculinity provides a definitive prognosis for who ought to have power in the social order by exploring what sort of man is most ideal.

Austen knows that selecting the self-made over the genteel is a radical concept, and it is one which she wholeheartedly supports throughout *Persuasion*. Anne's loyalty to her family line and genteel status gives way in this aforementioned revolution to a self-made man because of his own merits and feelings for her. She explains to Wentworth, after they have confessed their mutual feelings, that in the past she had been persuaded to reject him based on "duty," but in this instance her duty is not to her family or class but to *herself*: "'In marrying a man indifferent to me, all risk would have been incurred, and duty violated'" (Austen 197). Thus, their marriage provides a conclusion for the novel, along with a few moral conclusions of Austen's own. She acknowledges that "Captain Wentworth, with five-and-twenty thousand pounds, and as high in his profession as merit and activity could place him, was no longer nobody," while Sir Walter is "a foolish, spendthrift baronet, who had not had principle or sense enough to maintain himself in the situation in which Providence had placed him" (Austen 199). She directly criticizes the current state of the ruling classes while lauding the professionals for having worked their way into distinction. Wentworth's merits have allowed him to become *somebody* and his marriage to Anne cements his place in the established world of the landed classes. Indeed, "Anne's marriage forces Sir Walter Elliot to acknowledge Wentworth as a somebody" (Bertolini). Further, the novel closes with the final sentiment that Anne "gloried in being a sailor's wife" (Austen 203), placing the position in the highest esteem and presenting it as a desirable one by fleshing out all of Wentworth's merits and demonstrating, throughout *Persuasion*, that the self-made professional masculinity is the one which will bring England the brightest future.

The conclusion of *Persuasion* proves that England's future lies not with the genteel. They have become vain, greedy, and unstable. They no longer fulfill their duties or carry out their functions; it is time for a new type of man – a new social class – to take the helm. *Persuasion*'s ending involves a glimpse into the future by hinting at a "future war" (Austen 203). Southam writes that this "holds the promise of naval advancement and success … a Baronetcy even, for Wentworth" (297). While this glimpse ahead instills some uncertainty, it is with a far more optimistic and determined attitude than in *Mansfield Park*. Unlike William, whose journey upward was cut short by the war, Wentworth's status is solidified: the only direction he can go is up. Because Wentworth is the love interest of our protagonist, and because she makes a deliberate choice to be with him over the genteel alternative, Austen provides a definitive

prognosis for the future of the landed classes. She, like Anne, favors the professionals of the nation's future. Further, while in *Mansfield* the future of the estate, Mansfield Park, seems to rest in the unsteady hands of Sir Thomas, at the end of *Persuasion*, Kellynch Hall does not return to the "care" of the Elliots, but rather remains in the deserving hands of the naval Crofts. The power of the genteel and aristocratic has fallen to vice and dysfunction, allowing the professionals, with their many virtues and merits, to take their place. Austen not only suggests that this is the correct path, but offers a prediction that this *is* what will happen. Through her depictions of different masculinities, Austen demonstrates to her readers that she looks favorably upon this outcome.

Conclusion: Revolutionary Masculinities and What England Ought to Be

It is not commonly contested that Jane Austen explores "masculine identities in relation to men's power and responsibilities within social, economic and political contexts" (*Jane Austen's Men* 67). However, the scholarly differences lie in deciding what Austen's intentions and aims were in including such explorations in her novels. Sarah Ailwood writes that "Austen, among other writers, reinvents gentlemanly masculinity from its association with birth and inheritance to a new definition grounded in merit and substance" (*Jane Austen's Men* 3). The preceding investigation upholds this idea by discovering what masculine representations Austen includes in her work, and how specifically she represents them in the novel. I have argued that through her depictions of naval officers, bolstered by each novel's decidedly-moral female protagonists' unwavering favorable opinion on them, indicates that this new self-made masculinity was one upon which Jane Austen looked warmly. *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* reveal that Jane Austen ultimately held radical political opinions. Through positively depicting the professional, self-made William Price and Captain Wentworth, as well as implying their continued good fortunes, Austen offers a clear-cut solution to the various problems she acknowledges as pervading the landed classes. By questioning the ideal masculinities of the time, Austen demonstrates the various faults of the gentry and aristocracy. In *Mansfield Park*, she provides a scathing critique of these classes, listing out a variety of their vices as symptoms to provide a diagnosis for what is wrong with the state of the order. Some years later, after the Napoleonic Wars ended, in *Persuasion*, she reveals that it is now too late to remedy these issues. The ruling classes are too far gone into dysfunction, and the only solution is to pass power onto the rising professional class. No longer are antiquated views of men's being "nothing" or "every thing" held with any esteem for her. These two novels advocate for the ability of men to instead *make* something of themselves instead of relying on their birthright. *Persuasion*, then, provides a final prognosis for the ruling classes: their time is running out.

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