

**Readers and Reading in *Northanger Abbey*:
When the Vulgar Reader Enters the World**

Jelige: Willow

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Stylistic Variety and the Heroine's Progression in <i>Northanger Abbey</i>	5
Reading in the Eighteenth-Century Novel	11
How John Thorpe and Henry Tilney Read.....	18
How Isabella Thorpe and Eleanor Tilney Read	22
How Catherine Morland Reads	26
Conclusion.....	31
Works Cited	33

Introduction

Writers read other authors' works to broaden their knowledge, become familiar with genres and conventions, and develop their writing styles, and Jane Austen was no exception. During her time in Steventon, she would give her manuscripts and read aloud her early novels to her family, honing the words based on their reactions. Later, she transcribed the surviving pieces into "archly labelled mock books that mimicked print conventions, as though to form a wildly precocious *Collected Works*: 'Volume the First', 'Volume the Second', 'Volume the Third'" (Keymer 19). In her youth, she worked as a critic of her contemporaries, "she manifested her judgment of them not by direct censure, but by the indirect method of imitating and exaggerating the faults of her models" (Simpson 244). Therefore, reading, other people's opinions, and reading aloud equally played a significant role in the formation of her novels. Her juvenile essays included burlesques of popular romances, epistolary novellas, and short picaresque adventures. This shows her familiarity with nonfiction as she parodies Oliver Goldsmith's *The History of England, from the Earliest Times to the Death of George II* in her *The History of England* (1791). By the age of twenty, she completed the first manuscripts of *Sense and Sensibility*, initially given the name *Elinor and Marianne* in 1795, and *Pride and Prejudice*, which she originally entitled *First Impressions* in 1796. Her immediate family seemed to help and support her in publishing her works, which is seen in her father's letter to the publisher Thomas Cadell. George Austen showed his support for his daughter's career as he compared the manuscript to the domestic novel writer "Frances Burney's *Evelina*" (Kaplan 94). Nevertheless, this first attempt at publication failed. By 1815, four of her novels had been published: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1815). Her books were published on commission, except for *Pride and Prejudice*, because she sold the copyright to Thomas Egerton. As a result, instead of her best-known novel, *Mansfield Park* brought her the most profit, as it "exceeded £310, more than she received during her lifetime for any novel" (Fergus, "Professional Woman", 24). At the beginning of the nineteenth-century, the publisher John Murray "had published few novels, though he had floated the idea of a series of 'British Novelists', to include Richardson and Fielding, but also Burney and Charlotte Smith, in 1808" (Wiltshire, Introduction, xxxv). He published the four-volume set of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in 1817, which "sold initially for twenty-four shillings". Since hand press books in Austen's lifetime "remained luxury items . . . her novels appeared in such modest runs—possibly as low as 750 copies of *Sense and Sensibility* and as

high as 2000 copies of *Emma*” (Barchas). However, Murray “printed 1750 copies, and most of these sold during 1818–19” (Benedict and Le Faye, Introduction, xxx). Around the 1830s, “the availability of print material increased phenomenally” (Lupton 4), and Bentley introduced his “well-made reprints of Miss Austen in single volumes at six shillings” (Barchas), proving that she had an established readership.

Writers gained popularity through reviews, which in turn increased sales. Due to her anonymity, “Austen initially received relatively few reviews” (Butler 93) but Walter Scott wrote one of the most famous ones after Austen’s publisher John Murray “established a leading literary brand, which he stimulated through his ownership of the *Quarterly Review*” (Sutherland 111) and persuaded Scott to review *Emma*. In 1816, he not only reviewed the novel but also praised its realism and was “prepared to make claims for Austen’s importance to the English novel” (Butler 94). He wrote this without knowing Austen’s authorship, but the title page of *Emma* states that it was written “by the Author of ‘Pride and Prejudice,’ etc, etc.” (qtd. in *Emma*). Richard Whateley reviewed *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in 1821 for the *Quarterly Review* and described Austen as similar to “Shakespeare in her vivid, carefully differentiated characterization” (qtd. in Stovel 232). He also pointed out “that her plots follow Aristotelian principles, and that her novels present, if indirectly, ‘moral lessons’: ‘her’s is that unpretending kind of instruction which is furnished by real life” (232). The publication of *Memoir of Jane Austen* (1870), written by James Edward Austen-Leigh, the nephew of Austen, and the *Biographical Notice* added to *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* by Henry Austen, her brother provides an insight into the life of Austen, which was not available before. The notice acknowledges her as the “author of the six novels” (Benedict and Le Faye, Introduction, xxix). The memoir paints an engaging picture of Austen and “planted the tradition, subscribed to by most twentieth-century critics and biographers, that Austen the novelist was substantially created at home” (Butler 11). As the public and critical interest surrounding her novels increased, new editions and critical studies of her works started to emerge after 1870, ultimately resulting in the enormous interest and popularity of Jane Austen, which defines current research. One of the research topics of current scholarship that I will focus on is the depiction of reading and readers in Austen’s novels.

Northanger Abbey uses the quixotic tradition to criticise the irrationalism and naivety of heroes who learn about life through reading. The second half of the eighteenth century brought a rise in public interest in Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. As Zelei puts it, “Everyone wants something different from Quixote: some like the characters, some like the story, some like the

way it relates to literature and the way it is spoken about” (60)¹. MacKay attempts to find the reason why *Don Quixote* became inspiring to novelists, a feature she attributes to realism: “Realism becomes the tyrant, the giant monster *Don Quixote* was trying to kill” (34). Austen belongs to the group of writers who were inspired by the way *Don Quixote* relates to fiction, while her work belongs to the tradition of female quixotic characters, which started with Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* (1752), “a book Austen read at least twice” (Keymer 36). *Northanger Abbey* is a response to how reading influences people and whether true character can be determined through one’s reading habits. I will refer to Catherine Morland, as a “vulgar reader” who confuses life with fiction after being exposed to a Gothic novel in Bath, a city where she lacks the guidance of her parents for the first time. Quixotic characters like her recognize the patterns and parallels between real life and the life they read about in books resulting in confusion that usually stems from the kind of realism portrayed in novels. Austen’s story also mirrors the development of Bildungsroman heroes when Catherine recognises her short-sightedness after being confronted with them. Besides being a parody of the contemporary vogue of gothic novels, *Northanger Abbey* is significant in how it reflects on novels and the act of reading, as well as its portrayal of different readers. Around the time Austen began to write *Northanger Abbey*, an essay entitled *On the Reading of Novels* was published in *The Monthly Visitor and Pocket Companion*, in 1798. It reflects on the general attitude towards the female reading public in the eighteenth century, claiming that women:

in general, are the most inclined to peruse them [novels], and from a fatal inattention to their education, they are the most likely to fall victims to their baneful insinuations. (qtd in Wyett 261)

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, after an entire century after its birth, the novel was still considered aesthetically inferior; one of the major prejudices behind this unfavourable view was that “its writing, reading, and subject matter were considered to be primarily related to women” (Séllei 233)². Walter Scott also agreed that novels were not respectable reading materials due to the many poor imitations that overshadowed “tolerable” works (see Scott). He also expresses his frustration over writers such as Richardson and Burney, whose “elegant and fascinating productions” honoured the name of the novel before, but now “have entirely

¹ All translations made from Hungarian are mine.

² All translations made from Hungarian are mine.

vanished from the shelves of the circulating library” (340). Austen defends and praises the works of Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth in *Northanger Abbey*:

It is only *Cecilia*, or *Camilla*, or *Belinda*;" or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language. (31)³

Ever since its publication, this famous formulation of the contemporary novel has been regarded not only as a defence of the novel but also its definition, where the emphasis is placed on the presentation of human nature rather than on norms of behaviour. It is significant not only because of its portrayal of model and empirical readers but also as a reflection on the contemporary state of the novel. She also writes against the consensus among authors who are “scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust” (NA 30). This point is also emphasised in the narrative, as it is concerned with the protagonist reading and enjoying novels while being confronted by the prejudices surrounding them. By looking at aspects of Jane Austen’s life, based on the memoir, the *Biographical Notice*, and scholarly reviews, I will analyse how Austen exhibits her vast knowledge of literature, especially of the eighteenth-century novel, in the characterisation of her characters in *Northanger Abbey*. To demonstrate this, I will differentiate between two reader types based on the reader-response theory, namely, by Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish, Umberto Eco, Wayne Booth, and Louise Rosenblatt. I will juxtapose their theories with ideas represented in the works of Austen’s contemporaries, such as Samuel Johnson’s *Rambler* no. 4, Clara Reeve’s *The Progress of Romance* and Henry Fielding’s two works *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*.

³ From this point, *Northanger Abbey* will be referred to as NA in my citations.

Stylistic Variety and the Heroine's Progression in *Northanger Abbey*

In the late eighteenth century, critics considered the Gothic as “the trash of the circulating libraries” and a “cheap and tawdry form of entertainment” (Townshend). However, critical opinion shifted after the publication of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Ann Radcliffe, which readers singled out as an exception because its author had perfected the Gothic form. Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1785) is the first heroine-centred Gothic novel, but it was Radcliffe who perfected this type of fiction by increasing the “detail and intensity of its focus on the heroine's consciousness” (Watt 123). We know from the preface of the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* that even Horace Walpole aimed to make his heroes “think, speak, and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions” (8); yet, he still puts the hero's consciousness to the background. In this same preface, he observes that in “all inspired writings, the personages under the dispensation of miracles, and witness to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character: whereas, in the productions of romantic story, an improbable event never fails to be attended by an absurd dialogue” (8). Radcliffe mixed the elements of these two approaches in her works by concentrating on the rationality of her heroine in supernatural circumstances, as in *Udolpho*. As a basis for the progress of her narratives, Radcliffe uses suspense “in a way that consciously aligns the reader's experience with the heroine's inescapable, equivocal anxiety” (Russett 159). This technique is also reminiscent of how Walpole, in the first preface to *The Castle of Otranto*, describes the use of terror in such a work which “prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions” (6). When Emily St Aubert lifts the veil, she finds a figure instead of a picture. “Horror occupied her mind, and excluded, for a time, all sense of past, and dread of future misfortune” (*The Mysteries Udolpho* 178). By showing the distress of the heroine, her “pale and affrighted countenance” (178), the reader believes that what she saw must have been the worst of horrors. However, later it is revealed that it was a wax figure. Critics describe Radcliffe as “the most emulated, copied and plagiarised author of the period” (Townshend), but the parodies and criticism of her works are also proof of her success and impact.

The popularity of the Gothic novel brought about many parodies of the genre. One of the most significant responses to the genre is a complex novel that is not merely a parody but also aims to reflect on the reading and enjoyment of Gothic novels. In *Northanger Abbey*,

Austen re-contextualizes familiar contemporary discourses and styles, as well as making references to other well-known authors and texts. She mentions several Gothic novels in her work such as *The Italian*, *Castle of Wolfenbach*, *Clermont*, *Mysterious Warnings*, *Necromancer of the Black Forest*, *Midnight Bell*, *Orphan of the Rhine*, and *Horrid Mysteries*. While she mentions these only once, *Udolpho* is mentioned as many as eighteen times and Radcliffe five times. Parodies are “repetition with ironic critical distance” (Hutcheon xii), but parodies are “not necessarily implicit in the idea of quotation” (41). In *Northanger Abbey*, the illusions created by the uncritical readings of novels lead Catherine to believe she is a heroine of a Gothic novel, such as Emily St Aubert, the heroine of her favourite book, *Udolpho*. She sets out on late-night wanderings around the abbey, just like what she read about; but instead of mysteries, she finds herself ashamed of the fantasies she indulged in. Parodies such as *Northanger Abbey* have a self-reflexive aspect, which, as Hannoosh summarizes Rose’s idea, is a result of the dual function of the “parodist as reader [of the parodied work] and author [of the parody]” (Hannoosh 113). For instance, *Northanger Abbey*, and Henry Tilney’s story in Volume II Chapter 5 in particular, are comical rewritings. In his story, Henry describes life in the abbey to Catherine as an adventure full of mysterious chests, violent storms and hidden passages. This comical narrative becomes an essential feature of the text that gives necessary information to the reader, such as Catherine’s being fallible to Gothic-like tales. Henry’s parody, similarly to every other parody, juxtaposes the probability and realism of the Gothic convention to make them look more absurd (see Munderlein 63):

But you must be aware that when a young lady is . . . formally conducted by Dorothy the ancient housekeeper up a different staircase, and along many gloomy passages, into an apartment never used since some cousin or kin died in it about twenty years before. Can you stand such a ceremony as this? Will not your mind misgive you, when you find yourself in this gloomy chamber . . . Dorothy meanwhile, no less struck by your appearance, gazes on you in great agitation, and drops a few unintelligible hints. To raise your spirits, moreover, she gives you reason to suppose that the part of the abbey you inhabit is undoubtedly haunted, and informs you that you will not have a single domestic within call. (NA 161-62)

Henry here employs the conventions of the Gothic genre, thus showing familiarity with and knowledge of the parodied style, in this case, the style of *Udolpho*, while Catherine’s all too

naive and innocent readerly attitude towards the story makes it humorous to Henry and the readers of *Northanger Abbey*.

Austen employs the parodic elements of her writing to solve the stylistic disunity of her novel, which has been debated among critics, who concluded that “the book as a whole lacks a sufficiently consistent technique or unified form to make it a coherent work of art” (Kearful 511). The lack of coherence is a result of the stylistic disunity, which I will demonstrate by dividing *Northanger Abbey* into three stylistically different parts that also differ in their genre. The first part is a domestic novel. It starts with Catherine’s development as a young middle-class girl, a typical theme of domestic novels where the “portrayal of bourgeois home life is frequently coextensive with narrating female development” (Fraiman 170). Then as Catherine goes to Bath, the focus of the work also expands, and it is concerned with Catherine’s education to help her become a heroine and to find a romantic suitor and socialize. Before she goes to Bath, she is only familiar with books that fictional heroines should know and books her parents approve of, such as *Sir Charles Grandison*, a book Catherine’s mother has read. Catherine only becomes familiar with Gothic novels during her stay in Bath, as she was not exposed to new ones, such as *Udolpho*. She also meets Isabella and John Thorpe, as well as Eleanor and Henry Tilney in Bath, whose reading habits deeply influence her. Throughout the narrative, Austen employs elements of irony to connect the parts of the work. For instance, there is a parodic reference to Johnson’s essay no. 97 in *The Rambler* (1751):

Whether she thought of him so much, while she drank her warm wine and water, and prepared herself for bed, as to dream of him when there, cannot be ascertained; but I hope it was no more than in a slight slumber, or a morning doze at most; for if it be true, as a celebrated writer has maintained, that no young lady can be justified in falling in love before the gentleman’s love is declared, it must be very improper that a young lady should dream of a gentleman before the gentleman is first known to have dreamt of her.
(NA 22)

Johnson asserts that “a young lady should be in love, and the love of the young gentleman undeclared, is an heterodoxy which prudence, and even policy, must not allow” (460). Instead of directly quoting him, the narrator uses the word “dreaming” as a metaphor for love to draw attention to the impossible task of women who have to control a subconscious action such as dreaming: the narrator compares love to this same uncontrollable action. Remarks such as “I hope it was no more than in a slight slumber, or a morning doze at most” (22) create a parodic

tone in the passage. This type of repetition of a discursive text is reminiscent of Hutcheon's definition of parody as "repetition with ironic critical distance" (xii).

The second part of the narrative begins when Catherine leaves Bath and goes to Northanger Abbey. An example of the change of style between the parts is in Volume II Chapter 5, when Henry teases Catherine with an exaggerated description of life at the abbey, using the conventions of Gothic fiction. His story serves as an introduction for the reader to imagine what Catherine will experience. However, her experiences are just as real as Henry's comical rewriting, as they are both fabricated through their literary competence. The success of Henry's rewriting and Catherine's adventures both stem from her naivety, irrationality, and lack of self-reflection as a recipient of Gothic novels. The narrator provides parodic remarks on Catherine's actions and thoughts to show the difference between the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey* and *Udolpho*: Catherine relies on her imagination, whereas Emily is a rational thinker. "Catherine had read too much not to be perfectly aware of the ease with which a waxen figure might be introduced, and a supposititious funeral carried on" (196). Furthermore, the quote highlights a more conspicuous way in which Austen parodies *Udolpho*. Instead of incorporating the wax figure into the plot, she draws attention to it by saying it is a part of a Gothic book Catherine has read. Austen uses the figure to highlight Catherine's vulnerability to the influence of books. The narrator makes the heroine's uncritical reliance on imagination a part of the parodic essence of the novel (see Glock).

The third part of the novel includes the last three chapters. At this point in the narrative, Catherine realises her mistakes and eventually is granted the happy ending of any heroine, marriage. This ending is a typical feature of domestic novels, in which:

almost by definition, the formal demands of narrative mean that novels cannot simply dwell on domestic paragons but are obliged to chronicle a process of domestication, whose ultimate success (with just a few exceptions) is signalled by the heroine's marriage to a suitable upstanding man. (Fraiman 170)

After learning rationality and critical thinking from Henry and Eleanor, Catherine is freed from the fantasies induced by her readings and becomes a heroine of a Bildungsroman. *Northanger Abbey* is particular because the conclusion that her mind was plagued by reading comes to her while the narrative resembles that of a Gothic novel. However, this process starts in the first part of the work, when, while talking to Henry and Eleanor Tilney, Catherine expresses "her want of knowledge; declared that she would give any thing in the world to be able to draw; and

a lecture on the picturesque immediately followed” (112). In the second part, she realises that her assumptions, caused by her readings, “had been all a voluntary, self-created delusion, each trifling circumstance receiving importance from an imagination resolved on alarm” (205). This understanding of her situation is only possible due to Henry Tilney’s lecturing her on rationality.

This seeming lack of narrative coherence could be a result of the book’s publication history: Austen wrote this novel “about the years 98 & 99” (qtd. in Todd 26), but she revised it at least until 1816 when she reclaimed it. Austen obeys the stylistic rules of other parodies and novels; thereby, her narrative is compounded of diverse elements in seeming contradiction. She probably worked on the novel until 1816, which, as Shaw argues, can be seen through her use of free indirect speech in the novel that will later characterise her mature novels (see Shaw). Its publication history also affected the stylistic unity of the novel. Her siblings Henry and Cassandra published two of her novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, together. “The setting is the same—Bath—but the subtlety and sentiment of *Persuasion* are offset by the sophisticated naivety of *Northanger Abbey*” (Butler 91-92). The five years Austen spent in Bath between 1800 and 1805 significantly affected her writing. At that time, Bath was a cultural centre and became a tool for literary exploration as it became the setting in her last two books. Austen first approached Crosby in 1809 about publication; he declined the offer. In 1816, she reclaimed *Susan* from Crosby and revised it as *Catherine*. Either John Murray or Henry Austen changed its title from *Catherine* to *Northanger Abbey*, which is reminiscent of the typical titles of Gothic novels, because “between 1784 and 1818 no fewer than thirty-two novels had been published containing ‘Abbey’ in the title” (Benedict and Le Faye, Introduction, xxx). However, by the time of its publication, the popularity of the genre already decreased, and parodies became more frequent. The stylistic variety of the narrative can be attributed to its prolonged composition over many years, which affected the protagonist’s changing character and the categorization of the work. The book begins as a domestic novel, with its heroine’s many adventures in the different social circles of Bath; then, it takes a pseudo-gothic turn, Catherine’s journey to a very modern yet very ancient gothic abbey and her misconceptions of the place are revealed. These parts of the novel are sewn together by the parodic treatment of the subject matter by the narrator, which might be the voice of a more mature Jane Austen reflecting on her earlier writerly experiences. When Austen changed the heroine’s name to Catherine Morland as she revised her book for the third time, she also wrote a brief advertisement to promote the work and to explain why certain parts of it had become obsolete: “During that period, places, manners, books, and opinions have undergone considerable changes” (qtd. in

Benedict and Le Faye, Introduction, l; also qtd. in Fergus, *A Literary Life*, 113). Although these did not change, Jan Fergus also assumes the possibility of a later revision of the work. In *A Literary Life*, he states, “Revising *Susan* or *Northanger Abbey* was for Austen an exercise in control and distance. It permitted her to play with and manipulate her readers at the same time that she both mocked and exploited the conventions of the sentimental and the Gothic novel” (qtd. in Benedict and Le Faye, Introduction, lvi; also qtd. in Fergus, *A Literary Life*, 113). To achieve the paradoxical effect of allusions, Austen combines these elements and sets the change in style between the two volumes, shifting from a domestic novel to a Gothic novel while keeping its parodic elements. Yet, without this change, the events at the abbey would not lead readers like Catherine to misreadings. Although she uses parody to create cohesion, I argue that the parodic tone is more evident in the second part of the novel as it responds to the Gothic conventions that had been exhausted by the time of the publication. The final part shows the heroine’s mental evolution and her development into a deserving young heroine in a Bildungsroman-like manner. Her self-reflection is rewarded by love and marriage. Catherine’s misconceptions and development are not only significant for the progression of the novel but for this work as well. Her quixotic experiences stem from her reading habits and her deep knowledge of other types of characters who read differently.

Reading in the Eighteenth-Century Novel

Northanger Abbey is predominantly analysed as a parody of the Gothic; while I acknowledge this in my work, I will rather focus on its significance and relation to the history of reading novels and readers. Reader-response theorists reject new criticism and focus on the relationship between the literary work and the reader, who is an active agent in the creation of a text. Rosenblatt, in *Literature as Exploration*, claims that an aesthetic reading of a text involves the reader's past experiences and moods. Because of Catherine's little exposure to Gothic novels, their fictional world had an extreme effect on the naive girl. Theorists like Rosenblatt focus on the text as a co-creation of the reader and the author, where the three cannot exist independently from each other, while other pioneers of the Konstanz school such as Jauss, focus on how different readers are created. The stylistic change in the second part of *Northanger Abbey* is a hermeneutic device, where even the reader of the book expects events that Catherine hopes to encounter. Jauss' reception theory suggests that the cooperation of the text and the reader is reliant on historical and social circumstances as well. As such, readers like Catherine Morland decode texts based on their personal circumstances. Catherine lives in eighteenth-century England and interprets real-life events in this same scheme. Despite this seeming consensus that the individual contribution from the reader's side results in divergent reading experiences and meanings, Booth goes against this transactional view. For instance, readers of *Northanger Abbey* dislike John Thorpe because of his arrogance and praise Henry Tilney for his intellect, while in *Pride and Prejudice*, as Booth observes, everyone "celebrate[s] the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy" (349). Eco in *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (1994) highlights the cooperation between not the reader and the text but the reader and author. The model author of *Northanger Abbey* shows its presence through the use of free indirect speech that a model reader can recognise because they must appear together, for they "are entities that become clear to each other only in the process of reading" (28). Eco's empirical readers rely on the same type of external information brought by the reader that Rosenblatt and Booth also comment on in their work. However, Eco also refers to an "ideal type whom the text not only foresees as a collaborator but also tries to create," which relates to Iser's Implied Reader, but he calls them model reader (13). Iser looks at texts from the perspective of an aesthetic response theorist and denies that the text has its own identity. Instead, his reader anticipates the presence of a recipient, but their role "is not identical with the fictitious reader portrayed in the text. The latter is merely one component of the reader's role" (Iser 36). The narrator of *Northanger*

Abbey does not intend to amend the heroine but to tell her story, which involves her own reading, and uses Catherine's disillusion to fool the readers. When Catherine goes to the ball in Bath, the reader expects her to get compliments from possible suitors because the narrator states that "now was the time for an heroine . . . to be noticed and admired" (16). But it turns out, "not one, however, started with rapturous wonder on beholding her, no whisper of eager inquiry ran round the room, nor was she once called a divinity by anybody" (16), leaving the reader with unfulfilled expectations. Transactional reader response theorists such as Iser, Rosenblatt, and Booth, analyse the cooperation between the text and the reader. Their readers can fill the gaps in texts, which the narrator of *Northanger Abbey* also expects from its readers. "I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience" (261). Representatives of the affective stylistics such as Fish call attention to the informed reader who is a "competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built up; is in full possession of the semantic knowledge that a mature . . . listener brings to his task of comprehension . . . and has literary competence" (Fish 406). Austen's predecessors and contemporaries were also interested in the question of reading and readers and reflected on the question of readers in eighteenth-century England.

The general approach toward contemporary readers was the distinction between knowledgeable and simple readers. Samuel Johnson's *Rambler* No. 4 essay provides a contemporary perspective on readers and their reading habits. He compares ancient romances that leave the reader in "very little danger of making any applications to himself; . . . he amused himself with beings of another species . . . who had neither faults nor excellences in common with himself" (17) with contemporary romances, that is, novels. He argues that once readers are presented with a realistic story that they could encounter in everyday life, the "young spectators fix their eyes upon him [a realistic character] with closer attention, and hope by observing his behaviour and success to regulate their own practices, when they shall be engaged in the like part" (17). Johnson also states that,

these books are written chiefly to the young, the ignorant, and the idle, to whom they serve as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life. They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impressions; not fixed by principles, and therefore easily following the current of fancy; not informed by experience, and consequently open to every false suggestion and partial account. (16)

These impressionable young readers that Johnson mentions are whom Austen draws attention to in the guise of vulgar readers. In *The Progress of Romance*, Reeve argues, “young people fancy themselves capable of judging of men and manners” (78-79) as a result of reading novels that model real-life experiences realistically. The easily impressionable are made to think these books are reliable guides to the world, a theme that Jane Austen explores in her posthumous novel, *Northanger Abbey*. However, Reeve also defends novel readers by stating, “under proper restrictions and regulations they will afford much useful instruction, as well as rational and elegant amusement” (xvi). Fielding, in the preface of *Joseph Andrews* (1742), distinguishes between mere and classical readers who differ in the extent of information they require. He also highlights that “it is possible the mere English reader may have a different idea of romance from the author of these little volumes; . . . it may not be improper to premise a few words concerning this kind of writing, which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language” (25). However, for classical readers, these comments are unnecessary because, for them, the entertainment of “parodies or burlesque imitations are chiefly calculated” (26). Later, in *Tom Jones* (1749), he describes the readers who have applicable knowledge from previous readings and recognise allusions to “the best antient authors without quoting the original, or without taking the least notice of the book from whence they were borrowed” (544) as “sagacious readers.” However, Fielding also comments on less erudite readers who either dismiss allusions or suspect the author of “plagiarism” (544). There are similarities between the ideas of critical theorists and contemporary writers. The model reader of Eco is reminiscent of Fielding’s sagacious reader in their ability to recognize patterns and have the competence to join the creation of the text. Sterne also refers, although mockingly, to the sagacity of readers in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, when the narrator tells his “unlearned readers” that, without previous reading experiences and literary competence, they “had better throw down the book at once” for they “will no more be able to penetrate the moral of the next marbled page (motley emblem of my work!) than the world with all its sagacity has been able to unravel the many opinions, transactions, and truths which still lie mystically hid under the dark veil of the black one” (232). These readers are similar to Fielding’s mere readers. Moreover, the narrator invites the reader to become an active co-creator of the text (Iser) by entertaining their imagination:

The truest respect which you can pay to the reader’s understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself.

For my own part, I am eternally paying him compliments of this kind, and do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination as busy as my own. (*Tristram Shandy* 127)

To differentiate between the two distinct types of readers, I will compare five characters from *Northanger Abbey*. Some characters have the literary competence to recognise allusions to authors and their works and interpret them because of their knowledge acquired by reading in variety. Similarly to Fielding, I will refer to people with this reading habit as sagacious readers. They are familiar with a variety of novelistic genres and have no prejudices against any of them. They also possess the ability to self-reflect, which in this context refers to one's ability to distinguish between real life and imagination. They are aware that the world they are reading about is fictitious and is presented in a literary work. I will also look at readers whose minds are corrupted by their readings and leave behind their rational selves because of their inability to differentiate between the "food and poison [that] are conveyed to the young mind" (Reeve 77) in a novel, whom I will refer to as vulgar readers. These readers take the mimetic qualities of fiction and apply them to their lives, similarly to quixotic characters. Moreover, they tend to be ignorant readers with a superficial knowledge of literature, oftentimes prone to stereotyping. Whether and how characters discuss books will also be important in my analysis of *Northanger Abbey* as the books the characters enjoy reveal their true selves.

Even though Jane Austen refers to herself as "the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress" (Austen-Leigh 154-55), I argue that she was a most sagacious reader. The eighteenth century "saw the emergence of a relatively broad, middle-class, female readership, which was the primary target of fiction at the time" (Séllei 228). This female readership came to exist partly because of the start of women's education even "in non-formal educational institutions" (228). Austen received non-formal education from her father, as a clergyman, had a library, which "ran to more than 500 books" (Grundy 189). This library equipped him "to prepare two of his sons for the University and to direct the studies of his other children, whether sons or daughters" (Austen-Leigh 18). However, from the age of ten, Austen received formal education in the Reading Abbey Girls' School, where, in her leisure time, she visited the "nearby lending library, which catered adeptly for the tastes and imaginations of girls and young women by way of romance, adventure, and much male greed and villainy" (Butler 10). The memoir also reveals that James Austen "was well read in English literature, had a correct taste" and had "a large share in directing her reading and forming her taste" (20). Austen also had access to a library "of some 1,250 books, many in multivolume sets" (Sabor 2), as her brother Edward became heir of Godmersham Park, an estate belonging to his adoptive

parents, Thomas and Catherine Knight. Peter Sabor digitally recreated the Library of Godmersham Park based on the two-volume catalogue created by Edward Austen Knight. It “contained standard works of English, French, and ancient Greek and Roman literature, as well as books in Italian, Spanish, and German . . . sets of periodicals, dictionaries, atlases, and parliamentary records . . . novels, including ones by Jane Austen’s contemporaries and recent predecessors” (*Reading with Austen*). Some of the theological, philosophical and historical books, and periodicals include *Letters Concerning the English Nation* by Voltaire, *The Rambler* by Samuel Johnson and *Select Theological Discourses Written* by Thomas Cockman. “Jane spent much of her time there in the library, reading, writing, and browsing the shelves” (Sabor 2). She had access to the works of James Fordyce, Johnson, Sterne, Fielding, Thomas Thompson and Scott in this library, whose works she mentioned in her novels.

In *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen mentions Cowper, Scott and Pope to emphasize Marianne’s preference for contemporary poets, while she mentions James Thomson to show Marianne’s enthusiasm for nature poetry. Marianne and Mrs. Dashwood never finish *Hamlet*. When Mrs. Dashwood says to Edward, “since leisure has not promoted your own happiness, that your sons will be brought up to as many pursuits, employments, professions, and trades as Columella’s” (*Sense and Sensibility* 119), her advice is a reference to Richard Graves’s novel, *Columella* (1779). In the novel, Columella plans his sons’ life, who “would be secured from that tedium and disgust of life which he experienced” (Graves 210). Edward’s family is not supportive of his choice to become a clergyman. Instead, they recommend other possibilities to him, leaving him “properly idle” (*Sense and Sensibility* 119). Austen’s second novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, also includes literary allusions to books Austen was familiar with. Similarly to her previous novel, she references Cowper and Shakespeare, but she also directly mentions Fordyce’s *Sermons to Young Women*. Austen also quotes Milton in *Mansfield Park*, which “may have been gathered from one of those Anthologies which, as she recognized in *Northanger Abbey*, formed part of a debutante’s equipment for polite society” (Ragg 168). The novel also has an allusion to Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* as Maria compares herself to the imprisoned starling: “I cannot get out, as the starling said” (*Mansfield Park* 116). When Miss Bertram, Henry Crawford, Mr. Yates, Tom Bertram, Mary Crawford and Edmund are discussing what play they should act out, they consider nine plays (see 154). Eventually, they choose Elizabeth Inchbald’s *Lover’s Vows*, “which was so popular that Jane could assume that all readers of *Mansfield Park* would be familiar with it” (Ragg 173). Johnson’s *Idler* and *Rasselas* are also mentioned in the novel, as well as Pope, and Voltaire’s *Louis XIV*. The references to Shakespeare in *Mansfield Park* are also significant as they draw attention to

superficial familiarity with works, a concept I will explore in my analysis of how reading is represented in *Northanger Abbey*. Similarly to Austen's previous novels, *Emma* is also filled with allusions to Milton, Cowper, and quotes from Shakespeare. When Harriet and Emma are talking about Mr. Martin, Harriet reveals, "he has read the *Vicar of Wakefield*. He never read the *Romance of the Forest*, nor the *Children of the Abbey*" (*Emma* 17). This is the first instance when Goldsmith and Radcliffe are mentioned in any of Austen's books. In Chapter 11 of *Persuasion*, *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake* by Scott are listed, as well as *Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* by Lord Byron. There is also an allusion to Matthew Prior's poem *Henry and Emma*: "Without emulating the feelings of an Emma towards her Henry" (*Persuasion* 78); this is an indication that Anne is not as abject as Emma, who expresses a desperate desire to serve the non-existent rival with whom Henry pretends to be in love. These literary references show Austen's knowledge of not only popular literature of the time but also classical literature.

For the purpose of this essay, *Northanger Abbey* is the most significant work of Jane Austen. This novel has the most references to literary works, and it also focuses on the act of reading and what the characters read "Nowhere in Austen . . . are reading and its social consequences more central than [in] *Northanger Abbey*" (Benedict, "Reading"). Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* serve as important indicators of the true character of John Thorpe. Austen mentions several Gothic books (see NA 33) only once, while *Udolpho* is mentioned eighteen times and Radcliffe five times. To show what pieces of literature a heroine should be familiar with, she quotes Pope, *Elegy* by Gray and *Spring* by Thomson, as well as *Othello*, *Measure for Measure* and *Twelfth Night* by Shakespeare. Austen used the knowledge she acquired from the wide variety of books she read, but besides mentioning authors and their works as something her characters read, she also implements the values and lessons of those works. In *Northanger Abbey*, she not only refers to *Tom Jones* to indicate the true nature of John Thorpe, but she also employs traces of Fielding's work in her own novel. The narrator of *Tom Jones* speculates how his reader might interpret his novel; in a very similar manner, the narrator of *Northanger Abbey* also interrupts the narrative to address the reader: "I leave it to my reader's sagacity to determine how much of all this it was possible for Henry to communicate at this time to Catherine" (256). The use of the word sagacity in this context is reminiscent of the time the narrator of *Tom Jones* compares Mrs. Wilkins to birds of prey and states that "The sagacious reader will not from this simile imagine these poor people had any apprehension of the design with which Mrs. Wilkins was now coming towards them" (29). Austen uses books to foreshadow her characters' true nature, but it is only helpful if one is as well-read as the storyteller.

In contrast to Austen's view of herself as an "unlearned and uninformed female" (Austen-Leigh 154-55), I argue that she was well educated, which can be seen in her many references to authors and their works in her novels, as well as from the records of her access to libraries. However, even her brother Henry Austen tried to conceal the part of Austen's life that would point to her enjoyment of novels. In the *Biographical Notice* to the first edition of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*,

[he] was happy to say that 'Her favourite moral writers were Johnson in prose, and Cowper in verse', but was also careful to assure his readers that she 'did not rank any work of Fielding' as high as Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, since 'Neither nature, wit, nor humour, could make her amends for so very low a scale of morals.' (qtd. in Benedict and Le Faye, Introduction, xl-xli)

Henry's notice suggests that Austen held prejudices over certain genres; however, in *Northanger Abbey*, the narrator formulates what has ever since been regarded as the defence of the novel. This shows that Austen herself did not hold prejudices at all; on the contrary, as Grundy states, "Books are of service to her novels because of the daily uses that people make of their reading, in conversation, argument, and the shaping of imaginative experience" (190). In the following chapters, I will identify how Austen used her knowledge in the characterisation of her characters in *Northanger Abbey*.

How John Thorpe and Henry Tilney Read

For my close reading of the characters, I divide the characters into categories based on their relationship with Catherine. Although a categorisation based on reader types might be more efficient, I want to emphasize that people who fulfil similar role in Catherine's life have different influences on her based on what type of reader they are. John Thorpe and Henry Tilney are both possible suitors of Catherine Morland, whose reading habits, which they discuss with Catherine, foreshadow their personalities. It can easily be established whether they are sagacious or vulgar readers by looking at how and what they read as well as how their reading habits influence their view of the world. Henry and John both studied at Oxford, but their attitudes represent two different ends. They come to different conclusions on the matter of novel reading because they represent different types of readers.

Even though John Thorpe makes a positive first impression on Catherine, her perception of him changes after their conversation about reading. He is the prototype of the unwanted suitor, but he is not importunate or unscrupulous enough to match his Gothic counterparts. However, he can be seen as a villain of *Northanger Abbey*, "like the rest of the actual world, on a much smaller and more disposable scale" (Mudrick 46), because he is the only character who purposely tries to hurt Catherine. His ill-nature is first hinted at when he talks to Catherine for the first time. Although Thorpe publicly wears the mask of an "affectionate son" (44), who helps others, he also shows signs of prejudice and coarseness. His disparagement of the literature Catherine enjoys displays a prejudice enhanced by his choice of preferred authors. Moreover, his remark that his sisters "looked very ugly" (44) further reinforces her dislike. Thorpe is a vulgar reader, who only possesses a superficial knowledge of literature. He has certainly read a wide variety of books whilst studying at Oxford with James Morland. However, whilst talking to Catherine, John only shares his views on novel reading, not the quantity or the types of books he has read. He expresses his distaste for novels when stating: "Novels are all so full of nonsense and stuff; there has not been a tolerably decent one come out since *Tom Jones*, except the *Monk*; I read that t'other day; but as for all the others, they are the stupidest things in creation" (43). These books are regarded as books for men, written by male writers, Fielding and Lewis. They are books that the more modest Catherine does not seem to have read. *The Monk*, a gothic novel, among other things, about sexual exploitation and rape, reveals the concealed layers of John's character, which is revealed when angered by Catherine's lack of affectionate feelings towards him: he tells General Tilney that the Morlands are almost poor.

This is an example of the villain's revenge, which ultimately results in the General sending Catherine home. Thorpe's preferred authors contradict his early claim that he "never read novels" because he has "something else to do" (43). He is not familiar with novels but has a generally assumed attitude towards them. As a result, he does not possess literary competence, and thus cannot be regarded as a sagacious reader, which is further emphasized by his mispronunciation of an author's name whom he previously spoke highly of. When Catherine recommends *Udolpho* to him, he reveals his ignorance by responding that if he was to read any of those books, "it shall be Mrs. Radcliff's; her novels are amusing enough; they are worth reading" (43). Later, when Catherine tells Thorpe that *Udolpho* was written by Radcliffe, he tries to justify his ignorance by claiming that he "was thinking of that other stupid book, written by that woman they make such a fuss about, she who married the French emigrant" (43). In this instance, Thorpe is referring to *Camilla* but happens to contradict himself again. Previously, he expressed positive feelings towards Radcliffe's works, yet, he later refers to her work as "stupid" (43), which is identical to his attitude toward other books written by women. Due to her brief acquaintance with John Thorpe, the first man in the novel close to her age that she discusses reading with, Catherine falsely believes that "gentlemen read better books" (107) than novels.

Unlike John Thorpe, the face Henry Tilney shows to the world is identical to his true nature. He is perceptive, witty and erudite, which is also represented in how and what he reads. As a parson educated in Oxford, his literary competence is reflected in the great variety of books he read. His formal education, along with his leisurely reading, helps him perceive the world rationally. While walking around Beechen Cliff, Catherine, to her surprise, learns that not all gentlemen despise novels. Henry is as familiar with novels as with history and theology. His view of novels is favourable for Catherine, as he believes that:

the person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid. I have read all Mrs. Radcliffe's works and most of them with great pleasure. *Udolpho*, when I had once begun it, I could not lay down again;—I remember finishing it in two days— my hair standing on end the whole time. (107-8)

Henry contradicts what Thorpe tells Catherine about reading novels. He endorses her literary taste and assures her they can talk about literature without prejudices. Henry has comprehensive knowledge and semantic knowledge (see Fish). He articulates his thoughts not only on what he reads but also on reading in general. He is an informed reader who also corrects Catherine's

word choices because of his vast knowledge and literary competence; Catherine, when confronted by Henry, realises her mistake not only because of her feelings towards him but because of his straightforwardness, sophistication and vast knowledge. Catherine recognises Henry and his sister as superior to her regarding their knowledge of reading and the world.

Even though Henry is a sagacious reader, his reading still influences his imagination even if, unlike Catherine, it does not get the best of him. When he read *Udolpho*, he says, he read it with his “hair standing on end the whole time” (108). This indication of heightened interest shows that reading absorbs him to a similar extent as Catherine. Even so, his critical and rational thinking allows him to differentiate between the “food and poison [that] are conveyed to the young mind” (Reeve 77). He is what Eco calls a model reader, who is “determined only by the type of interpretive moves that that voice asks him or her to make” (Eco 27). As a result, instead of projecting the fantasies evoked by novels to the world around him, he creates similar stories to entertain others. The narrative competence of the reader, Genette argues, arises “from practice, which enables him both to decipher more and more quickly the narrative code in general or the code appropriate to a particular genre or a particular work” (74). As Henry and Catherine are going to Northanger Abbey, he displays this competence to tease Catherine with an exaggerated description of life at the abbey:

After surmounting your unconquerable horror of the bed, you will retire to rest, and get a few hours’ unquiet slumber. But on the second, or at farthest the third night after your arrival, you will probably have a violent storm . . . and during the frightful gusts of wind which accompany it, you will probably think you discern (for your lamp is not extinguished) one part of the hanging more violently agitated than the rest. (162)

Although his comical approach and parodic tone are evident from the beginning, in addition to Henry basing his story on the events of *Udolpho*, Catherine nevertheless fails to perceive his intended humour until Henry can no longer “command solemnity either of subject or voice” (164). Henry’s confrontation shows his horizon of expectations as he calls Catherine’s attention to their circumstances, “Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians” (203). Furthermore, his social status and education also affect his horizon of expectations not only when he confronts Catherine, but also while telling her his parodic story.

By looking at how and what these two characters read and how their reading habits influence their view of the world, we can fairly say that John Thorpe is a vulgar reader, while

Henry Tilney is a sagacious reader. The different approaches to reading that John Thorpe and Henry Tilney represent and show to Catherine directly influence her perception of them. John Thorpe is a vulgar reader who holds prejudices towards her favoured readings, which makes him disagreeable to her. However, the sagacious reader Henry Tilney, who takes on the role of a lecturer for Catherine, is an agreeable partner for her, which does not change after their first discussion about books.

How Isabella Thorpe and Eleanor Tilney Read

Isabella Thorpe and Eleanor Tilney become friends with Catherine Morland, but they have different motifs. By looking at the reading habits of the two and determining whether they are sagacious or vulgar readers, it is worth examining how their reading habits influence their view of the world and their friendship with Catherine.

Isabella, similarly to her brother, John, goes through a process of revealing her real character in *Northanger Abbey*. She “is the heroine’s confidante reversed: sensibility into vulgarity, sympathy into egocentrism, chastity into man-chasing, thoughtfulness into frivolity” (Murdick 48). At first, she quickly becomes a good friend to Catherine: “the progress of the friendship between Catherine and Isabella was quick as its beginning had been warm” (NA 30), so much so that they call each other by their Christian names. Furthermore, she is the first person to introduce Catherine to Gothic novels, more specifically, to *Udolpho*. According to Isabella, she prepared “a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind,” which she collected in a pocketbook for them to read. This list includes “*Castle of Wolfenbach, Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries*” (33). These books reflect on the Radcliffean Gothic and are “largely condemned by the reviewers for their improbable and clumsy plots” (Benedict and Le Faye, Introduction, xxxviii). However, when she reads them out, it turns out that there are only seven titles, which shows her tendency to exaggerate. Furthermore, she reveals that she has not read those books, but a “particular friend” (33) recommended them. Although this would imply that she discusses reading with others, it is worth noting that in a conversation with Catherine about reading, she is quick to change the subject. Presumably, she did not have access to the type of education to equip her with the appropriate terminology to discuss books, and she has not read a wide range of books that she is prepared to talk about. On this basis, Mr. Darcy, the hero of Austen’s other novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, would not regard Isabella as an accomplished woman who, along with “what is usually met with,” must “add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading” (*Pride and Prejudice* 27). First, Isabella shifts the conversation to her particular friend, then to how good a friend she is as her “attachments are always excessively strong” (34). Yet she refers to her friend as “amazingly insipid” (34). Then she further shifts their conversation away from reading to men; “I thought it [*Sir Charles Grandison*] had not been readable. But, my dearest Catherine, have you settled what to wear on your head tonight?” (35). Isabella’s incoherent chatting is a sign of her vulgarity. She uses

literature to converse with others, instead of as a tool to educate herself. Her interest in literature is limited to sensational novels, and she only reads Gothic novels. She is the prototype of the vulgar reader. This type of reader tends to fall victim to illusions created by novels because they want to achieve their goals, which in her case is to form an advantageous marriage through manipulation. *Udolpho* provided her with examples of marriages born from manipulation. For instance, Montoni marries Madame Montoni by making her believe he is wealthy and cares about her. However, later it is revealed that neither is true. Montoni also tries to manipulate Emily into marrying his friend Count Morano, but this attempt is unsuccessful. There are three consequences to Isabella's reading habits. First, she introduces Catherine to Gothic novels, which leads to her misreading the events in the abbey. Secondly, she wrongly believes that real people can be controlled just as easily as fictional characters. Lastly, she believes that reading about characters who can manipulate people makes her competent to do the same. Eventually, even the naïve Catherine sees through her self-serving, manipulative evocations of friendship. Isabella wants to find a suitable marriage partner, namely, James Morland. Once Catherine and Isabella become close friends, Isabella tells Catherine what she looks for in a man:

I have not forgot your description of Mr. Tilney;—‘a brown skin, with dark eyes, and rather dark hair.’—Well, my taste is different. I prefer light eyes, and as to complexion—do you know—I like a sallow better than any other. You must not betray me if you should ever meet with one of your acquaintance answering that description.
(36)

Her description fits James, but instead of telling Catherine to help her meet him, she uses manipulation. She shows Catherine she can trust her as a friend by recalling how Catherine described Henry Tilney during their earlier conversation. As a result, Catherine becomes aware that she can only be a good friend to her if she remembers this description. Otherwise, she betrays her friend. Eventually, Isabella shifts her allegiance to a wealthier man, Frederick Tilney. The societal convention to pursue an advantageous marriage pushes her to seek means represented in novels. Her manipulation and betrayal of Catherine complement the confusion of fiction and truth in the abbey that Catherine experiences. Isabella consciously uses novels to reach her goals, not by alluding to their fantasies but by luring people towards herself through them. Without introducing Catherine to *Udolpho*, their friendship would not have developed as fast.

The friendship between Eleanor Tilney and Catherine Morland is nothing like that between Catherine and Isabella. Although their foundation is similar, as Catherine only befriended Eleanor in hopes of learning more about Henry, the “first wish of her heart was to improve her acquaintance with Miss Tilney” (56). However, their acquaintanceship has evolved as the novel progresses. The depth of their friendship is most apparent when Eleanor tells Catherine that she has to leave the abbey; “I could hardly believe my senses when I heard it;—and no displeasure, no resentment that you can feel at this moment, however justly great, can be more than I myself—but I must not talk of what I felt. Oh! that I could suggest any thing in extenuation!” (232). In this instance, Eleanor shows that she genuinely considers Catherine as her friend. Before meeting Eleanor for the first time, Catherine had not met a female character with these reading habits. Her familiarity with different genres of books is only matched by that of her brother, Henry. He read *Udolpho* for her, and she enjoyed it. “Come, Miss Morland, let us leave him to meditate over our faults in the utmost propriety of diction, while we praise *Udolpho* in whatever terms we like best. It is a most interesting work” (109). Other than Henry, she is the only character who indulges in fiction and nonfiction. She likes history because “They display imagination without raising interest. I am fond of history—and am very well contented to take the false with the true” (110). The acknowledgement that history books might alter reality is similar to the approach of Julian Barnes’s in his novel *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* that it is the creation of historians who “keep a few true facts and spin a new story around them” (Barnes 242). Eleanor reads history for entertainment without “raising interest” (110), which could lead a vulgar reader into misreading and illusion, but for an ideal reader like her, it is an enjoyable reading. Eleanor is a sagacious reader who reads in great variety, without prejudices and discusses her readings with pleasure. Despite reading at least one Gothic novel, she does not apply the knowledge acquired through such works to try to make sense of the circumstances surrounding her mother’s death because she sees the world around her rationally. However, she does mistake a new book Catherine heard about for an anticipated riot:

I have heard that something very shocking indeed, will soon come out in London . . . A particular friend of mine had an account of it in a letter from London yesterday. It is to be uncommonly dreadful. I shall expect murder and every thing of the kind”

...

“Miss Morland, do not mind what he says;—but have the goodness to satisfy me as to this dreadful riot.” (113)

This is not an indication of her imagination failing her, as their previous topic was politics: “he shortly found himself arrived at politics.” However, Catherine interjects by saying: “I have heard that something very shocking indeed, will soon come out in London” (113). She supposes that Catherine makes an appropriate remark instead of shifting back to her favourite topic, Gothic novels. In the end, Henry Tilney explains that while Catherine talks about a new book, Eleanor thinks about riots as she is influenced not only by the previous conversation about politics but also by the political alarms following the French Revolution, which shows her horizon of expectations. Eleanor does not try to find love through the means used by Isabella; her marriage to a man who “was really deserving of her; independent of his peerage, his wealth, and his attachment, being to a precision the most charming young man in the world” (260). However, her marriage is reminiscent of a heroine in a domestic novel whose fate is to marry a suitable partner.

The most striking difference between Isabella and Eleanor is the difference in the kinds of books they read. While Isabella limits herself to sensational novels, Eleanor indulges fiction and nonfiction alike. Accordingly, Eleanor Tilney would fit the description of an accomplished woman that Mr. Darcy describes, which makes her a sagacious reader. The siblings in *Northanger Abbey* represent similar reading habits. John and Isabella Thorpe are vulgar readers, while Henry and Eleanor are sagacious readers. John and Isabella focus on their shared goal to climb higher on the social ladder and are motivated by materialistic means. The narrator also concludes that the Thorpes are “aiming at a style of life which their fortune could not warrant; seeking to better themselves by wealthy connexions” (256). Eleanor and Henry Tilney, on the other hand, focus on acquiring knowledge and could be referred to as informed readers.

How Catherine Morland Reads

By looking at the reading habits of Catherine Morland one can determine whether Catherine is a sagacious or a vulgar reader, while also taking into account how she perceives the world and the people around her. Looking at how she misreads the character of General Tilney and the circumstances surrounding the death of Mrs. Tilney because of her reading habits also shows that she is as impressionable as any quixotic character.

The female protagonists of the Gothic novels Catherine enjoys are referred to as true heroines and are frequently driven by an inquisitive spirit. Radcliffe takes traditional and exemplary heroines and uses the techniques of the Gothic genre to demonstrate how some of the terrors that the heroine suffers can be solved rationally. Emily St. Aubert is a young, beautiful girl who is “advanced in youth, this sensibility gave a pensive tone to her spirits, and a softness to her manner, which added grace to beauty, and rendered her a very interesting object to persons of a congenial disposition” (*Udolpho* 3). As a result of her tragic past, Emily is predestined to be a heroine. The loss of her mother, followed by her father’s death, sets her on the path of a stereotypical heroine. Her education also prepares her to become one. As a result, the narration begins by establishing Catherine as the exact opposite of a character like Emily, which the narrator also points out: “No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be an heroine” (5). Before her teenage years, neither her appearance nor her intelligence matched those of heroines. “She never could learn or understand anything before she was taught; and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive, and occasionally stupid” (6). However, from the age of fifteen, she is “almost pretty” (6) and “read all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with” (7). In this instance, the narrator re-contextualizes the ruling literary conventions, and Catherine has had to memorize the passages of Pope, Shakespeare, Gray, and Thompson to learn to value sentimentality (see *NA* 8). However, she never uses those pearls of wisdom. Instead, she relies on texts recommended by Isabella Thorpe. These books, specifically *Udolpho*, heavily influence her judgement throughout the novel. Although she tries to discuss her readings with others, the quality of her assessment lacks the appropriate semantic knowledge. She frequently uses the word “amazingly,” which, for the first six instances, only Isabella uses. However, when Catherine uses it for the first time, Henry Tilney immediately mocks her word choice:

“But I really thought before, young men despised novels amazingly.”

“It is *amazingly*; it may well suggest *amazement* if they do—for they read nearly as many as women.” (108)

Another word she uses to describe books is “nicest” which Henry corrects: “The nicest;—by which I suppose you mean the neatest” (109). Unlike the Tilney siblings, Catherine cannot construct her opinion intellectually, using proper phrases, showing that she cannot be regarded as an informed reader. Catherine Morland is a vulgar reader. The illusions and corruption of the mind created by reading without maintaining rationality are most prominent in her case. Throughout the novel, it is apparent that she is impressionable. For Catherine, the text she has to collaborate on with an author is her life, and as an “addressee” (see Jauss), she formulates her new “text” based on her most recent reading experience, *Udolpho*. First, she incorrectly interprets Isabella Thorpe’s character as if she were a gothic heroine who is flawlessly perceptive. Later, Catherine applies similar gothic attributes to the abbey, to General Tilney, and to the circumstances around the death of Mrs. Tilney. Because of her desire to be in a Gothic novel, Catherine willingly entertains irrational beliefs reinforced by her favourite books and becomes a Gothic heroine. She is looking forward to her stay at the abbey and anticipates encountering all of the horrors she has read about in Gothic books:

Northanger Abbey!—These were thrilling words, and wound up Catherine’s feelings to the highest point of extasy . . . Its long, damp passages, its narrow cells and ruined chapel, were to be within her daily reach, and she could not entirely subdue the hope of some traditional legends, some awful memorials of an injured and ill-fated nun. (142-44)

Her expectations, however, are not met, as the abbey’s interior holds nothing Gothic-like. Thus, she becomes a heroine of her own imagined Gothic story. Catherine wrongfully believes that the General has murdered his wife and searches through the abbey for evidence of his heinous act. Although her adventures are similar to the paradigmatic quests of heroines when she discovers that the General has done nothing villainous in that respect at least, she is ashamed of her assumptions.

Catherine is exposed to characters who enjoy and understand history while talking to Henry and Eleanor Tilney. She “cannot be interested in” (109) history because she is a quixotic character. Similarly to Don Quixote, Catherine reflects on what she reads about her life because of her “over-identification insufficiently tempered by judgments of probability” (Alliston 255).

Quixotic characters are convinced that their perception is reasonable. The reason why a sagacious reader like Eleanor Tilney can enjoy history is the same reason why a vulgar reader such as Catherine cannot: history “display[s] imagination without raising interest” (110). Catherine acknowledges that “invention is what delights me in other books” but immediately contradicts herself by stating that “the speeches that are put into the heroes’ mouths, their thoughts and designs—the chief of all this must be invention” (110). Catherine uses the word invention to refer to historical figures rather than events. According to her, historians distort certain aspects of historical figures. Eleanor, on the other hand, while acknowledging the embellishments of historical figures, also states that she reads them with pleasure. Catherine is unable to enjoy history because it does not display an idealized hero and life, which her novels do. The real-life events accounted for in history books are not similar to a realistically written novel which records “everyday life as it was supposed to be lived” (Armstrong 265). Catherine projects her fantasy on the world around her based on the conventions she became familiar with by reading *Udolpho*, which leads Catherine into misreadings and becoming a quixotic heroine. After starting reading the novel in Bath, Catherine’s mind is captivated by the story of Emily St Aubert, a heroine whose stay in the castle is plagued by mysterious events. Catherine’s impressionable mind and inexperience allow her to interpret the extratextual reality (see Iser) based on her readings. She prefers inexplicable explanations for insignificant events and eventually realises how mistaken she has been when looking for the truth in an unnecessary situation. “It’s this novel that dominates Catherine’s imagination in Bath and sets up her torrid fantasies about Northanger, beguiling her mind from the commonplace realities of civilised life in ways that will lead to humiliation” (Keymer 38). One similarity between what she experiences and what she has read in *Udolpho* is the suspicious death of female characters. Catherine spends a relatively large portion of her time at the abbey, convincing herself that the General has murdered his wife. She searches through the abbey and makes desperate assumptions to support her notion derived from the novels she has read. As an empirical reader, Catherine assumes that General Tilney’s displeasure when Catherine asks to see Mrs. Tilney’s room stems from the fact that he did not love his wife. “Of her unhappiness in marriage, she felt persuaded. The General certainly had been an unkind husband. He did not love her walk:—could, he, therefore, have loved her?” (185). Catherine justifies her speculation about this cruel act by turning to what she learned from *Udolpho*. As a result, she compares the General to Signor Montoni: “It was the air and attitude of a Montoni” (192). In *Udolpho*, Montoni imprisons his wife and allows her to die of a fever, which is similar to the crime Catherine accuses the General of. “There’s even a meaningful sense in which General Tilney did indeed

kill his long-suffering wife, or at least give her little to live for” (Keymer 41), because, as Catherine concludes during her walk around the abbey with Eleanor,

Of her unhappiness in marriage, she felt persuaded. The General certainly had been an unkind husband. He did not love her walk:—could he therefore have loved her? And besides, handsome as he was, there was a something in the turn of his features which spoke his not having behaved well to her. (185)

However, the conclusion Catherine arrives at is murder: “His cruelty to such a charming woman made him odious to her. She had often read of such characters; characters, which Mr. Allen had been used to call unnatural and overdrawn; but here was proof positive of the contrary” (185-86). Another instance where *Udolpho* inspires Catherine’s adventure is when she contemplates going down the family vault. Here the narrator provides parodic remarks about her actions and thoughts: “Catherine had read too much not to be perfectly aware of the ease with which a waxen figure might be introduced, and a supposititious funeral carried on” (196). Emily St. Aubert finds a wax figure, one of the mysteries she encounters during her stay in *Udolpho*.

By the end of the novel, Catherine learns the truth about the mysteries she has encountered at the abbey. However, Catherine only becomes aware of her folly after being confronted by Henry, whose opinion she values highly. Therefore, his words put an end to her fantasies, making her rational self surface: “Catherine was completely awakened” (204). Before that, as a vulgar reader of not only books but people too, Catherine fails to see the truth about General Tilney and the reason behind the death of Mrs. Tilney. As a vulgar reader, she misapplies the formulas of novels to people’s social context and failed to see the truth about General Tilney and the reason behind the death of Mrs. Tilney. Henry and Eleanor form an interpretive community (see Fish) that tries to help Catherine’s rationality to come forward by setting a good example for her. Because Catherine’s abilities, background, and appearance are opposed to typical gothic heroines such as Emily, her development from an anti-heroine to a heroine mirrors the protagonist of a *Bildungsroman*, whose evolution is a result of maturation and learning. The complexity of Austen’s work stems from the fact that it does not simply parody a style but also attempts to reflect on the reading and enjoyment of different genres. Catherine’s uncritical reading at first makes her a victim of her illusions and leads to misconceptions. However, when she is confronted by Henry, she realises her mistake, and it is at that moment that she becomes a heroine of a domestic novel. At last, she admits that:

Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, . . . it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the Midland counties of England, was to be looked for . . . Upon this conviction, she would not be surprised if even in Henry and Eleanor Tilney, some slight imperfection might hereafter appear; and upon this conviction she need not fear to acknowledge some actual specks in the character of their father, who, though cleared from the grossly injurious suspicions which she must ever blush to have entertained, she did believe, upon serious consideration, to be not perfectly amiable. (205-6)

The confrontation makes Catherine no longer seek gothic adventures. From this point on, "the visions of romance were over" (204), her rationality surfaces, and she becomes a heroine of real life. Based on what Henry tells her (see 203), she believes that crimes, such as the one Catherine ascribes to General Tilney cannot be true because it is not in the nature of the English. Previously her horizon of expectations and preoccupation (see Rosenblatt) were derived from the same source, her reading of *Udolpho*, but after the confrontation, she adopts Henry's perspective. Being sent away by the General and acknowledging her follies at the abbey help Catherine to mature and realise that she cannot label people either good or bad because, in real-life, human nature is more complex than in novels. She realises that even people she loves and views as intellectually superior can have bad qualities. Through her experiences, Catherine gradually matures and eventually realises that she is not a heroine in a Gothic tale but an ordinary girl living in the ordinariness and beauty of reality.

Catherine Morland is a complex character. As a dynamic character, she goes through a process of learning throughout the story, which results in her gaining the ability to be rational. As Isabella introduces Gothic novels to her, she becomes a vulgar reader who allows novels to influence her mind. Her conversation with John Thorpe makes her believe that gentlemen do not read novels. He also sets an obstacle for her by preventing her from spending time with Henry Tilney. First, he consciously prevents her from being with Henry when he takes her to Blaize castle, then indirectly when the General sends her home due to his conversation with Thorpe. Her acquaintanceship with Henry Tilney helps her to wake up from the irrational thoughts formed by novels. He serves the role of a lecturer to her, along with his sister Eleanor Tilney, who also proves to be a sagacious reader whose opinion Catherine values. She is a quixotic character whose reading habits represent that of vulgar readers. However, through her Bildungsroman-like development, she evolves into a true heroine who is also a sagacious reader.

Conclusion

In her first mature novel *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen applied traces of her earlier works when she worked as a censurer of her contemporaries. The consensus on *Northanger Abbey* has been that it is a parody of a genre whose popularity decreased during the time of the prolonged composition of the novel. Austen reinterpreted the Gothic and related contemporary discourses to parody them while referencing well-known authors and books, in particular, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. This paper aimed to propose a new reading of *Northanger Abbey* in order to highlight the novel's significance in the history of reading and readers.

Instead of directly replicating the characters and situations from *Udolpho*, Austen situated her narrative in a domestic setting that clashes with the conventions of the Gothic novel to parody the genre: her quixotic heroine is a parodic response to such well-known heroines. She introduces not only Catherine's but also her other characters' personalities through a representation of different reading habits. These habits reflect the general readerly attitudes that characterized the eighteenth century, as commented on by Johnson and Reeve. The prejudices surrounding novel reading became an essential part of Austen's narrative, not only through characters such as the roguish John Thorpe but also through the narrator's famous defence of the novel in Chapter 5.

The complexity of Austen's work stems from the fact that it is not simply parodying a genre but also attempting to reflect on the reading and enjoyment of different types of literature. In *Northanger Abbey*, Austen exhibits her vast knowledge of literature, especially of the eighteenth-century novel, in the characterisation of her characters. In my analysis, I introduced some of the concepts of the ideal reader relying on the reader-response theory to create my own categorisation of reader types. Based on this, I asserted that Isabella and John Thorpe are vulgar readers who aspire to get higher on the social ladder but immediately reveal their ignorance to the educated reader. While Isabella talks about reading to form acquaintances with people who could lead her into higher society or an advantageous marriage, John talks about reading because Catherine brings up the topic. They do not fit the definition of model readers because their lack of knowledge prevents them from decoding the signals given by the author. They also lack the right vocabulary to talk about literature that an informed reader would be familiar with. However, the Tilneys are exemplary characters who are also sagacious readers because they indulge in a wide variety of books and are more knowledgeable than the Thorpes or Catherine. They are informed and model readers who have the competence to fill in the gaps of the text

and can contribute to the creation of the text. The most complex character of the novel is Catherine Morland. She is a quixotic character whose reading habits represent those of a vulgar reader. Despite being in a domestic setting, she fails to understand that she is not like the heroines she reads about. Even at the beginning of the book, the narrator highlights that Catherine is not a typical heroine. She is an empirical reader who projects her fantasy on the world around her based on the conventions she became familiar with by reading *Udolpho*. The stylistic variety of the narrative in *Northanger Abbey* also helps portray the Bildungsroman-like progression of Catherine. She evolves from a vulgar reader who is also a quixotic character to a true heroine and a sagacious reader. While acknowledging the generally accepted approach to the work as a parody of the Gothic, my essay contributes to a new direction in Austen scholarship by showing how characters are shaped through their reading.

Works Cited

- Austen, Jane. *Sense and Sensibility*. Edited by Edward Copeland, Cambridge UP, 2005. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen.
- . *Mansfield Park*. Edited by John Wiltshire, Cambridge UP, 2005. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen.
- . *Northanger Abbey*. Edited by Barbara M. Benedict and Deirdre Le Faye, Cambridge UP, 2005. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen.
- Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Edited by Stephanie Insley Hershinow, Norton, 2022.
- . *Persuasion*. Edited by Patricia Meyer Spacks, Norton, 2013.
- . *Pride and Prejudice*. Donald Gray, Norton, 2016.
- Austen-Leigh, James Edward. *A Memoir of Jane Austen*. Cambridge UP, 2009.
- Barnes, Julian. *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*. Picador, 1990.
- Barchas, Janine. “The Lost Copies of *Northanger Abbey*.” *Jasna. Jane Austen Society of North America*, 2019, <https://www.jasna.org/publications-2/persuasions-online/volume-40-no-1/barchas/>.
- Benedict, Barbara. “Reading by the Book in *Northanger Abbey*.” *Jasna. Jane Austen Society of North America*, 1999, <https://www.jasna.org/persuasions/online/vol20no1/benedict.html>.
- and Deirdre Le Faye. Introduction. Benedict and Le Faye, pp. xxiii-lxi.
- Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric Fiction*. U of Chicago P, 1983.
- Butler, Marilyn. *Jane Austen*. Oxford UP, 2007.
- Copeland, Edward, and Juliet McMaster, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*. Cambridge UP, 1997.

- Eco, Umberto. *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. Harvard UP, 1994.
- Fergus, Jan. *Jane Austen: A Literary Life*. Macmillan, 1991.
- . “The Professional Woman Writer.” Copeland and McMaster, pp. 12–31.
- Fielding, Henry. *History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. Penguin, 2004.
- . *Joseph Andrews*. Penguin, 1985.
- Fish, Stanley. *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature*. Duquesne UP, 1998.
- Fraiman, Susan, et al. “The Domestic Novel.” *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 3: The Nineteenth-Century Novel: 1820-1880*. Edited by John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015, pp. 169–84.
- Genette Gérard, et al. *Narrative Discourse*. Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Glock, Waldo S. “Catherine Morland’s Gothic Delusions: A Defense of *Northanger Abbey*.” *Rocky Mountain Review*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1978, pp. 33–46. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1347760>.
- Graves, Richard. *Columella; or the Distressed Anchoret*. 2 vols. London, 1779.
- Grundy, Isobel. “Jane Austen and Literary Traditions.” Copeland and McMaster, pp. 189-210.
- Hannoosh, Michele. “The Reflexive Function of Parody.” *Comparative Literature*, vol. 41, no. 2, 1989, pp. 113–27. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1770971>.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. U of Illinois P, 2000.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.
- Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Translated by Timothy Bahti, U of Minnesota P, 1982.

- Johnson, Samuel, and Arthur Murphy. *The Works of Samuel Johnson*. BiblioBazaar, 2012.
- Kaplan, Deborah. *Jane Austen among Women*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2019. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/book.68486.
- Kearful, Frank J. "Satire and the Form of the Novel: The Problem of Aesthetic Unity in *Northanger Abbey*." *ELH*, vol. 32, no. 4, 1965, pp. 511–27. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2872256>.
- Keymer, Tom. *Jane Austen: Writing, Society, Politics*. Oxford UP, 2020.
- Lupton, Christina. "The Shortness of Time." *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century*, Johns Hopkins UP, 2018, pp. 1–9.
- MacKay, Marina. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Novel*. Cambridge UP, 2011.
- Mudrick, Marvin. "The Literary Pretext Continued: Irony versus Gothicism (*Northanger Abbey*)." *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery*, Princeton UP, 1952, pp. 37–59.
- Münderlein Kerstin-Anja. "Gothic Novels versus Gothic Parodies: The Difficulties of Differentiation." *Genre and Reception in the Gothic Parody: Framing the Subversive Heroine*, Routledge, 2022, pp. 60–68.
- Radcliffe, Ann. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In *Parantheses*, 2001.
- Ragg, Laura, M. "What Jane Austen Read." *English: Journal Of The English Association*, vol. 2, nr. 9, 1938, pp. 167–74, <https://doi.org/10.1093/english/2.9.167>.
- Reeve, Clara. *The Progress of Romance*. Vol. 2. The Facsimile Text Society, 1930.
- Rosenblatt, Louise M., and Wayne C. Booth. *Literature as Exploration*. MLA, 2005.
- Russett, Margaret. "Narrative as Enchantment in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*." *ELH*, vol. 65, no. 1, 1998, pp. 159–86. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030173>.
- Sabor, Peter. "Introduction." *Reading with Austen*, 19 Sept. 2019, <https://readingwithaustenblog.com/tag/peter-sabor/>.

- . “Reading with Austen.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2019, p. 441-42. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/741211.
- Scott, Walter. “Fatal Revenge; or, the Family of Montorio: a Romance.” *Quarterly Review*, May 1810, pp. 339-47.
- Séllei, Nóra. “Angol írók a 18. században.” *Az Angol Irodalom Története* 4. Edited by Tamás Béneyi and Géza Kállay, Kijárat, 2021, pp. 227-35.
- Shaw, Narelle. “Free Indirect Speech and Jane Austen’s 1816 Revision of *Northanger Abbey*.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1990, pp. 591–601. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/450561>.
- Simpson, Richard. “Richard Simpson on Jane Austen.” *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, Volume 1, 1811-1870*. Edited by B. C. Southam, Routledge, 2001, pp. 243–63.
- Sterne, Laurence. *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Penguin, 1967.
- Stovel, Bruce. “Further Reading.” Copeland and McMaster, pp. 227-43.
- Sutherland, Kathryn. “Jane Austen’s Dealings With John Murray And His Firm.” *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 64, no. 263, 2013, pp. 105–26. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42003759>.
- Todd, Janet. *The Cambridge Introduction to Jane Austen*. Cambridge UP, 2015.
- Townshend, Dale. “An Introduction to Ann Radcliffe.” *British Library*, 15 May 2014, <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/an-introduction-to-ann-radcliffe>.
- Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto*. 1764. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2016.
- Watt, James. “Gothic.” *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1740–1830*. Edited by Thomas Keymer, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 119–35.
- Wiltshire, John. Introduction. *Mansfield Park*. By Jane Austen. Edited by John Wiltshire, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp. xxv-lxxxiv.

Wyett, Jodi L. "Female Quixotism Refashioned: *Northanger Abbey*, the Engaged Reader, and the Woman Writer." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2015, pp. 261–76. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24575169>.

Zelei, Dávid. "Don Quijote Angolszásziában." *Alföld*, vol. 73, no. 8, 2022, pp. 59–62.