In Henry Tilney’s charge to Catharine Morland, he implies that this land and time are safe and ordered. In Emma Woodhouse’s expression of disgust with the behavior of Frank Churchill, she identifies his actions as unmanly. Her aversion, likewise, presumes that there is a proper way for a man to act in society that all males ought to know. These comments of Austen’s characters remind us of her concern with the identity of the English nation and its men. Austen’s corpus dramatizes England’s transformation into a modern nation, and an integral element of this process is the modernization of English men. She depicts men who achieve the social and sexual propriety referenced by Emma Woodhouse despite the cultural turmoil engendered by England’s response to the French Revolution—turmoil that Henry Tilney does not acknowledge. Austen’s men respond to a variety of cultural directives for proper masculinity, and they acclimate themselves to the needs of a changing society, but they must carefully regulate their proclivity to sexual desires to ensure their prolonged stability.

Austen’s novels do not portray a society attempting to forbid men from engaging in sexual activity; rather, Austen’s tales present a modernizing nation that attempts to regulate how its men stylize and fashion themselves as sexualized subjects. Michel Foucault points out that “sexual behavior is not, as is too often assumed, a superimposition of, on the one hand, desires
that derive from natural instincts, and, on the other hand, of permissive or restrictive laws that tell us what we should or shouldn’t do.” He concludes that “sexual behavior is more than that. It is also the consciousness one has of what one is doing, what one makes of the experience, and the value one attaches to it” (“Sexual Choice, Social Act” 141–42). I will treat the issues of sexuality, sexual desire, and love within Austen’s texts not as natural instincts that must be either satisfied or repressed, but as matters of social conduct and cultural consciousness that are crafted, maintained, and adjusted. Austen repeatedly represents men who monitor their sexualities as part of their larger civic duty, and their self-management allows them to participate more fully in a modernizing culture.

As I discuss in my opening chapter, the English society that emerged in the years following the French Revolution specifically instructed men how to prevent emotion from endangering their civic identities. Early-nineteenth-century England actively sought strategies to curb the passionate behavior of men associated with the radical experiment in France, and England was especially nervous about men’s susceptibility to love and sexual desire. Austen’s works consistently illustrate this important dialectic between the individual’s sexuality and the security of the national community. Austen specifically notes the social complications and consequences involved in sexual desire, love relations, and marriage, and she likewise demonstrates how civic duties affect the pursuit of desire and romance. Throughout my argument, I will use the term social/sexual subjectivity to denote this complex interrelation between the social statuses and sexualities of Austen’s men. I want to emphasize how the late-eighteenth-century cultural discourses that I discuss in my first chapter were concerned with both the construction of a modern English nation and the formation of a disciplined modern man.

Austen’s corpus is a useful cultural site to study how men of a modernizing nation respond to cultural anxieties about masculinity. Her narratives depict men who monitor their amorous emotions while maintaining romantic relationships with women; these relationships, however, are inevitably marked by the order amenable to a society in transition rather than the volatile unpredictability of love. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari provocatively inquire, “What does it mean to love somebody,” and they conclude:

It is always to seize that person in a mass, extract him or her from a group, however small, in which he or she participates, whether it be through the family only or through something else; then to find that person’s own packs, the multiplicities he or she encloses within himself or herself which may be of an entirely different nature. To join them to mine, to make them penetrate mine, and for me to penetrate the other person’s. Heavenly nuptials, multi-
For Deleuze and Guattari, love destroys the singularity and security of the individual and compels each lover to embrace the diversity and complexity in both the self and the other; love engenders lines of flight or new kinds of relationships between the diverse and mobile packs that constitute the lovers. Such love prevents men and women from embracing the specific and singular roles that both the post-Revolutionary English nation and the late-millennial men’s movements assigned to citizens to establish gender clarity and ordered civilizations. For Deleuze and Guattari, “being-lover” and “being-loved” allow individuals to pursue fluid emotion, pleasurable sensation, and subjectivities marked by flexibility. They ultimately announce that we should “use love and consciousness to abolish subjectification”; they see the potential of love to subvert the ordering forces of modern civilization that subject us/make us subject to disciplined modes of sexuality (Thousand Plateaus 35). The male figures of Austen’s corpus are, however, strongly urged to become regulated social/sexual subjects in order to provide the civic and cultural leadership required to stabilize the modern English nation. The literary and political discourses of the 1790s establish distinct desires for appropriate English maleness, and each of these models requires the proper man to maintain a singular, static, and well-managed sexuality that does not entail self-banishment from women; Austen’s work offers us portraits of men who relinquish the “heavenly nuptials” and powerful desire theorized by Deleuze and Guattari in favor of a disciplined model of modern love endorsed by post-Revolutionary England. This modern love solidifies stable individual identities for men and women, and, by ensuring strict gender polarity, it ultimately helps to justify and maintain hegemonic structures that support modern patriarchy.

**Austen, Love, and Marriage**

The issues of love, sexuality, and marriage have, of course, received considerable attention in Austen scholarship, and the centrality of these features in her work has helped to promote her enduring appeal. Austen’s late-twentieth-century revival illustrated how her supposed documentation of gender and social propriety has remained extremely attractive to American consumers. Austen’s ostensible authority on gender, marriage, and love, however, has historically focused upon women. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in a later manifestation of her infamous 1989 MLA conference presentation, noted that
“Austen criticism is notable mostly, not just for its timidity and banality, but for its unresting exaction of the spectacle of a Girl Being Taught a Lesson” (“Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl” 315). Sedgwick’s characterization of Austen scholarship as a practice in disciplining vivacious young women reflects a lengthy tradition of “marriage” criticism that Claudia Johnson discusses in her influential essay, “Austen Cults and Cultures.”

Austen criticism continues to insist upon the educational value of her corpus for young women, and the late-millennial Austen craze reminded us of this reputed applicability of the writer’s stories. Natalie Tyler, in her wonderfully entertaining handbook The Friendly Jane Austen (1999), reveals the longevity of this cultural belief in Austen’s panoramic authority on both women’s lives and their progression toward marriage. Tyler presents Austen as an advisor who offers helpful counsel to troubled individuals, and she specifically upholds the valuable marital advice in Austen’s works. Tyler adds that “the marriage plot compels Austen’s heroines to learn how to read human character. . . . Hence it is also an education plot” (59). This popular conception of her tales as guidebooks for young women’s effective marriage preparation has prompted numerous critics in the years following Austen’s Hollywood successes to explore the role of the writer and her tales in expounding the cultural narrative of heteronormativity.

And her contemporary cultural clout as a heterosexual romance advisor has encouraged scholars to sustain both the “Girl-Being-Taught-A-Lesson” model of criticism and the focus on the narratives’ marriage plots; however, Austen criticism remains notably silent on the sexuality and behavior of the heterosexual male lover.

Instead, the critical penchant to view Austen’s corpus as a marital training ground for young women has led to a scholarly focus on the female subject. Important feminist and female-centered treatments of Austen throughout the 1980s—including Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s The Madwoman in the Attic (1979), LeRoy W. Smith’s Jane Austen and the Drama of Woman (1983), Margaret Kirkham’s Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction (1983), Mary Poovey’s The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer (1984), and John Hardy’s Jane Austen’s Heroines: Intimacy in Human Relationships (1984)—established a vital new arena in Austen criticism by advancing sophisticated arguments about the depiction of women and femininity in the six novels. These early feminist critics provided detailed explorations of femininity and women’s social lives in Austen’s texts. Their works, nonetheless, often isolated Austen’s representations of female characters, effectively disregarding the symbiotic and complex processes of gender formation in Austen’s narratives; moreover, this concentration on her portrayal of the heroine has traditionally theorized (either implicitly or explicitly) a simple and static man who is the opposite
and/or oppressor of women. The critical emphasis on Austen's marriage plots has thus encouraged many to read her corpus as a collection of tales documenting a woman's search not for love or a lover, but for a stable and stabilizing husband.

The young woman's marital quest, according to this standard approach of Austen criticism, involves various lessons the heroine must learn as she matures and accepts her own social/sexual limitations. This critical supposition depends upon a conception of masculinity as fixed and static; the ideal man for each heroine is presumably somewhere within the narrative, and if she learns the requisite lessons, she will find her man—who is simply waiting to be found. Laura Tracy claims that Austen portrays exactly such autonomous and self-determining men; she argues that “one of Austen’s sub-themes about men in her work [is] that they cannot be changed by women”; she concludes that “Austen implied that men in Western culture are created to be independent subjects—heroes of their own lives” (157). This traditional reading of Austen, which casts each woman's idealized man as a secure and independent figure, is strongly rooted in Freudian notions of Oedipal development that presuppose the masculine subject as an always-already complete and fully formed sexual subject. In *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, Freud outlines the different challenges faced by men and women throughout their Oedipal developments. He theorizes that men must successfully progress beyond these trials to achieve sexual and social maturity, but he bemoans that “the majority of men are . . . far behind the masculine ideal” (193). Freud's notion of a “masculine ideal” that men supposedly seek has remained important to the field of masculinity studies and integral to the success of the late-millennial popular men's movements. Kaja Silverman's widely anthologized study, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (1992), may have epitomized this Freudian influence as she explored the struggles and failures of modern men to reach the apex of masculinity—the same struggles and failures that prompted many men's interest in Bly's mythopoetic manifesto and Promise Keepers' gatherings. This Freudian theory of masculinity effectively bifurcates men—that is, each man is either an ideal male sexual subject, or he is lacking.

Freud's conception of men and masculinity is reductive, and it is specifically ineffective for studying Austen's fictional representation of gendered identity. The men of Austen's corpus, rather than attempting to imitate a single and stable paragon of masculinity, must negotiate numerous intertwined and contradictory standards for proper maleness that are always inflected by national concerns and perpetually debated and revised. Claudia L. Johnson accurately expresses the complexity of Austen's male characters
when she announces that “we will miss what is distinctive about Austen’s achievement if we assume that masculine self-definitions were givens rather than qualities under reconstruction” (Equivocal Beings 199). The developing English nation does not offer Austen’s men a single and static system for male sexual development à la Freud; the literary and political discourses of the 1790s debate various models of masculinity and male social identity. Deleuze and Guattari, in their response to Freud, take up precisely this point, explaining that modern societies “make a habit of feeding on the contradictions they give rise to, on the crises they provoke, on the anxieties they engender” (Anti-Oedipus 151). The post-Revolutionary cultural disorder creates such a contradictory situation for England’s men, and Freud’s prominent theory of sexuality cannot negotiate this complexity. Angus McLaren points out that “Freud’s famous question ‘What do women want?’ has garnered a good deal of indignant attention,” but as McLaren reminds us, “few have observed that he did not ask ‘What do men want?’; the assumption being that everyone knew” (3). My treatment of Austen allows for a reexamination of the emergent model of Western masculinity, and I demonstrate that post-Revolutionary men’s desires—and perhaps more importantly, post-Revolutionary society’s desires for men—were neither certain nor static.

**Modern Man and the Aesthetic of Existence**

Austen’s corpus provides us with a unique opportunity to study masculinity and male sexual development for three primary reasons: (1) it coincides with profound historical changes in Western conceptions of men and maleness; (2) it demonstrates the important dialectical process of gender formation; and (3) it portrays men who have become cultural icons of masculinity. Joseph A. Kestner rightly notes that “the formation of modern ideologies of masculinity occurred precisely at the time of Austen’s formation as a novelist” (147). Austen’s texts depict modern men who attempt to achieve new and changing standards for proper male sexual identity, and she emphasizes how this process is affected by numerous discourses and events, including the transformation of English society, the reconfiguration of its class structure, and the social/sexual formation of women. To consider the complexity of these various cultural concerns to which Austen’s men respond, I employ Foucault’s notion of the aesthetic of existence that he develops in the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. Foucault’s work offers a flexible understanding of sexualized subjectivity that allows me to theorize the impact of diverse socially produced qualifications for appropriate maleness.
without neglecting the individual’s interaction with these cultural forces. Foucault indicates that the deployment and regulation of sexuality involves an ethics or aesthetics of existence that he discusses as an “elaboration of a form of relation to self that enables an individual to fashion himself into a subject of ethical conduct” (Use of Pleasure 251). He explains that the subject’s ethics involve “the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself . . . which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions” (“On the Genealogy” 263). England’s cultural debates of the 1790s delineate various and conflicting standards for proper masculinity that the men of Austen’s fiction must negotiate as they fashion themselves as sexual and national subjects; Austen’s tales reveal that these men’s efforts repeatedly compel them to relinquish their identities as lovers and discipline their sexual desire. While Freud’s theory of an idealized masculinity invites critics to read Austen’s corpus as a manual for young women in quest of Mr. Right, Foucault’s theory of the aesthetic of existence allows us to examine—within the context of England’s late-eighteenth-century discussions—how and why Austen’s male characters form their social/sexual subjectivities.

Austen’s men craft disciplined social/sexual identities that enable them to satisfy a variety of cultural desires for proper masculinity, and this model of male sexuality is integral to the development of the modern English nation throughout the nineteenth century. Austen’s men learn to become stable subjects who are then able to participate in hegemonic heterosexual structures like marriage and family; moreover, the regulation of their desires masks their complexity and prevents any destabilizations. Austen’s novels illustrate an efficient model of love and desire that serves the state and its systems of cultural reproduction. Her portrayal of the heterosexual romance narrative is undeniably marked by such concerns of national stability and social rehabilitation, and her corpus offers us multiple portraits of men who opt to pursue the ordered rationality of secure/securing love rather than the messiness and complications of sexual desire. This strategy for male sexual formation has become the dominant model of Western masculinity that is reinforced whenever the hackneyed “crisis of masculinity” resurfaces.

In Deleuze’s brilliant “Letter to a Harsh Critic,” he explains that “non-oedipal love is pretty hard work,” and he points out that the majority of modern lovers are hesitant to expose themselves “to love and desire” and instead revert to “the whining need to be loved that leads everyone to the psychoanalyst” (10). This “whining need” fueled the successes of the mid-1990s men’s movements, and it likely helped to entice moviegoers to the filmic adaptations of Austen’s tales in search of a simpler time when love...
supposedly “worked.” The propinquity of the late-millennial men’s move-
ments and the Austen cultural revival, however, ultimately reminds us of the
incipience of our efficient and effective model of disciplined modern love.
Non-Oedipal love, as Deleuze notes, is risky and even arduous, and Austen’s
novels illustrate that as the modern English nation recovers from the radical
tumult of the French Revolution, it could not allow its men to assume such
perilous and laborious tasks that might distract them from the business of
ordering the state.

Austen Criticism and Masculinity

Despite Freud’s sustained influence in the study of sexual development,
thorists of masculinity finally succeeded in questioning and destabilizing
the long-standing assumption of a fixed and natural male figure during the
same mid-1990s period that experienced Austen’s Hollywood vogue and
the rise of popular men’s movements. R. W. Connell’s Masculinities (1995),
Robyn Wiegman’s American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender (1995),
and Michael Kimmel’s Manhood in America: A Cultural History (1996) all
challenged the cultural and critical expectation of a static man by examining
the histories of different masculinities and exploring the various processes of
men’s social formations; moreover, these and other theorists of masculinity
emphasized the intellectual and political synergy between feminist scholar-
ship and masculinity studies. Wiegman explained that the deconstruction
or “‘unmaking,’ if you will, of the category of men importantly remakes
masculinity as pertinent to if not constitutive of female subjectivity, thereby
rendering complex feminism’s ability to negotiate the distinctions and inter-
connections between sex, sexuality, and gender” (“Unmaking” 33). Connell
likewise insisted that “no masculinity arises except in a system of gender
relations.” Connell added that “rather than attempting to define masculinity
as an object (a natural character type, a behavioural average, a norm), we
need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and
women conduct gendered lives” (71). The work of Connell, Wiegman, and
Kimmel helped to initiate new theoretical strategies for studying the forma-
tion of masculinity as a dialectical process informed by historical contexts
and individual men’s desires.

Although Alfred P. Ollivier wrote a master’s thesis on Austen’s men in
1950, Austen scholars did not begin to directly address her men until this
critical reconfiguration of masculinity. The theme of the 1996 meeting of
the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) was “Jane Austen and
Her Men,” and the subsequent 1996 volume of Persuasions collected much
of the convention attendees’ work on the subject. During this same mid-1990s period, scholars began to treat Austen’s men as part of larger critical projects. Roger Sales’s *Jane Austen and Representations of Regency England* (1994) offered an impressive reading of Austen’s later works within the context of regency scandals, including the indecorous activity of prominent men such as the Prince of Wales. Sales’s criticism has been particularly important in identifying new ways to historicize gender identity in Austen’s tales by rethinking the relationship between her narratives and the regency crises. Johnson’s *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (1995) provided an innovative reading of gender in the late eighteenth century, but she devoted only her Afterword to Austen. Johnson read *Emma’s* Knightley as an impressive male figure capable of rehearsing earlier models of chivalric masculinity while simultaneously performing modern male duties. She argued that Knightley’s humane model of masculinity “[diminished] the authority of male sentimentality, and [reimmasculated] men and women alike with a high sense of national purpose” (191). Johnson suggested that Knightley initiated a new type of English maleness that is neither anachronistic nor overly progressive; this model of masculinity, according to Johnson, “desentimentalizes and deheterosexualizes virtue, and in the process makes it accessible to women as well [as men]” (199). The critical work of Sales and Johnson demonstrated the importance of Austen’s men to our larger understanding of post-Revolutionary England, and specifically illustrated the emergence of modern men alongside the development of the modern nation.

Tim Fulford’s *Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, De Quincey and Hazlitt* (1999) has likewise been a vital contribution to the study of masculinity in early-nineteenth-century literature. Fulford added to Johnson’s work by evaluating the national responses to the French Revolution and the subsequent reconfigurations of England’s cultural conception of proper masculinity. Fulford argued that throughout the Romantic period, “Chivalric manhood did not die”; he asserted “it was relocated in the middle classes,” and he traced this thesis through the writings of many major male writers of the period (*Romanticism and Masculinity* 9). His work encouraged a reconsideration of both the Romantic(ized) male subject and the literary representation of men in the period, and his more recent treatments of Austen’s novels have been especially informative to my investigation of masculinity in her corpus. And yet, this critical energy has not generated sustained critical study of Austen’s male characters; rather, this interest in Austen’s men seems to have culminated with the publication of Audrey Hawkridge’s *Jane and Her Gentlemen: Jane Austen and the Men in Her Life and Novels* (2000).
Hawkridge’s work provided a comprehensive but uncritical and ahistorical assessment of the male figures in Austen’s family and fiction. While this book did offer interesting speculations on the representation of maleness in Austen’s texts, Hawkridge’s goal was simply to demonstrate the artistry of Austen’s characterization by documenting the impact of the men in her life on the men in her stories. Hawkridge made clear that her “particular examination of Jane’s world looks at the men in her family and her social circle, what she thought of them and how they affected her life. They cast their own light on the men in her works, most of whom she presents so roundly that we feel they are old friends, to admire or smile at as she intended but never to hate” (7). Hawkridge’s fond appreciation for Austen’s men may have concluded what appeared to be a promising new area of Austen studies. Despite the accomplishments of masculinity theorists and the work of scholars such as Sales, Johnson, and Fulford, Austen’s men have not yet received the critical study necessary to delineate the cultural efficacy of her novelistic project’s conceptions of masculinity.

**Men, Love, and the Modern Nation**

I treat Austen’s novels as a collection of cultural documents that exposes both a social anxiety about masculinity and a social response to this anxiety. My focus throughout is to evaluate the social discipline of the male lover that Austen’s work dramatizes. Austen’s works have been influential in crafting Western notions of the idealized man, but it is a critical misreading to assume that Austen’s tales advocate or uphold either a disciplined model of masculinity or any other ideal of maleness. Instead, in my discussions of the individual novels, I consider various men’s attempts to develop social/sexual subjectivities that will allow them to participate in the civic community and its hegemonic structures, and I explore the ramifications of such attempts on the men’s identities as lovers. I make no effort to take up every man in Austen’s corpus, and prominent figures such as Mr. Darcy, Edward Ferrars, and Henry Crawford receive only brief mention. I concentrate on men whose social/sexual subjectivities reveal important shifts in the modernizing nation’s expectations for men.

England’s ambitions for the modernizing nation and its men are the principal topics of my first chapter, and I briefly frame my discussion of the late-eighteenth-century discourses on nation and masculinity by considering the influence of prominent eighteenth-century courtesy books upon such public debates. The turbulent decade of the 1790s has proved fecund ground for studies of Austen, and yet treatments of her novels have
largely ignored the various prescriptions of ideal manliness that emerged throughout this period. These models of maleness are produced by a nexus of literary and political texts that focused on and responded to the national crisis engendered by the French Revolution, the rising feminist movement in England and Europe, the continuing Enlightenment tradition, and the sentimental rhetoric of the late eighteenth century. The post-Revolutionary cultural documents I investigate explored plans for the future of the nation and debate the worthiness of proposals for far-reaching social reform. England’s ideal of masculinity was a recurring component of these discourses, and I will specifically treat three discourses that structured the public dialogue about masculinity: the contemporary relevance of a chivalric social system, the volatile relation between the Enlightenment doctrine of rationality and the sentimental tradition, and the appropriate relations between the sexes. My goal in this chapter is to establish the historical and textual context out of which Austen’s depictions of masculinity emerged. I organize my discussion of the late-eighteenth-century cultural debates around the works of Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft; I concentrate on the political and philosophical texts in the initial chapter, and I consider relevant literary works within my discussions of Austen’s novels.

I then provide a selective treatment of Austen’s juvenilia, and while I do not concern myself with the impact of the post-Revolutionary discourses on the male lovers of these short tales, I do note a burgeoning cultural anxiety about young men, their neglect of courtesy book guidelines, and their susceptibility to the dangers of love and sexual desire. I argue that the social/sexual subjectivity of *Northanger Abbey*’s Henry Tilney serves as Austen’s fictional response to this growing concern about England’s young men. Tilney’s strong adherence to the doctrine of rationality protects him from the potentially overwhelming powers of love. Henry models a masculinity rooted in Jacobin principles of reason and industry; he will not allow the irrational or sublime to affect his behavior, and even his climactic decision to disobey the authority of his father and travel to the Morlands’ home is based upon reason. And yet, Henry’s restraint reveals his knowledge of other cultural debates on nation and masculinity, including the discourses of chivalry and Enlightenment feminism. He is a disciplined man whose structured behavior protects him against the snares of romance that entangle the young lovers of Austen’s juvenilia.

The suitors of Marianne Dashwood show us more extensive examples of the dangers of love and desire. Austen casts Brandon and Willoughby as men of sensation who are schooled in the appreciation of sensory perceptions, respectful of sentiment, and liable to uncontrollable emotional outbursts. The narrator portrays these men as lovers, and she notes the
severe consequences of such behavior; Brandon has taught himself to regulate his senses and manage his sensitivity, and the narrative dramatizes Willoughby’s training in modern love. The long-standing reading of Sense and Sensibility as Marianne’s epiphany that Brandon is the truly right man for her implies that there is some outstanding difference between her suitors, but I argue that Willoughby and the Colonel are essentially committed to the same model of male behavior. Brandon has simply already learned what Willoughby learns by the end of the novel: that to become a trusted and responsible figure in the modern national community, men of sensation must discipline their sensitivity.

_Pride and Prejudice_ offers us an important glimpse of the cultural reconceptualization of masculinity that accompanies England’s modernization. I treat Darcy as an exemplar of a vanishing type of man; he is a resplendent figure who is at once chivalric, rational, and romantic, and I argue that his status as an ostensibly impeccable man highlights his uniqueness. The aristocratic tradition that Darcy embodies and Pemberley institutionalizes is waning, and while it is still greatly admired in the novel, its representatives are dwindling. The novel indicates that as the esteemed nobleman and his accompanying mythology become less common in the modern nation, England must now establish new models of male social identity and begin training non-aristocratic men to assume greater civic responsibilities. I focus on the development and improvement of Mr. Bingley and Mr. Gardiner. Both of these men have benefited from the successes of the trade class in the early nineteenth century, and each receives important guidance in proper masculinity from Darcy; moreover, the special attention that Darcy devotes to Bingley, whose family has risen from the trade industry, suggests that landed men are concerned enough about the future of the nation’s masculinity to mentor men of new money.

While _Pride and Prejudice_ shows us a society preparing for the transition to a new nation and a new kind of man, _Mansfield Park_ dramatizes a society in denial of this transition. The various crises of the Bertram household anticipate the impending collapse of the aristocratic tradition that we see in _Persuasion_. Edmund’s sincere effort to re-solidify his family serves as Austen’s final fictional attempt to preserve this decaying lifestyle and its model of masculinity. I present Edmund as the last bastion of the declining aristocratic community; the hero’s social/sexual subjectivity specifically tries to merge the qualities of manliness—the gentleman and the clergyman—that Burke outlines in his _Reflections on the Revolution in France_ (1790). Edmund invests great importance in both identities, and he virulently defends the importance of the ecclesiastical profession against the charges of the sensually stimulating Mary Crawford. The hero’s infatuation
with Mary tempts him to abandon the discipline of Burke’s archaic mode of socially responsible maleness in favor of the pleasures of modernity, but Edmund ultimately anesthetizes his sensitivity to amorous desires. The hero’s marriage to his cousin slows the deterioration of his aristocratic family, preserves the integrity of the Bertram line, and perpetuates endangered models of masculinity, but the atavistic quality of this union also reveals the desperation of the aristocracy to reproduce itself.

In *Emma*, the atrophying aristocracy and its model of masculinity become comic. Mr. Woodhouse is a ridiculous male figure who maintains only ceremonial responsibilities in his community. The tradition that Edmund Bertram endeavors to save now appears to have dissipated with little regret. I treat Knightley as an embodiment of what Foucault theorizes as the modern subject whose social/sexual identity is marked by finitude. I agree with Johnson that Knightley is an important figure in the history of masculinity because of his adaptability; he values the agricultural heritage of Donwell Abbey and serves as a pastoral caretaker for the downtrodden of Highbury, but he also rebukes Frank Churchill’s excessive gallantry and willingly pursues the company of the rising trade class. Knightley is truly an impressive man who has loaded his finite social/sexual subjectivity with all the masculine characteristics desired by the post-Revolutionary discursive community. He is an extremely well-ordered individual like Henry Tilney, but unlike the hero of *Northanger Abbey*, Knightley is not committed to one model of male sexuality; his is a flexible masculinity, and he has learned to adjust his social/sexual identity to a modern nation. Knightley, moreover, shows how modern men can preserve social/sexual identity, maintain a vital civic role, and keep the company of women by carefully regulating any amorous desire or sexual passion.

In *Persuasion*, Austen finally presents us Wentworth—a man who embraces amorous emotions. Wentworth is a lover who experiences first-hand the personal and cultural consequences of such a social/sexual identity. The pain of his truncated early romance with the heroine lingers throughout the tale, but the naval hero ultimately regains a willingness to experience desire and passion. Wentworth and his naval colleagues are distinct from the previous men of Austen’s corpus and Sir Walter Elliot, who embodies the utter demise of the aristocracy and its model of English masculinity. The Elliots must relinquish their landed estate, and while the narrator highlights the decadence of Sir Walter and his circle, she likewise accentuates the sincerity and compassion of the naval community. Wentworth is a sensitive man whose very body bears the marks of seafaring life, but unlike Willoughby or Brandon, the naval hero does not allow his prior experiences of sensation to curb or anesthetize his sensitivity. He remains open to desire
and its social, emotional, and romantic ramifications; his social/sexual identity is essentially insecure, and his maritime marriage to Anne prevents his sexuality from becoming stultified or disciplined.

My conclusion briefly considers what I theorize as the cultural response to Anne and Wentworth’s dynamic nautical relationship. I discuss the proliferation of small communities that Sanditon suggests are quickly appearing along the English coast. While Mr. Heywood insists that the vast growth of such oceanside settlements is economically and socially dangerous for the nation, Austen presents Sanditon as a successful capitalistic venture; it is a modernized village whose satirized inhabitants have no interest in experiencing the mobility and volatility of the sea that Anne and Wentworth embrace. Sanditon may be near the water, but the naval community of Persuasion will not be spending much time in this well-regulated coastal locale. Sanditon’s modernity prevents individuals from expressing and experiencing potentially destructuring emotions and desires that might disturb the stability desperately sought by post-Revolutionary England. Sanditon can tolerate only conventional figures whose desires and passions are disciplined, predictable, and easily categorized.

This disciplined model of social/sexual subjectivity has become a crucial component of the modern nation and its men. Austen’s corpus portrays a nation in the process of becoming modern that is nervous about its men. These men of Austen’s tales respond to this anxiety by developing stable social/sexual identities capable of enduring such transformation; they become functional men who help to stabilize the post-Revolutionary nation and its social structures. In Terry Castle’s controversial review of Austen’s letters to her sister, she claims “it is a curious yet arresting phenomenon in the novels that so many of the final happy marriages seem designed not so much to bring about a union between hero and heroine as between the heroine and the hero’s sister” (“Sister-Sister” 3). Castle’s comment frightened many Austen fans and critics because of its suggestion of lesbianism, but Castle actually points to the sibling-like quality of Austen’s marriages. Indeed, she presents several of her marital relationships as close friendships that resemble familial bonds rather than sexual unions. Austen’s popularity as a default-relationship advisor may even stem from the absence of sexual desire in her novels’ concluding marriages. Modern society desperately wants marriage to be cleansed of the messiness of sex and desire, and Austen’s corpus offers us a valuable example of this burgeoning cultural ambition in the years following the French Revolution. As England becomes a modern nation throughout the nineteenth century, passionate male lovers become liabilities who cannot consistently assume civic responsibilities; such lovers might be able to exist on the seas, but the post-Revolutionary English nation
needs stable men who will not permit love to interrupt their involvement in 
hegemonic social structures. Austen’s novels may offer us instructions, but 
they are rarely instructions for lovers; her texts do, however, teach us how 
heterosexual men can solidify their involvement in the modern national 
community by dismissing the role of the lover in favor of a disciplined 
social/sexual subjectivity.