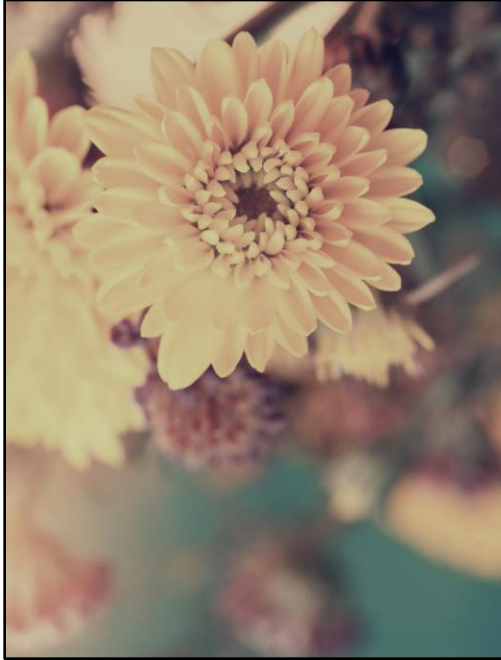




Jane Austen and Dogs

Siobhan Burland Ross
JASNA Winnipeg, October 9, 2025



Agenda



A Brief History of Dogs
Dogs in Jane Austen's Writing
Dogs in Austen Adaptations





A Brief History of Dogs

Presentation title

When did the dog become
man's best friend?





- Research reveals that it was the Victorians who were responsible for changing attitudes towards domestic animals.
- Until the 19th century, keeping pets was frowned upon and would crop up in satirical prints criticizing the elite and aristocracy: animals were generally expected to earn their keep or be eaten
- In the late 18th century and early 19th century, pet-keeping becomes culturally more acceptable.

5

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/oct/19/pets-how-victorians-turned-beats-into-mans-best-friends>

From The Guardian, October 19, 2019 by Donna Ferguson: How the Victorians turned mere beasts into man's best friend:

- A five-year research project combing historical archives for evidence of when familial, emotional attachment to pets became commonplace and socially acceptable in Britain
- "You get pictures of 18th-century ladies dressed in ostentatious, over-the-top costumes with a lapdog" – more on this later.
- Pet ownership began to be seen as character building – teaching caring and responsibility – and also to enhance the domesticity of a home. Bringing up children properly was seen as very important for creating the right kind of morality in society. Aside: from the mid-19th century on (after Austen's time) there began to be a lot of advice manuals suggesting children keep pets.
- The Victorians felt dogs, in particular embodied prized cultural values, seeing them as steadfast, loyal, plucky and courageous.



<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/oct/19/pets-how-victorians-turned-beats-into-mans-best-friends>

During the Victorian era, cats were kept and people felt affection for them, but they were still very much seen as utility animals, which kept mice and vermin down.

I could not find any mention of cats in Jane Austen.

REVOLUTION



Animals and the Making of Modern British Life

Jane Hamlett and Julie-Marie Strange

Dogs in the Regency

- Most dogs were still “working” dogs and had some value:
 - Sport/hunting
 - Pest control/guard dogs
- Transition to pets was underway

This research led to publishing of a book in 2023. Available on Amazon.



Dogs in Jane Austen's Writing

Scene-setting, Plot, Character Development

Dogs are not mentioned a lot in Jane Austen's works, but there are some definite memorable moments. What are some you can think of?

- Lady Bertram's pug
- Willoughby's hunting dogs
- Emma's looking at two curs fighting over a bone

The Generous Curate

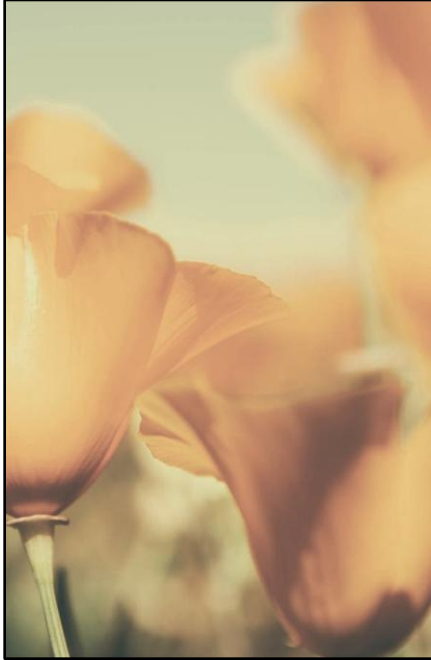


“... destined for Newfoundland, where his promising & amiable disposition had procured him many freinds among the Natives, & from whence he regularly sent home a large Newfoundland Dog every Month to his family.”



9

The inspiration for this talk was this excerpt from *The Generous Curate: a moral Tale*, setting forth the Advantages of being Generous and a Curate



Pride and Prejudice



No direct references.

10

I was unable to find any direct references to dogs in *Pride and Prejudice*. Although I may have missed some?

Chapter 9

"And what sort of a young man is he?"

"As good a kind of fellow as ever lived, I assure you. A very decent shot, and there is not a bolder rider in England."

"And is that all you can say for him?" cried Marianne, indignantly. "But what are his manners on more intimate acquaintance? What his pursuits, his talents and genius?"

Sir John was rather puzzled.

"Upon my soul," said he, "I do not know much about him as to all that. But he is a pleasant, good humoured fellow, and has got the nicest little black bitch of a pointer I ever saw. Was she out with him to-day?"



4 References (Ch. 9, Ch. 32, Ch. 44, Ch. 50)

1. Chapter 9 – when Willoughby rescues Marianne. Sir John is sharing what he knows about Willoughby with the Dashwoods.

This discussion helps to set the scene we just witnessed, we can picture Willoughby with his dog and a gun coming to Marianne's rescue. It also serves to illuminate the character of Sir John, who is much more preoccupied with hunting and sport than with the character of his acquaintances.

Chapter 32

Sir John could not have thought it possible. "A man of whom he had always had such reason to think well! Such a good-natured fellow! He did not believe there was a bolder rider in England! It was an unaccountable business. He wished him at the devil with all his heart. He would not speak another word to him, meet him where he might, for all the world! No, not if it were to be by the side of Barton covert, and they were kept waiting for two hours together. Such a scoundrel of a fellow! such a deceitful dog! It was only the last time they met that he had offered him one of Folly's puppies! and this was the end of it!"

Sense and Sensibility



12

4 References (Ch. 9, Ch. 32, Ch. 44, Ch. 50)

In Chapter 32, after Willoughby's engagement becomes public, Sir Johan is trying empathize (unsuccessfully) with Elinor and refers to Willoughby as a "deceitful dog". This is the first of a few examples of using dogs as a metaphor – bestowing a negative character trait onto a person.

Again, the reference to dogs used in sport aligns with what we know about Sir John's character. He also refers to having previously offered Willoughby a puppy but that would not now be done.

The giving of puppies to friends and selling through agents or direct advertisements was in fact a usually thing at this time. In this way, selective breeding of good traits could be shared and the animals that were not needed be redistributed.

Chapter 44

"As bluntly as he could speak it, therefore, he told me that Marianne Dashwood was dying of a putrid fever at Cleveland -- a letter that morning received from Mrs. Jennings declared her danger most imminent -- the Palmers all gone off in a fright, etc. I was too much shocked to be able to pass myself off as insensible, even to the undiscerning Sir John. His heart was softened in seeing mine suffer; and so much of his ill-will was done away, that when we parted, he almost shook me by the hand while he reminded me of an old promise about a pointer puppy."

Sense and Sensibility

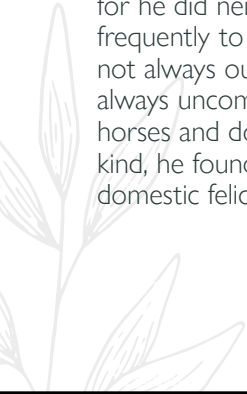


4 References (Ch. 9, Ch. 32, Ch. 44, Ch. 50)

In Chapter 44, this proffered gift of a puppy is revisited. During Willoughby's visit to Cleveland, after he finds out Marianne is sick and maybe dying, Elinor asks how he found out about Marianne's illness. Willoughby admits it was Sir John who told him. Willoughby was so shocked and clearly upset by the news, that fickle Sir John showed his compassion the best way he knew how – by re-opening the offer of a puppy to Willoughby.

Chapter 50

But that he was for ever inconsolable -- that he fled from society, or contracted an habitual gloom of temper, or died of a broken heart, must not be depended on -- for he did neither. He lived to exert, and frequently to enjoy himself. His wife was not always out of humour, nor his home always uncomfortable! and in his breed of horses and dogs, and in sporting of every kind, he found no inconsiderable degree of domestic felicity.



Sense and Sensibility



4 References (Ch. 9, Ch. 32, Ch. 44, Ch. 50)

The last reference to dogs in *Sense and Sensibility* is in the epilogue, where Willoughby is referred to as enjoying the rest of his life as to be expected. Again the use of dogs here helps us to picture the scene – Willoughby surrounded by the accoutrements of his sport.

Emma



Chapter 18

"My idea of him is, that he can adapt his conversation to the taste of every body, and has the power as well as the wish of being universally agreeable..."

"And mine," said Mr. Knightley warmly, "is, that if he turn out any thing like it, he will be the most insufferable fellow breathing! What! at three-and-twenty to be the king of his company -- the great man -- the practised politician, who is to read every body's character; and make every body's talents conduce to the display of his own superiority; to be dispensing his flatteries around, that he may make all appear like fools compared with himself! My dear Emma, your own good sense could not endure such a puppy when it came to the point."

15

5 References: Chapter 18, 27, 38, 43, 54

When I think of young men being called “puppies” in Emma, I always think of Mrs. Elton. But in fact it is Mr. Knightley who first uses this metaphor.

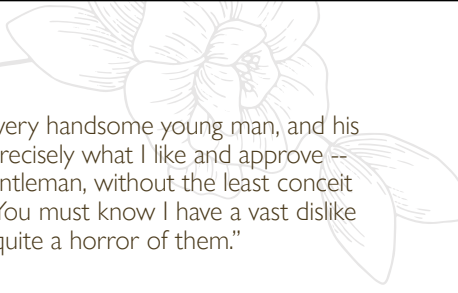
Puppy – defined as a conceited or arrogant young man.

Emma



Chapter 38

"I think him a very handsome young man, and his manners are precisely what I like and approve -- so truly the gentleman, without the least conceit or puppyism. You must know I have a vast dislike to puppies -- quite a horror of them."



Chapter 43

"I had an acrostic once sent to me upon my own name, which I was not at all pleased with. I knew who it came from. An abominable puppy! You know who I mean (nodding to her husband)."

16

5 References: Chapter 18, 27, 38, 43, 54

Two additional references to “puppies” as a trait of young men are made by Mrs. Elton. One in Chapter 38 after meeting Frank Churchill for the first time at the ball at the Crown. This evening, Mrs. Elton is in a very satisfied mood as she feels as a new bride that the ball is being held in her honour – she is the star of evening and all eyes are on her. So she is disposed to be kind to Frank and gives this praise to Mr. Knightley.

In Chapter 43, at Box Hill, Mrs. Elton refuses to participate in the awkward games Frank is trying to get everyone to participate in. As part of her refusal, she refers to an unknown former suitor who tried to please her. It is interesting that the relationship between the newlyweds seems to have included sharing much of their past, including former lovers. One wonders what sort of acrostic this was to displease Augusta and yet not be so embarrassing that she would share it with Mr. Elton, perhaps during their courtship?

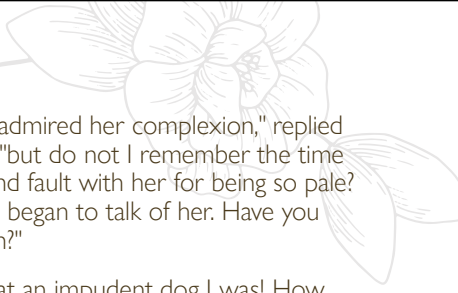
Emma



Chapter 54

"I have always admired her complexion," replied Emma, archly; "but do not I remember the time when you found fault with her for being so pale? When we first began to talk of her. Have you quite forgotten?"

"Oh! no -- what an impudent dog I was! How could I dare -- "



17

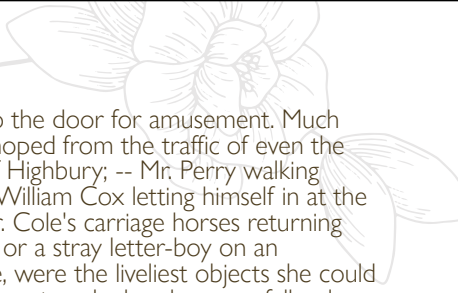
5 References: Chapter 18, 27, 38, 43, 54

One last use of dog as metaphor. Frank Churchill refers to himself as “an impudent dog” when discussing his past behaviour with Emma after the couples have finally be given their happy endings. Emma reminds him that he first shared with Emma his dislike of Jane’s complexion.

Emma



Chapter 27



Emma went to the door for amusement. Much could not be hoped from the traffic of even the busiest part of Highbury; -- Mr. Perry walking hastily by, Mr. William Cox letting himself in at the office door, Mr. Cole's carriage horses returning from exercise, or a stray letter-boy on an obstinate mule, were the liveliest objects she could presume to expect; and when her eyes fell only on the butcher with his tray, a tidy old woman travelling homewards from shop with her full basket, two curs quarrelling over a dirty bone, and a string of dawdling children round the baker's little bow-window eyeing the gingerbread, she knew she had no reason to complain, and was amused enough; quite enough still to stand at the door. A mind lively and at ease, can do with seeing nothing, and can see nothing that does not answer.

18

5 References: Chapter 18, 27, 38, 43, 54

There is one actual reference to a dog in Emma and it is in Chapter 27, when Emma steps out of the shop and takes in the village scene. This description adds the two dogs fighting over a bone that helps the reader really visualise the scene. This also helps to develop Emma's character – she is content with what she has and the life she lives. We expect that things will end up happily for her.

Emma



19

5 References: Chapter 18, 27, 38, 43, 54

Although no direct reference, we can expect that there were dogs in the scene where Harriet and her friend are approached by Gypsies for money. According to the Regency Ramble blog “Dogs in the Regency”, the Lurcher, pictured here, was bred in Ireland and Great Britain by the Irish Gypsies and travellers in the 17th century. They were used for poaching rabbits, hares and other small creatures. The name Lurcher is a derived name from the Romani language word lur, which means thief. Perhaps some of these dogs were used in the pilfering of poultry that led to the resolution of the romance plot in Emma.

<https://regencyramble.blogspot.com/2007/07/dogs-in-regency.html>

Persuasion



Chapter 6

The Mr. Musgroves had their own game to guard, and to destroy; their own horses, dogs, and newspapers to engage them; and the females were fully occupied in all the other common subjects of housekeeping, neighbours, dress, dancing, and music.

20

4 references: Ch 6, 7, 10, 22

The first reference of dogs in *Persuasion* is when Anne removes from Kellynch to Uppercross and comes to terms with the fact that her family there have their own concerns and they are not as engaged as she is (or not at all engaged) in the concerns that have been taking up all of her thoughts for many weeks. This little bit of scene-setting helps the reader to quickly adjust to our new location. Once again, the dogs are a reference to the sport they facilitate for rich landed men.

Persuasion



Chapter 7

Mary and Anne were not more than beginning breakfast when Charles came in to say that they were just setting off, that he was come for his dogs, that his sisters were following with Captain Wentworth...

Chapter 10

Just as they were setting off, the gentlemen returned. They had taken out a young dog, who had spoilt their sport, and sent them back early.

21

4 references: Ch 6, 7, 10, 22

The dogs continue to be part of the story at Uppercross. The mentions in Chapter 7 and Chapter 10 actually propel the plot forward. In Chapter 7, Charles is coming to get the dogs to go hunting with Captain Wentworth and the Captain is taking this opportunity to greet Anne for the first time since he went away broken-hearted.

A few chapters later, when Louisa is plotting to get Henrietty back together with Charles Hayter – thus leaving the field open for Captain Wentworth! – Charles and Captain Wentworth return early from their hunting because a young dog had spoilt their sport. This then leads to the joint long walk, in which not only does Louisa succeed with her sister, but also shares some intimate moments with Captain Wentworth, that Anne overhears to her disappointment.

What would it mean for a young dog to spoil their sport? Presumably, the young dog in question is still being trained for hunting and the training is not yet successful or complete. Different kinds of dogs are trained for different behaviours to assist in hunting. Rather than helping, the dog may have chased away their prey.

Persuasion



Chapter 22

"I got more acquainted with him last Monday than ever I did before. We had a famous set-to at rat-hunting all the morning in my father's great barns; and he played his part so well that I have liked him the better ever since."

22

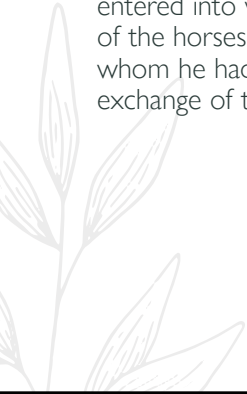
4 references: Ch 6, 7, 10, 22

When I tried to think of dogs in each of the novels in preparation of this talk, I immediately picture the scene of Captain Benwick ratting with Charles Musgrove. Dogs are not specifically mentioned but I think it clear that they would have been involved. This scene speaks to Benwick's character and hints that the future brothers will get along just fine.

From the Cambridge Annotated Edition of *Persuasion*: (A note on "ratting"): William Makepeace Thackeray gives a vivid account of rat hunting in *Vanity Fair*, published 1847-48 but set in the Regency. One "most blissful morning", Thackeray writes, "Mr. James, the Colonel, and Horn ... taking little Rawdon with them ... partook of the amusement of rat-hunting in a barn, than which sport Rawdon as yet had never seen anything so noble. They stopped up the ends of certain drains in the barn, into the other openings of which ferrets were inserted; and then stood silently aloof with uplifted stakes in their hands, and an anxious little terrier (Mr. James' celebrate 'dawg' Forceps) scarcely breathing from excitement, listening motionless on three legs, to the faint squeaking of the rats below. Desperately bold at last, the persecuted animals bolted above-ground: the terrier accounted for one, the keeper for another, Rawdon, from flurry and excitement missed his rat, but on the other hand he half-murdered a ferret."

Chapter 8

The very easy manner in which he then told her that he had kept her waiting did not by any means reconcile her more to her lot; nor did the particulars which he entered into while they were standing up, of the horses and dogs of the friend whom he had just left, and of a proposed exchange of terriers between them.



Northanger Abbey



3 References: Ch 8, 9 and 26

The first two references of dogs in *Northanger Abbey* are in chapter 8 and 9 and both are from the bragging diatribe of John Thorpe. In the first instance, Thorpe's talking about dogs causes him to be late to take Catherine to the dance floor. Note the discussion once again about sharing puppies – in this case an exchange of terriers. This scene helps to establish Thorpe's character – he clearly cares more about his image than Catherine.

Chapter 9

...all the rest of his conversation, or rather talk, began and ended with himself and his own concerns. He told her of horses which he had bought for a trifle and sold for incredible sums; of racing matches, in which his judgment had infallibly foretold the winner; of shooting parties, in which he had killed more birds (though without having one good shot) than all his companions together; and described to her some famous day's sport, with the fox-hounds, in which his foresight and skill in directing the dogs had repaired the mistakes of the most experienced huntsman,

Northanger Abbey



3 References: Ch 8, 9 and 26

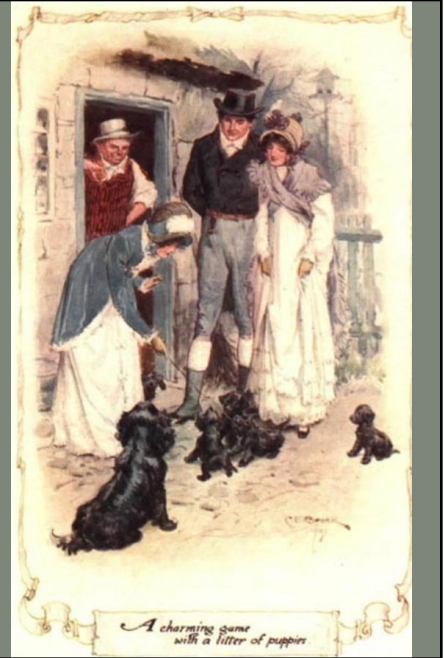
The second instance of John's talking at Catherine about dogs is when she first goes riding with him and she bravely concludes that John Thorpe is not altogether completely agreeable.

Chapter 26

...as they drove up to the door, Henry, with the friends of his solitude, a large Newfoundland puppy and two or three terriers, was ready to receive and make much of them.

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...with a visit to the stables to examine some improvements, and a charming game of play with a litter of puppies just able to roll about...



3 References: Ch 8, 9 and 26

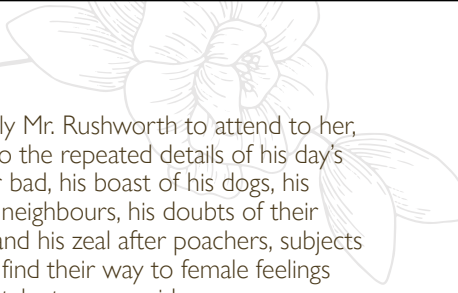
The final direct mention of dogs in Northanger Abbey is the scene in which many readers fall in love with Henry, if they haven't already. In this scene, we see Henry at his own home, surrounded by his own dogs and inviting Catherine to play with a little of puppies. We can see how happy Catherine will be.

Mansfield Park



Chapter 12

Maria, with only Mr. Rushworth to attend to her, and doomed to the repeated details of his day's sport, good or bad, his boast of his dogs, his jealousy of his neighbours, his doubts of their qualifications, and his zeal after poachers, subjects which will not find their way to female feelings without some talent on one side or some attachment on the other, had missed Mr. Crawford grievously;



26

7 References: Chapter 2, 7, 8, 12, 19, 33, 38

The most famous dog in Jane Austen is of course, Lady Bertram's Pug in Mansfield Park. There are just enough mentions of Pug throughout the novel that Pug stays in our mental image throughout the novel. There are, however, only 7 direct references that I found. 5 of the 7 are reference to Pug, so I will start with the other 2 references which are more generally to dogs.

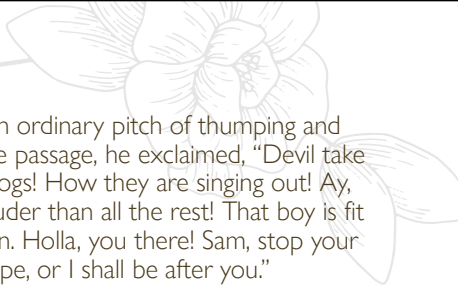
The first is in Chapter 12 and helps to set the character and future happiness (or lack thereof) of Maria in marrying Mr. Rushworth. This scene happens during an absence of only a fortnight by Mr. Crawford.

Mansfield Park



Chapter 38

At a more than ordinary pitch of thumping and hallooing in the passage, he exclaimed, "Devil take those young dogs! How they are singing out! Ay, Sam's voice louder than all the rest! That boy is fit for a boatswain. Holla, you there! Sam, stop your confounded pipe, or I shall be after you."



27

7 References: Chapter 2, 7, 8, 12, 19, 33, 38

The other reference to dogs not Pug occurs when Fanny has been exiled to Portsmouth. It is part of the setting of the Price household as a noisy, chaotic, impolite place starkly contrasted with the peace Fanny is used to at Mansfield Park.

Mansfield Park



28

7 References: Chapter 2, 7, 8, 12, 19, 33, 38

We first meet Lady Bertram, and thus Pug, along with Fanny in Chapter 2. "In vain did Lady Bertram smile and make her sit on the sofa with herself and pug." Fanny was not to be cured of home-sickness so easily. Later in the chapter we are told that Lady Bertram thought more of her pug than her children. This was a general criticism of the women who kept lapdogs like pugs at this time. More on this in a moment.



Chapter 7

"I am very much afraid she caught the headache there, for the heat was enough to kill anybody. It was as much as I could bear myself. Sitting and calling to Pug, and trying to keep him from the flower-beds, was almost too much for me."

29

7 References: Chapter 2, 7, 8, 12, 19, 33, 38

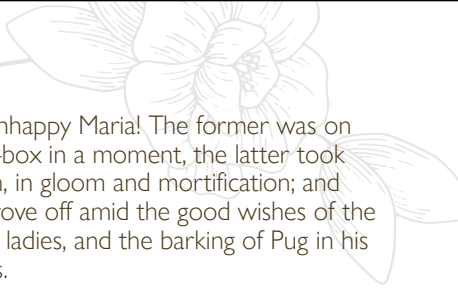
In chapter 7, Lady Bertram admits that she was exhausted just by sitting outside and calling to Pug to keep him from the flower-beds. This is when Edmund discovers that Fanny had been sent twice to Aunt Norris's in that same heat.

Mansfield Park



Chapter 8

Happy Julia! Unhappy Maria! The former was on the barouche-box in a moment, the latter took her seat within, in gloom and mortification; and the carriage drove off amid the good wishes of the two remaining ladies, and the barking of Pug in his mistress's arms.



30

7 References: Chapter 2, 7, 8, 12, 19, 33, 38

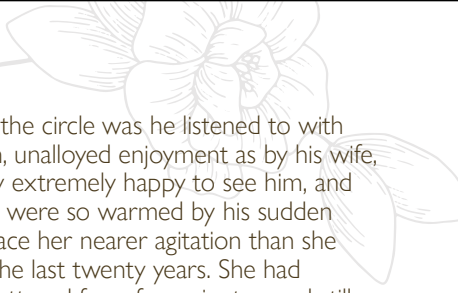
In chapter 8, Pug is there in Lady Bertram's arms barking as the carriage takes all the young people and Aunt Norris to Sotherton to visit Mr. Rushworth.

Mansfield Park



Chapter 19

By not one of the circle was he listened to with such unbroken, unalloyed enjoyment as by his wife, who was really extremely happy to see him, and whose feelings were so warmed by his sudden arrival as to place her nearer agitation than she had been for the last twenty years. She had been almost fluttered for a few minutes, and still remained so sensibly animated as to put away her work, move Pug from her side, and give all her attention and all the rest of her sofa to her husband.



31

7 References: Chapter 2, 7, 8, 12, 19, 33, 38

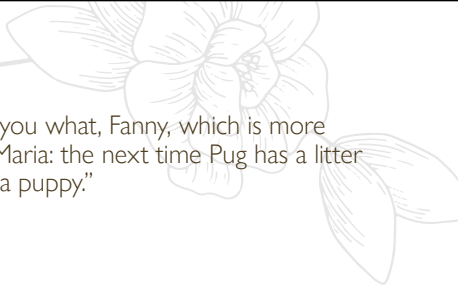
In chapter 19 we begin to see further into Lady Bertram's character. Pretty much all we have got to this point is that she is lazy and cares more for her Pug than her children. But in this chapter, Sir Thomas is returned and we find that Lady Bertram had actually been missing him. She is truly happy to see him. And she specifically sets Pug aside to make room for her husband.

Mansfield Park



Chapter 33

“And I will tell you what, Fanny, which is more than I did for Maria: the next time Pug has a litter you shall have a puppy.”



32

7 References: Chapter 2, 7, 8, 12, 19, 33, 38

The last direct reference to Pug is the scene when Lady Bertram tries to bribe Fanny to accept Henry Crawford in marriage by offering to give them one of Pug’s puppies. This is done with such genuine feeling – Lady Bertram so values her Pug that to her this is genuinely a special gift. And I think Fanny would feel this. Unfortunately it just adds to the guilt she is already feeling about being unable to accept Henry Crawford. This is yet another example of the giving of puppies as gifts.

Why a pug?



Why a pug?



- Toy dogs had been associated with black slaves and servants since the late seventeenth century and so were linked to Sir Thomas's business—sugar plantations in Antigua—and therefore connected to the profits through which Lady Bertram could support an animal with no apparent use.
- Uselessness was a particularly common criticism of pugs and, indeed, of all lapdogs
- By the end of the eighteenth century, the toy dog was a heavily politicized animal, evidence of women's over-consumption and idleness for both misogynists and early feminists.

34

<https://jasna.org/assets/Persuasions/No-35/howard-smith.pdf>

“Hearty Fow Children”: The Penrhyns, Pugs and Mansfield Park by Stephanie Howard-Smith.

Why a pug?

- Unlike other lapdogs, the pug had been out of fashion for half a century when Austen wrote *Mansfield Park*.
- Hester Lynch Piozzi: I recollect only Lord Penryn [sic] who possesses such an animal.
- Lord Penrhyn was opposed to the abolition of the slave trade. One of the staunchest proponents of slavery and the slave trade, in the six years before his retirement, he spoke over thirty times on the matter in the House of Commons.
- William Murray, the first Earl of Mansfield, attracted censure for his famous ruling in the 1772 case that enabled James Somerset, an escaped slave, to remain free in Britain.
- Mrs. Norris's name may be a reference to John Norris, a Liverpoolian ex-slave-captain who defends the slave trade to Clarkson.

35

<https://jasna.org/assets/Persuasions/No-35/howard-smith.pdf>

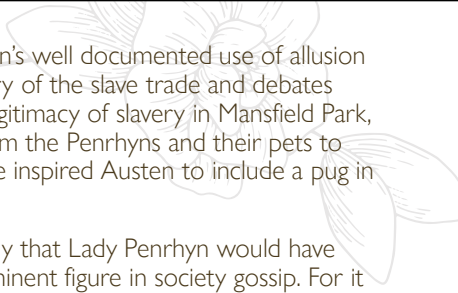
“Hearty Fow Children”: The Penrhyns, Pugs and *Mansfield Park* by Stephanie Howard-Smith.

Why did Jane Austen choose a Pug for Lady Bertram?

Austen was familiar with Piozzi (referred to her as “my dear Mrs Piozzi” in a letter to her sister Cassandra. Austen would have recognized Hester Piozzi’s sole pug-fancier of note, Lord Penrhyn, from Thomas Clarkson’s *History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament*, a book many Austen scholars believe she was familiar with. Penrhyn makes several appearances in Clarkson’s history, including a speech to the House of Commons in which he “predicted the ruin and the misery, that would inevitably follow the abolition of the trade” .

Why a pug?



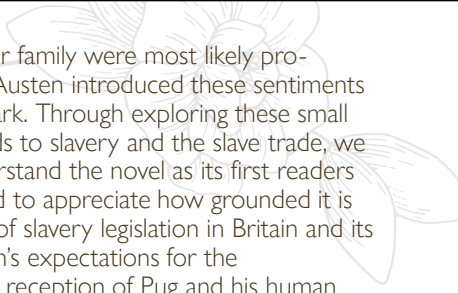
- Given Austen's well documented use of allusion to the history of the slave trade and debates about the legitimacy of slavery in *Mansfield Park*, it would seem the Penrhyns and their pets to some degree inspired Austen to include a pug in particular.
 - It seems likely that Lady Penrhyn would have been a prominent figure in society gossip. For it was Lady Penrhyn who really owned the pugs that Piozzi mentioned, rather than her husband, and it was she who attracted censure.
 - Lady Penrhyn died two years after *Mansfield Park* was published, leaving her three surviving pugs an annuity of £40 a year. Her will was printed and reported on in several national newspapers. For decades after, Lady Penrhyn and her pugs continued to be described in books and newspapers.
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36

<https://jasna.org/assets/Persuasions/No-35/howard-smith.pdf>

“Hearty Fow Children”: The Penrhyns, Pugs and *Mansfield Park* by Stephanie Howard-Smith.

Why a pug?



Austen and her family were most likely pro-abolition and Austen introduced these sentiments in *Mansfield Park*. Through exploring these small and subtle nods to slavery and the slave trade, we come to understand the novel as its first readers might have and to appreciate how grounded it is in the history of slavery legislation in Britain and its empire. Austen's expectations for the contemporary reception of Pug and his human family are illuminated by the knowledge that Pug is most likely a means of associating the Bertrams not only with the excesses of colonialism but specifically with a man who attempted to halt the progress of the abolition movement in order to preserve his own interests as well as with a woman who used those profits gained from holding men in bondage to lavish luxury upon her spoilt pugs.

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<https://jasna.org/assets/Persuasions/No-35/howard-smith.pdf>

“Hearty Fow Children”: The Penrhyns, Pugs and *Mansfield Park* by Stephanie Howard-Smith.

Types of references to dogs in the novels:

1. Setting the scene
2. Sport/work
3. Plot/character development
4. Metaphor





Dogs in Austen Adaptations

As we have seen, there were a lot of dogs everywhere during Jane Austen's time. Although she didn't mention them often, specifically, we can assume they were there. In adaptations, therefore, most filmmakers make sure to add them in.

In addition to the addition of dogs all over the place, some adaptations specifically use dogs to show character and even advance the plot. Think of Netherfield Park in *Pride and Prejudice* when Darcy looks out the window and sees Elizabeth playing with his dog. Dogs were considered to be loyal, so Darcy's dog has judged Elizabeth to be of good character by allowing her to play with him.

There is the "Try not to kill my dogs." scene in the 1997 *Emma* with Gwyneth Paltrow.

Thank you



We should feel free to add dogs liberally to all of our internal visualizations while reading Jane. *(Photo credit: Nova by Brock Gunter-Smith, 2025)*