

ABSTRACT

THE USE OF SILENCE AND PROPRIETY IN JANE AUSTEN'S *MANSFIELD PARK* AND *PERSUASION*

In Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* the heroines must navigate within society without breaking the laws of propriety, or at least maintain the appearance of upholding these laws. Jane Austen gives her heroines the tools by which they are able to use their silence in such a way as to communicate yet maintain propriety. At the same time, their counterparts must discern the best use of their silence and when to break it in order to maintain propriety within their realm of society.

In this way, Jane Austen shows the development of the heroes as proper prospective husbands, and reveals the strength and perseverance of her heroines, who refuse to compromise their reputations. Her heroines demonstrate their intelligence by using society's conventions to their benefit and eventually achieve happiness. Through the heroines' steady characters and patience, their counterparts also achieve the happiness that they were seeking and their characters are completely revealed.

Cassie Slonaker
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