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Suspense in selected works of 18th and 19th century romance

An Analysis based on Pride and Prejudice, Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre, and Evelina

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1. Introduction

The experience of suspense is often an important motivation for people to read a novel. Numerous genres exist in which suspense plays an important role; romance novels, especially from the 18th and 19th centuries, are not usually among them. Curiously enough, there are many such novels which are still popular today, and are even read over and over again by the same people. However, the reasons for this are not clear. Hence, this thesis aims at illustrating how and if suspense is created in the romance novels of the 18th and 19th centuries. Furthermore, the question of whether the rereading of such novels can still create suspense is investigated. The objectives of this thesis are to answer these questions on the basis of an analysis of four novels written during the 18th and 19th centuries: *Evelina* by Frances Burney, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë.

In chapter two, the thesis presents various definitions of suspense. Furthermore, it distinguishes suspense from other concepts such as tension, surprise, thrill, and curiosity. However, it also shows where the similarities lie, and how suspense and these other feelings intertwine. Lastly, some requirements and elements of suspense are enumerated.

Chapter three investigates the genre of romance itself. It analyses the requirements of a romance novel and to what extent the above mentioned novels fulfil them. Furthermore, the characteristics of a gothic novel and of romantic suspense are defined; the four romance novels are then examined to see if any of these can be found. Finally, the thesis shows if the romance genre is able to create suspense.

Chapter four focuses on methods of suspense creation. First, the creation of suspense at text level is shown, together with representative examples from the novels. The following subchapter analyses how the experience of suspense is influenced by time, especially by its order and duration, by the narrative situations, and the language. Secondly, it illustrates how the readers and their involvement contribute to the experience of suspense. There is a special focus on their relationship with fictional characters. Furthermore, a subchapter discusses whether the recipients are able to experience suspense while rereading a novel. In order to illustrate the arguments, various theories are presented. Lastly, a subchapter focuses on the generation and differentiation of suspense caused by withholding information at different levels: using linguistic and literary devices and the audience's involvement.

The next chapter provides various schemata which create suspense: the schemata of mystery and of suspense proper. The analysis shows how they do this and if elements of these schemata can be found in romance novels.

Finally, chapter six presents an extensive analysis of suspenseful topics which can be associated with romance novels. These are: initial meetings, rivalry and jealousy, desire and yearning, obstacles, separation, forbidden love, danger, and happy endings. Investigations show whether these subjects occur in the novels analysed in this thesis, and if they are presented in a suspenseful way. Furthermore, it examines if, and how far the theoretical concepts investigated in chapter four, contribute to the suspensefulness of these topics.

2. Suspense – a definition:

When defining suspense one has to take various points into account. It can be regarded and defined in various ways. Furthermore, many factors influence suspense in a story. As suspense can be very complex, it is important to distinguish it from other concepts such as tension, surprise, thrill, interest, and curiosity. Additionally, suspense can be created at different levels, as certain requirements are necessary to make a narrative effective. Lastly, one has to consider various elements which contribute to suspense.

2.1 Various definitions of suspense

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English defines suspense as "a feeling of worry or excitement that you have when you feel that something is going to happen". This definition shows that suspense can have a positive connotation as well as a negative one. Worry is usually associated with a negative feeling; excitement with a positive one. Therefore, scholars have varying opinions as to the kind of feelings suspense can arouse. Although suspense is often related to a negative emotion, there must be some instances where audiences perceive it as positive. Otherwise, they would hardly read suspense fiction (Brewer 107).

Zillmann (*Unterhaltene Ungewissheit* 69), for instance, regards suspense as a negative emotional reaction. He defines it as an irritation characterised through emphatic distress. Hence, in order for suspense to arouse a negative feeling in audiences, they have to develop a positive connection to one or more characters in the story, usually the protagonist. When these characters are in dangerous situations, the readers experience distress. Thus, the suspenseful feeling is perceived as negative, because it is connected to a sense of fear. Likewise, Zillmann (in *Psychology* 208) defines suspense as "a noxious affective reaction that characteristically derives from the respondents' acute, fearful apprehension about deplorable events that threaten liked protagonists, this apprehension being mediated by high but not complete subjective certainty about the occurrence of the anticipated deplorable events." However, suspense can also lead to a positive feeling. In order to show this Zillmann (*Psychology* 225) developed an "excitation-transfer" paradigm. It shows that distress can be turned into euphoria if the outcome of the suspenseful situation is desirable for the reader.

In contrast, Fill (*Prinzip Spannung* 15) regards suspense as a positive emotional state. However, he also acknowledges a negative meaning of suspense, and that not every

type of suspense can be perceived as good or positive. Some forms of suspense are perceived as negative. In general, Fill (*Prinzip Spannung* 10) claims that suspense is derived from a two-step schema: tension and relaxation. Hence, a suspenseful situation is followed by a solution. Readers yearn for a positive solution and, therefore, a relaxation of the tension caused by the suspenseful situation. As they expect a mainly positive solution, the suspense felt before the occurrence of relaxation, is experienced in a positive way.

All in all, when reading suspenseful scenes negative and positive feelings are closely intertwined. One of the primary motivations behind reading novels is to experience excitement. This is usually associated with a positive feeling (Hawthorn 350). However, Lewis (7) argues that the experience of excitement always involves a danger threatening the protagonist. Consequently, readers are frightened for this character, and the fear they experience is an emotion usually regarded as negative. The degree of fear depends on the degree of danger. Hence, the greater the danger the greater is the fear and, therefore, the experience of suspense. Although fear is regarded as a negative feeling the recipient is able to enjoy it, the reason being that in reality readers do not normally experience these types of dangers. In conclusion, if readers are confronted with danger in a fictional world, the fear and excitement can be enjoyed. Subconsciously, they know that the danger is not reality (Hawthorn 350).

When defining suspense, it can not only be defined as positive or negative; the various methods of its creation can be categorized, too. Firstly, suspense can be created on a purely textual level. Secondly, suspense also comes into existence through the participation of the audience and their imagination and interpretation.

When talking about suspense at a textual level, one has to distinguish between its creation through linguistic concepts, such as the use of words, and the creation of suspense through the story itself. Therefore, when analysing the linguistic level, the question has to be raised of how a story is told. In contrast, when looking at the story, one asks what is going to happen (Fill *Prinzip Spannung* 71). However, both forms of suspense creation intertwine. Literary forms of suspense mostly come into existence through the use of various linguistic devices. (Fill *Sprachliche Aspekte* 221).

As mentioned above, suspense can be created through the text. Thus, the story itself creates suspense. However, the audience also takes an active part in the creation of suspense. Junkerjürgen (11) claims that suspense is of a dual nature and that one has to

distinguish between suspense as a specific narrative form and that of a recipient's reaction.

Dolle-Weinkauff (125) regards suspense as a form of staging. Consequently, suspense is not just a part of the plot but depends on its staging and presentation. Therefore, when talking about a suspenseful situation, one always also has to consider its presentation. The reason for this is that the readers have certain expectations concerning the presentation of suspenseful scenes. For instance, if a suspenseful situation is regarded as "the last showdown", one has a particular concept in mind and expects to be presented with scenes that have typical characteristics associated with "the last showdown".

In the end though, one cannot strictly distinguish between suspense as a textual and a psychological phenomenon. Both interact with each other. The presentation of the text is essential for the creation of suspense. However, the audience cannot completely free themselves from the narrative. The imagination and participation of the readers are essential for the suspense creation (Wulff 4). Furthermore, suspense can be seen as a communication process which is more effective if the recipients are involved (Junkerjürgen 31). In the same way, Borringo (45) argues that suspense as a process of encoding texts on the one hand, and as an aspect of personal behaviour, on the other, complement each other.

A last theory links suspense to the drives of life. Wenzel (24) sees thrill as an intense bodily experience of suspense.[1] He further argues that this form of suspense experience can be based on biological drives and basic instincts. Koch carried out intense investigation of these drives of life, which again can be linked to literature and the experience of suspense during reading. Koch claims that suspense is simply "inherited from Adam and Eve" (Koch 35). Hence, it is an emotion that is deeply rooted in human nature.

One is able to distinguish three main drives of life, which guarantees the survival of humans and animals. Traditionally, every drive corresponds to co-active dyads, such as male-female, male-male, or young-parent. One of the first would be procreation. An example of a male-male dyad is territorial behaviour, fights, or pecking orders. Lastly, care for the offspring or feeding belongs to the young-parent dyad (Koch 45).

In terms of literature Koch (45) categorizes the co-active dyads into three drives of life, namely FRUCTUS, SEXUS, and CRIMEN. FRUCTUS refers to themes such as drinking, eating, well-being, meditation, and bliss. Hence, it is related to behaviour

[1] For a definition of "thrill" see chapter 2.2.3

concerned with nutrition and also the raising and nurturing of the offspring (Wenzel 25). The second drive, namely SEXUS, focuses on themes of sexual adventures or pornography (Koch 45). Therefore, SEXUS mainly refers to reproduction and biological sexual drives. Its main topic is the winning of attractive partners and the maintaining of a relationship (Wenzel 25). The third drive, CRIMEN, is concerned with attacks, flight, and fights (Wenzel 25).

If these three drives of life are applied to literature, numerous suspenseful motifs can be found. Examples of CRIMEN are the chasing and flight of characters, violence, fights, dangers, murder, bloodshed, vendetta, and a final confrontation between enemies resulting in a duel. Favourite themes for FRUCTUS are a conflict between generations, kidnapping, or a journey to paradise. Lastly, motifs representative for SEXUS are a love story, rivalry concerning a woman, incest, or other forms of forbidden love (Wenzel 25). Scenes belonging to CRIMEN have a high potential of conveying suspense. Therefore, scenes of violence, danger and fights are almost always regarded as suspenseful. In contrast, FRCUTUS is not as suspenseful but still able to contribute to some suspense (Wenzel 25). The drive of SEXUS is especially important for romance novels. They are the basis for popular and suspenseful romantic scenes.

In order to experience the highest form of suspense or thrill the boundaries between all three drives of life should be violated. Hence, if the drives are combined or mixed a scene is perceived as especially suspenseful (Wenzel 25). For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* the destructive love relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine bears traces of CRIMEN and SEXUS. A further example for a combination of those two drives would be the pursuit of an innocent woman (Wenzel 25). This theme is very dominant in *Evelina*.[2]

2.2 Tension – Surprise – Thrill – Interest - Curiosity

Bonheim (3) argues that suspense is a broad term and consists of various elements, such as tension and the expectation of a certain outcome of a situation or an action. Hence, suspense comprises various factors and is closely linked to other concepts. It is, therefore, of importance to distinguish between the various terms associated with suspense. The most important concepts to be distinguished from suspense are tension, surprise, thrill, interest, and curiosity. However, those concepts frequently overlap or complement each other.

[2] Further occurrences of these drives of life are analysed in chapter 6

2.2.1 Tension

The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English* defines tension among other things as “a feeling of anxiety and stress that makes it impossible to relax” and as “the feeling of fear and excitement that is created by a writer or a film/movie director”. These definitions show that tension refers to a bodily reaction as well as to an emotional one. Furthermore, as it is connected to anxiety and fear, it also has a negative connotation. However, just like suspense, this can still be perceived as positive and desirable by the readers, especially if they expect a positive outcome of a suspenseful situation (Zillmann *Unterhaltene Ungewissheit* 69). Contrarily, Bonheim (6) defines tension as a “toned-down equivalent of suspense” but without the slightly negative connotation. Hence, he regards tension as an entirely positive feeling.

Wenzel (22) sees tension as static and as a contrast between two different levels; suspense as more dynamic and connected to the plot. Therefore, in every text some form of tension can be detected. Suspense, however, can only exist if the narrative structure of a text provides it.

According to Bonheim (8), the main difference between suspense and tension can be seen when asking questions about the story. In a suspenseful situation one asks “What happened then?”. In contrast, tension involves the question of “What is the import of this event?”.

Consequently, there is no clear distinction between suspense and tension as both involve excitement. Still, tension is closely connected to suspense and according to Bonheim (6) necessary for every novel.

2.2.2 Surprise

> As [Elizabeth] had heard no carriage, she thought it not unlikely to be Lady Catherine, and under that apprehension was putting away her half-finished letter that she might escape all impertinent questions, when the door opened, and to her very great surprise, Mr Darcy, and Mr Darcy only, entered the room. (Austen 151)

Surprise is defined as “an event, a piece of news, etc that is unexpected or that happens suddenly” (Oxford Dictionary). Therefore, the main difference to suspense is that something happens unexpectedly. Contrarily, in a suspenseful situation the readers anticipate an event or action. The difference can best be illustrated by looking at the sequence of a text. The structure of suspense has an initiating event. The following

occurrences are anticipated by the readers. However, in the schema of surprise, there is no initiating event. The recipients are not able to anticipate an event, because they are not informed of its possibility. Therefore, an event which is suddenly presented is new information for them and comes as a surprise. Consequently, they reinterpret the scene (Brewer 111-112). The event is surprising because it hasn't been mentioned or even hinted at previously. The readers do not have the possibility to anticipate it due to its suddenness (Junkerjürgen 72).

As can be seen in the example above, the readers, together with Elizabeth, anticipate a visitor. However, as there is no indication of a possible appearance of Mr Darcy at a previous point in the story, his visit comes as a surprise. In the other novels one can also frequently find surprising moments. In *Jane Eyre*, for instance, one of the most surprising moments is Jane's discovery of the existence of Mr Rochester's wife Bertha. In *Evelina* the appearance of Lady Belmont at Bristol astonishes the readers, as they believe Evelina to be the true daughter of John Belmont.

Suspense and surprise can also be connected with each other. For instance, surprise is a good method to resolve a suspenseful situation. Frequently, surprise is then an unexpected reversion of a situation in which the outcome seemed logically predictable. In the end, the outcome is contrary to the expected and, therefore, surprising (Junkerjürgen 72-73).

Chatman (60) claims that surprise and suspense complement each other. They can be combined in narratives in various ways. Hence, they often work together and alternate throughout a story. Frequently, they can be found taking turns through a chain of events. For instance, a scene starts out with a surprise and is followed by a suspenseful episode. The end then again comes as a surprise. An example can be found in *Wuthering Heigts*. Catherine's sudden illness and its seriousness come as a surprise to the audience. For a long time, the readers do not know if Catherine is going to recover, or if she is going to die. Furthermore, the course of this illness causes a lot of suspense. When she finally passes away, the most surprising event is the birth of her daughter. A pregnancy has not been previously mentioned.

2.2.3 Thrill

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English* thrill is "a strong feeling of excitement or pleasure" or "a sudden strong feeling that produces a physical effect". Hence, thrill is more intense than suspense, and in contrast to tension,

it has a primarily positive connotation. Still, it has similarities to tension as it can produce a psychological as well as a physical effect. In a romance novel, the readers frequently experience a form of thrill when the protagonists overcome all obstacles, declare their love for each other and can finally be together. This can be accompanied by a physical reaction. This reaction can occur in numerous ways. One can observe readers straightening up, grabbing the book more firmly, standing up, grinning or even laughing out loud.[3]

As can be seen, thrill mostly has a positive connotation. Therefore, it is associated with a pleasurable feeling. The main reason for this is that in literature the readers are not really exposed to any danger. Therefore, every occurrence in the story does not affect the audience's real life. In this way, they can enjoy the thrill produced by dangerous scenes in a narrative (Mikos 39). A further factor responsible for the pleasurable experience of thrill is that during all episodes the readers expect a happy ending. This is especially true for romance novels. Hence, although the recipients are put into states of fear and anxiety, at some point the thrill aroused by this can be enjoyed, as they believe that the narrative will end well. Consequently, this is an emotionally satisfying ending (Mikos 45).

2.2.4 Interest

In the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English* one is able to find various definitions of interest. One definition of interest is: "the feeling that you have when you want to know or learn more about sb/sth". A second definition is: "the quality that sth has when it attracts sb's attention or wants them to know more about it". Thus, both definitions deal with the urge to learn more about something. Bonheim (5) claims that interest does not necessarily involve suspense because one does not expect an action or event, but just has an interest in a certain matter. Therefore, interest is the broader term and suspense only a subcategory of interest.

All in all, a story has to arouse a certain kind of interest in the reader. It is even a requirement if a novel wants to be read. However, without some sort of suspense, the audience might not be impelled to go on reading the story (Bonheim 5). Therefore, independent of the emotions aroused within readers, interest is a constant companion while reading a story. One always has the urge to know what events will happen next (Tan 119).

[3] For reader reaction see chapter 4.2; for happy endings see chapter 6.8

For instance, if one reads the sentence “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of good fortune, must be in want of a wife” (Austen 3) the readers usually do not experience any suspense. However, it arouses interest in the recipients and motivates them to continue reading the novel. Another form of interest constantly accompanying a romance novel is the question if, how, or when the protagonists are going to be happily united.

2.2.5 Curiosity

> [Evelina writing:] I have a vast deal to say, and shall give all this morning to my pen. As to my plan of writing every evening the adventure of the day, I find it impracticable; for the diversions here are so very late that if I begin my letters after them, I could not go to bed at all. (Burney 30)

This quotation is an excellent example of curiosity, which is defined as a “strong desire to know about sth” (Oxford Dictionary). It follows that the audience has been given some information and at the same time, knows that some has been omitted. Thus, the readers become curious about the missing information. As soon as they are provided with the omitted information, they are able to reconstruct the event (Brewer 112). In this example Evelina arouses the audience’s curiosity in announcing promising suspenseful events. Therefore, they are eager to know what happened to Evelina and want to learn about the whole story. Such announcements can be frequently found throughout Burney’s novel.

In terms of sequence, curiosity is created if the readers are presented with the solution or the outcome of a situation. However, the information of what led to this outcome is lefts out. Hence, the audience become curious and desire to know the missing information (Junkerjürgen 46). For instance, Evelina’s prevention of Mr Macartney’s presumable suicide is introduced with the following sentences: “O, my dear Sir! I have been shocked to death, - and yet, at the same time, delighted beyond expression, in the hope that I have happily been the instrument of saving a human creature from destruction!” (Burney 182). Although, the readers have the information that somebody’s life has been rescued, they do not yet know whose life has been saved, or how it happened. Hence, they are curious about the circumstances that led Evelina to write such a statement.

2.3 Requirements of suspense

It is of great significance for the analysis or creation of suspense that only a limited range of possible and therefore alternative outcomes to a suspenseful situation exist. Wenzel (23) claims that a requirement for suspense is the existence of open questions and a limited range of possible answers. This is in accordance with Hitchcock (in Gerrig 94), who argues that readers should be provided with enough information to make them aware of the fact that only a small range of outcomes are possible. However, it is important that the audience is unable to determine the actual outcome. Carroll (79) goes even further than Wenzel and Hitchcock in stating that an uncertain situation can have only two outcomes and therefore only two alternative solutions. One of them is perceived as evil but very probable; the other as morally correct but rather improbable. This again creates a lot of suspense as the readers hope for the good but improbable alternative. Dolle-Weinkauff (124-125) is more radical in his phrasing in claiming that in a suspenseful situation two antipodes clash together, which results in the elimination of one. Therefore, the situation either results in success or catastrophe.

In a romance novel one can find numerous examples of the existence of two alternatives. However, the most significant one is probably the question if the protagonists end up together or not. While, generally speaking, one can suspect that the heroine and hero will marry and live happily ever after, one cannot always be sure about it. In the case of Wuthering Heights this does not even hold true. The main protagonists Catherine and Heathcliff do not marry and are only united in death. Consequently, throughout every romance novel the union of the protagonists is at stake. Furthermore, it frequently seems to be very unlikely. Thus, such situations create a lot of suspense as the recipients constantly have both possibilities in mind; either the protagonists can be together in the end or not.

An additional requirement for a suspenseful story is that some form of suspense occurs at the beginning of the story. Otherwise, the readers would not be tempted to go on reading (Bonheim 5). Therefore, an initiating suspenseful event influences their decision to continue reading a story (Fill *Prinzip Spannung* 49). Furthermore, the beginning of a narration can be regarded as the part of a text which is responsible for the start of an intense emotion (Dolle-Weinkauff 121). For instance, *Evelina* begins with the words “Can there, my good Sir, be any thing more painful to a friendly mind, than a necessity of communicating disagreeable intelligence? Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to determine, whether the relator or the receiver of evil tidings is most to be pitied.”

(Burney 13). The story is introduced with a question and a hint of evil news. Hence, when reading this passage the readers become curious and immediately ask themselves what this evil news is, and have the urge to keep on reading in order to find it out. Another example is the beginning of Jane Eyre. “There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner […] the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further outdoor exercise was now out of the question.” (Brontë Ch. 3). This introduction of the novel sets a dark and gloomy mood and, therefore, prepares the reader for the following chapters, which describe Jane’s lonely and sometimes frightening childhood. This passage puts the audience into fearful anticipation, which can create suspense, and motivates them to read the novel.

2.4 Elements of Suspense

As the various definitions of suspense above have shown, suspense is a very broad term. Numerous elements exist which can create suspense. Frequently, suspense consists of contrasting elements. Junkerjürgen (90) claims that danger and attraction are the two major elements of suspense creation. Danger is the opposite of readers’ desires, while attraction refers to their desire of a dangerous situation changing and having a positive outcome, in accordance with the wishes and desires of the readers. Similarly, Borringo (39-41) Dolle-Weinkauff (117), and Cupchik (195) regard fear and hope as the two necessary major elements in the creation of suspense. Both emotions are future orientated. The first is the fear of an undesired event coming true. In contrast, its antipode, hope, refers to the difference between the situation in the story as it is and the preferred desired outcome. The coordination between both elements creates suspense. To sum up, recipients usually hope for positive outcomes which are favourable for good or liked characters, and negative outcomes for undeserving or disliked figures. In contrast, the audience fears for deplorable outcomes for liked characters and positive endings for undeserving characters. Hence, hope and fear are necessary elements in the creation of suspense (Zillmann 202). As Evelina says: “[w]hile I am yet in suspense, perhaps I may hope” (Burney 25). However, the question remains if the hope and fear experienced by the reader are real as the story itself is fictional. It can be argued that if the story itself is interesting and capturing enough, the boundaries between reality and text vanish and the emotions felt are real.

Additionally, one is able to find various factors which contribute to suspense. Fill (*Sprachliche Aspekte* 225) argues that especially the disregard of conventional linguistic and literary rules is important for suspense. Thus, contradictions in the story or within a character, interruption of the storyline, perspective of narration, the withholding of information, otherness, retarding, and unexpected situations are more suspenseful than clear situations where all information is given and all obstacles are overcome from the beginning onwards.

Similarly, Fludernick (46) argues that in longer texts classical narrative features have to be disregarded. Traditionally, the sequence of events is stressed, and every action has to follow logical patterns. However, this seems inappropriate when considering longer texts. Hence, in such text one frequently discovers "various strands of the plot [which] often serve to reflect aspects of the main plot in the subplot" (Fludernick 46). Therefore, throughout the story, various plots should exist which intertwine and do not follow a logical sequence. For one thing, this has the effect that the protagonist of a story is often compared or contrasted to other characters. This again contributes to the suspense of a text. For instance, the readers hope that the protagonists will either have the same luck as other characters in the book, or that they will not share the same destiny as they. Examples can be found in *Pride and Prejudice*. Elisabeth is contrasted to many other characters in story. One of them is her friend Charlotte, who marries Mr Collins out of sensible reasons rather than out of love (Fludernick 46). In contrast, the reader hopes that Elisabeth will not be forced to do the same thing and that she will find real love. A further example is Elisabeth's sister Jane, who finally reunites with Mr Bingley. When, at last, he proposes, the readers also wish Elisabeth's story to have a happy ending by marrying Mr Darcy. However, until this desired solution occurs, the readers are in a constant state of fear for the protagonist and therefore also experience suspense.

A second effect of the intertwining of various plots is that new information is constantly presented. This can happen in various ways. One is the introduction of new characters and the unravelling of their background. In doing so, the recipients acquire new information that they were unaware of before. This again can lead to a new understanding of the story (Fludernick 46). For instance, in *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth finds out that not Mr Darcy betrayed Mr Wickham; it was the other way round. Once again, the readers are put into emotional distress as they hope that

3. Genre

All the novels analysed in this thesis are perceived here as romance novels. Thus, it is significant to define the genre of romance. Additionally, some novels, mainly *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, show characteristics of the gothic novel, a very suspenseful genre. Lastly, as this thesis is concerned with the creation of suspense in romance novels, the genre of romantic suspense should be considered as well.

3.1 Romance

> "A romance novel is a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines." (Regis 22)

This definition entails the most important elements of a romance novel. Hence, in a romance there is at least one heroine and hero falling in love and trying to express this through courtship. They then become betrothed, which leads to a happy ending. This is most likely a wedding. Although the wedding itself is not described in every romance novel, it always ends with at least a promise of a wedding. A last element of a romance novel is the focus on one or more heroines (Regis 22).

With the exception of *Wuthering Heights*, these characteristics can be found in all novels analysed in this thesis. Consequently, *Wuthering Heights* cannot be regarded as a typical romance novel. One of the most important elements is missing. The story does not end with a happy marriage; at least not with the marriage of Catherine and Heathcliff. However, at the end of the novel the readers are presented with a happy ending through the marriage of Cathy and Hareton. Therefore, *Wuthering Heights* entails a happy ending, even though it does not concern the two main protagonists. Those are only united in death.

In addition to this definition, Regis (30-39) argues that a romance novel comprises eight essential elements. Every one of these elements can be used repeatedly and in any possible order. Firstly, the society in which the courtship between the hero and the heroine takes place has to be defined. Usually, the protagonists are oppressed by a flawed society. In *Evelina* the first hint regarding the society in the story is in the subtitle. It is a "history of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World" (Burney iii). Thus, Evelina is introduced into 18th century society in which she has to learn the rules and find her way. In *Pride and Prejudice* the definition of the society in the novel occurs in the first chapter; Mrs Bennet talks about their new neighbour as a possible marriage candidate for one of her daughters. Hence, the importance of finding a wealthy husband

is stressed. Consequently, the readers can form a picture of late 18th century society (Regis 31). In *Jane Eyre* the protagonist always searches for independence and struggles against the conventions and pressure of society. In *Wuthering Heights* society is mainly defined through the characterisation and contrasting of characters and places. Thrushcross Grange is compared to the farmhouse of Wuthering Heights and its residents, illustrating their difference. In addition, the latter are also contrasted with each other. Although both belong to the middle class, one gets the impression of the Lintons being at a higher level in society. This is particularly the case at a stage in the novel when Hindley denies Heathcliff his rightful education.

Secondly, the desciption of an initial meeting between the heroine and the hero is of particular importance. The nature of this meeting and its outcome can be positive as well as negative (Regis 31). A lot of suspense can be created by this type of meeting. However, this will be more closely analysed in chapter 6.1.

Thirdly, within a romance one is always able to detect a barrier which usually prevents a marriage. These barriers can be external or internal. External barriers are obstacles which are not generated by the protagonists, whereas internal barriers exist within the mind of either one of, or both protagonists. Examples of external barriers are society, family, a geographical separation and the economic situation. In contrast, internal barriers are the attitudes, beliefs, values, and temperaments of either the hero or heroine, or both. These barriers have to be removed in order that the novel can have a happy ending (Regis 32). There are numerous examples of obstacles, internal as well as external ones, in all four novels. However, these barriers will be analysed in chapter 6.5.

Fourthly, attraction plays a significant role and is constantly presented throughout the novels. This is essential to keep the hero and the heroine involved until they are able to overcome all of the barriers. It can be based on various issues such as friendship, sexual chemistry, shared feelings or goals, economic reasons, or society's expectations (Regis 33). In *Evelina* the main focus is on the attraction between herself and Lord Orville. This derives from friendship, crisis, sexual chemistry, and at the end even shared goals. For instance, before Lord Orville declares his love for Evelina he offers his friendship. Furthermore, during Evelina's crisis concerning her heritage, he is at her side and tries to help her. In the end, after Sir Belmont acknowledges Evelina as his rightful daughter, Lord Orville even presents a solution to the problem that the second Miss Belmont is in a precarious position. Secondly Mr Macartney and the false Miss Belmont are attracted to each other. Their attraction seems to arise from sexual chemistry. *Pride and*

Prejudice has four cases of attraction. Firstly, between Mr Collins and Charlotte an attraction exists which is merely founded on sensible and economic reasons. Secondly, Jane and Mr Bingley are drawn to each other because of their mutual good nature, whereas Lydia's and Mr Wickham's relationship is only built on sexual attraction. Lastly, there is a similarity between the relationships of Evelina and Lord Orville and that of Elizabeth and Mr Darcy. In both cases, the attraction is based on crisis, friendship, sexual attraction, and shared goals (Regis 33-34). For instance, Elizabeth experiences a crisis when she hears about her sister's elopement. Although she is not aware of it at first, Mr Darcy helps to solve it. *Jane Eyre* contains two instances of attraction; firstly, between Jane and Mr Rochester, built mainly on their friendship and mutual trust; secondly, between Miss Oliver and St. John, based on sexual attraction. In *Wuthering Heights* four instances of attraction occur; one between Catherine and Heathliff, another between Catherine and Edgar Linton. The former is based on friendship and sexual attraction; in the latter Catherine and Linton have different reasons for marrying. While Linton really loves Catherine, her main incentives are born out of sensible reasons and they are influenced by society's expectations. The third and fourth instances of attraction exist between Cathy and Linton and between Cathy and Harethon. Both are based on friendship initiated by a crisis.

The fifth element is a declaration of love, which can occur anywhere in the novel. When it coincides with a first meeting, the theme of love at first sight is introduced. If it is declared in the middle of the novel, one can almost be sure that the couple concerned will have to overcome some barriers before their love can be requited. In contrast, a declaration at the end usually signifies a happy ending and the removal of all barriers (Regis 34). In all four novels the declaration of love occurs in the middle of the novel. Consequently, the protagonists still have to overcome obstacles. In *Evelina*, the heroine has to discover her true heritage. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth has to overcome her prejudice, while Darcy has to learn to deal with his pride. In *Jane Eyre*, Mr Rochester's marriage has to be dissolved and Jane has to gain her independence. Lastly, In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine should overcome her pride, which she does not quite manage before her death.

The sixth element is the point of ritual death. This means that at a certain place in the narrative the fulfilment of the desired happy end seems impossible.

The seventh element is the recognition; new information is presented which resolves obstacles (Regis 35-37). As this element concerns the removal of barriers, it will be analysed in chapter 6.4.

Finally, the betrothal takes place: the hero and heroine promise to marry each other (Regis 37-38).

Additionally, three further elements can be detected in a romance novel. However, these are not essential. Firstly, the presentation of the actual wedding is depicted in some novels at the end. As this element is not absolutely vital one can frequently detect a mere hint at of a future wedding or a mere mention that it took place. Secondly, a novel sometimes contains a character who wants to prevent the protagonists from marrying. As a consequence, this person is then exiled after the happy union of the hero and the heroine. Lastly, there are also characters that initially oppose the marriage of the protagonists, but accept it at the end (Regis 38-39).

All of the elements mentioned are important for the suspense in a romance and contribute enormously to it. In all the novels analysed in this thesis one can detect the eight essential elements. Furthermore, non-essential ones are also frequently found. Hence, all of the said novels are clearly romance novels with suspenseful elements which are able to fascinate and thrill the reader.

3.2 Gothic novel

Cuddon (355) defines a Gothic novel as "[a] type of romance". In contrast Baldick (106) defines it as "a story of terror and suspense". Hence, the main themes are usually cruelty and terror since these narratives mostly contain elements of horror and mystery. The main aim of a Gothic novel is to curdle the blood of the readers and send a chill down their spine. This is even intensified by describing desolate, wild, and dark landscapes and through the creation of a gloomy atmosphere combined with a sense of doom (Cudden 356).

Although the Gothic novel was actually most successful between 1760 and 1820, one can frequently detect Gothic elements throughout mainstream 19th century fiction (Cudden 355, 360). This is also possible in the novels *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. In particular, the description of the landscapes creates a gloomy atmosphere. Furthermore, supernatural elements can be detected. For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* Mr Lockwood has a nightmare about the appearance of Catherine's ghost. A further example can be detected in *Jane Eyre*. Although Mr Rochester is nowhere near Jane,

she is able to hear him cry out for her, and begins her search for him. As is revealed at a later point in the story, Mr Rochester did, in actual fact, call out for her. Indeed, mysterious instances occur throughout these novels. However, as these books primarily contain elements which are typical for a romance novel, one could argue that they are romance novels with gothic influences.

3.3 Romantic Suspense

Saricks (35) claims that romantic suspense is the successor of the Gothic novel, which again followed the romance novel. Hence, romantic suspense is a further development of the Gothic and romance genre. Therefore, romantic suspense contains themes of both genres. However, one has to bear in mind that romantic suspense is a rather new genre, which only developed in the 20th century. In spite of this, it is possible to discover some of the characteristics in the novels analyzed in this thesis.

Usually in romantic suspense a heroine has to face some sort of danger from which she either manages to escape without any help, or with the hero's aid. An additional characteristic is that the heroine has to face certain dilemmas concerning one or two male protagonists. It could be that she has to choose between two men, one of good character, the other with no morals. The second possibility is that she learns to love and trust the hero, who initially seemed to be morally unacceptable. (Saricks 35).

Many of these elements can be mostly found in some form in the novels analyzed in this thesis. In *Pride and Prejudice* is an example for a danger, which the heroine is not able to avert by herself. One of the greatest dangers presented is the elopement of Mr Wickham and Lydia, as it could ruin the family. Mr Darcy manages to find them and to solve all problems. This is also the moment when Elizabeth realizes Mr Darcy's goodness and her love for him begins to grow. In *Jane Eyre* the female protagonist always strives for her independence. Therefore, she tries to escape all dangers or solve her problems on her own. Furthermore, a second element of romantic suspense can be detected. Jane falls in love with Mr Rochester, who initially does not seem trustworthy as he obviously carries some dark secret. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine is constantly torn between Mr. Linton and Heathcliff. She eventually marries Mr. Linton, the morally good character. However, atypically for a romantic suspense novel Catherine is not entirely happy with her choice.

The only novel not showing characteristics of romantic suspense is *Evelina*. In this story there are two occurrences of a threatening danger. The first instance is when

Captain Mirvan and Sir Clement attack Evelina and Madame Duval in their chariot. However, as Evelina does not get rescued and acts rather passively, this scene is not typical of romantic suspense. The second scene involves Evelina being nearly assaulted by some gentlemen in Vauxhall. She is then saved by Sir Clement, who, however, is not the hero. The only theme of romantic suspense found in Evelina is the choice between Lord Orville and Sir Clement. But, as Evelina never actually considers accepting Sir Clement, this theme is not completely realized.

3.4 Suspenseful genres

When talking about the genres above, one has to pose the question if the genre itself is able to create suspense. Readers usually have a pattern in mind or particular expectation concerning a novel belonging to a certain genre. These ideas are further influenced by an author-reader relationship. Authors usually know what type of story their readership expects and stick to the conventions of the genre. The audience, on the other hand, read such narratives with a particular concept in mind, which they hope to be fulfilled (Mikos 41-42).

Numerous genres are normally associated with the creation of suspense and the experience of excitement. Such genres are, for instance, detective novels, thrillers or horror stories (Mikos 42). The main reason that these genres are perceived as suspenseful is that individuals sharing the same culture have the same expectations concerning a genre. These expectations are usually met (Tan 47-48). Romance novels are not primarily associated with suspense; whereas suspense in Gothic novels is expected. The reason for this is that romance is often associated with a happy ending. As has been established in the chapters above one requirement of suspense is that readers or characters are only partially informed and do not know how the story is going to proceed or end. Therefore, the question remains: is a narrative still suspenseful if the readers are not only able to anticipate the ending but are almost certain about it?

One way to make romances suspenseful is to break with the conventions of the genre and present the reader with an atypical narrative (Mikos 42). However, this cannot be expected of romance novels of the 18th and 19th centuries. A further method is proposed by Zillmann (*Psychology of Suspense* 203). He argues that it is possible that suspense builds on the anticipation of a happy ending or good fortunes. He names game shows as an example for it. In a game show the contestants know that they are most likely going to win something. However, they still experience a thrill because it is uncertain what

prizes they will get. There is, however, the possibility that bad luck will befall them and that they will lose. Hence, the fear of losing produces the feeling of suspense.

Similarly, readers can experience suspense when reading a romance novel. Although one anticipates a happy ending and it is most likely to occur, the fear of it not becoming true thrills the audience. Furthermore, the primary motivation of reading a romance novel is not to learn about the outcome, as it appears to be rather predictable. Recipients are eager to know what will happen to the characters throughout the story and what obstacles they have to overcome until the protagonists finally end up together. Thus, how a story is told and what occurs in it is uncertain and creates suspense.

Furthermore, one has to bear in mind that a romance comprises various episodes, each of which can be suspenseful. A novel consists of many scenes and chapters. It is possible to detect suspense in each of them. Consequently, suspense is maintained throughout the story (Zillmann *Psychology* 207). However, this issue will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.1.1.2.

When talking about suspense creation in literary genres we also have to distinguish between high and entertainment literature. Usually, it is argued that suspense is mostly found in popular entertainment literature and, therefore, undemanding texts (Vorderer 236-237). The texts analyzed in this thesis are usually considered to be high literature. Consequently, the question remains whether suspense can also be created in these stories.

In an experiment conducted by Vorderer, Cupchik, and Oatley (in Vorderer 239) readers were given an action or entertainment text and an experience text which can be considered as high literature. During and after reading those texts, the various levels of suspense were measured. It was discovered that the action texts were regarded to be more suspenseful. This however, does not mean that experience texts do not produce suspense. Suspense is only experienced at a different level and not as strongly as when reading entertainment stories. For instance, in high literature it is much more important to have likeable characters. This is due to the reason that in action texts the focus is on the description of physical action rather than on the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of the characters (Vorderer 238). This can also be seen in the results, because experience texts were considered to be more complex, involving, and meaningful. Furthermore, the characters were more popular. This leads to an emotional involvement of the readers, which again is a significant factor for the experience of suspense. Hence, the motivation to continue reading is much higher. Therefore, narratives belonging to

high literature also produce suspense, even though the understanding of it is considered as more complex or complicated (Vorderer 239-240).

4. The creation of suspense

As has been established, suspense can be created at various levels. At the textual level, the story and the discourse level are the most significant. Additionally, the reader takes on an important role in creating suspense. Fill (73) mainly distinguishes between four different levels; theme, plot, character development, and style. The first three deal with the story itself, whereas style refers to linguistic aspects. However, this list leaves out numerous other aspects and methods concerning the production of suspense. Most significantly, it disregards the readers as active participants in the suspense creating process. However, they are essential for the existence of suspense.

Graesser and Klettke (2) argue that three components are required in order for the reader to be lost in a book and therefore experience suspense. These are agents, emotions, and plots. The former two will be discussed in the following chapter. The creation of suspense through the plot and therefore at story level will be investigated in chapter 7.

To sum up, it will be illustrated how suspense is created at a textual level with a special focus on time, narrator, and language. Furthermore, the involvement of the reader in the story and its importance for the creation of suspense will be analysed; especially in terms of identity, empathy, and sympathy. Additionally, this chapter takes a closer look at the process of rereading and how well-known stories are still considered as suspenseful, even after repeated readings.

4.1 Suspense on the Text Level

Junkerjürgen (61) argues that suspense at textual level comprises two elements; a content-related and a temporal one. Hence, time plays a significant role in the creation of suspense and offers numerous ways of doing so. A second way to produce suspense at a textual level is the choice of form and perspective of the narration. Lastly, suspense can be increased through the use of various linguistic devices.

4.1.1 Time

Time presents the audience with many possibilities in the process of suspense creation. Genette distinguishes between three different aspects of time; order, duration, and frequency. The first two contribute in some form to the suspense of a narrative. Frequency, on the other hand, is not likely to be suspenseful. Consequently, suspenseful scenes are not usually repeated in a story, as this would take the suspense out of the

sequence. However, it is shown in chapter 4.2.2 how suspense can still exist while rereading a novel.

4.1.1.1 Order

When talking about the temporal order of a story, one has to look at the single episodes and the presentation of their sequence in the text. Genette (40) calls the discordance between the order of a narrative and its presentation, anachrony. For instance, in *Jane Eyre* one discovers at an earlier stage in the story that mysterious occurrences at Thornfield all seem to lead back to Grace Poole. The fact that Rochester's wife Bertha has been causing everything is only presented at a later point in the narrative. Furthermore, the discovery of Bertha's existence and her tale also occur rather far on in the text. When talking to Jane Mr Rochester exclaims:

> I am a fool! […] I keep telling her I am not married, and do not explain why. I forget she knows nothing of the character of that woman, or of the circumstances attending my infernal union with her. Oh, I am certain Jane will agree with me in opinion, when she knows all that I know! […] When I left college, I was sent out to Jamaica, to espouse a bride already courted for me. (Brontë Ch. 268-269)

Mr Rochester refers to past occurrences. This is clearly indicated by referring to the time when he had just finished college. Therefore, the story itself, the marriage to Mr Rochester and what led to it happened before the actual presentation of the tale. This is suspenseful because the readers are eager to know the true story.

A further way of indicating anachrony is to mention how much time has passed. For instance, the sentences "[m]y excellent father died about five years ago;" (Austen 171) or "last summer he was again most painfully obtruded on my notice" (Austen 172) are a clear indication that these events happened earlier than their point of presentation in the narrative.

Another method of disturbing the chronological order of a story is to begin *in medias res*. This means that the readers are thrown into the story. Hence, when the recipients start reading, they have to find out what episodes led up to the starting point (Genette 36).[4] For example, in *Wuthering Heights* the story starts with Lockwood having visited his landlord Heathcliff. There he meets the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. The following descriptions of their behaviour can be found:

> I was pleased to observe the 'missis,' an individual whose existence I had never previously suspected. I bowed and waited, thinking she would bid me take a

[4] See also suspense at the beginning of the novel in chapter 2.3

> seat. She looked at me, leaning back in her chair, and remained motionless and mute. […] She never opened her mouth. I stared – she stared also. At any rate, she kept her eyes on me in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable. (Brontë E. 6)

> On opening the little door, two hairy monsters flew at my throat, bearing me down and extinguishing the light; while a mingled guffaw, from Heathcliff and Hareton, put the copestone on my rage and humiliation. (Brontë 12)

All in all, during his visit he encounters various people who treat him without much hospitality. Therefore, the readers are curious about the reasons for this, which again leads to them experiencing suspense. However, it is only when Nelly tells those people's stories that the audience learns about their background and characteristics and can understand the reasons for their behaviour.

In addition, Genette (48) uses the term anachrony not only to define the non-chronolgical order of a story but also its interruption. He argues that anachronies can reach into the future or the past. These forms of anachronies lead to various possible temporal relationships. Thus, retrospections and anticipations occur which can be subjective as well as objective. (Genette 39).

Genette (40) introduces further terms in order to define the forms of retrospection and anticipation, namely prolepsis and analepsis, which exist in various forms. However, generally speaking analepsis points to past events, whereas prolpesis always refers to the future. Therefore, the latter it is one of the most successful devices in creating suspense. Jahn defines prolepsis as "a narration of a story-event at a point before earlier events have been told". Hence, a future event is presented before it chronologically takes place in the story. This is important for the dramaturgy and suspense of a text. Thus, the readers are informed beforehand of an upcoming and presumably suspenseful scene. In this way, suspense is created by triggering off feelings such as curiosity in the recipients (Wulff 2). There are various devices which indicate prolepsis; a comment by the narrator, a notion or anticipation of future events by a character in the story etc (Junkerjürgen 57). An example of a character giving a hint of future events is Heathcliff's exclamation in chapter 7. He says "I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindly back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!" (Brontë E. 42). These sentences already hint at Heathcliff's revenge on Hindly, which occurs at a later point in the narrative. However, as the recipients do not yet know this, they can only anticipate it and form their own ideas. This again fosters suspense. A further example is Nelly's utterance concerning Heathcliff's behaviour as a

child. “I really thought him not vindictive: I was deceived completely, as you will hear.” (Brontë E. 28) This already shows Heathcliff’s bad character. Hence, suspense is experienced because the readers know that he will react revengefully in the further development of the story

When being presented with a proleptic scene, one tries to analyse the information and its possible meaning for future events. For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* Nelly forbids Cathy to write letters to Linton. Although Cathy still manages to write and send them to her cousin, this fact is only discovered at a future point when Nelly states, “I didn’t learn [that] till some time afterwards.” (Brontë E. 163). When Nelly gives this information, the readers know that Cathy’s letter will be of consequence for the future development of the plot.

A second narrative device pointing to future events is foreshadowing. While prolepsis is explicitly stated in the text, foreshadowing is realised through the audience themselves. Hence, foreshadowing primarily uses symbols. Chatman (60) claims that a text is interesting if the amount of information foreshadowing certain events is regulated so that the readers are kept interested. Therefore, a text should not reveal too much but still show possible future developments. For instance, after Jane’s first encounter with Mr. Rochester she states, “[I]t *was* an incident of no moment, no romance, no interest in a sense; yet it marked with change one single hour of a monotonous life.” (Brontë Ch. 100-101). This passage promises that Jane’s future life is also going to be more exciting now that Mr. Rochester has come into it.

There is also a further occurrence of foreshadowing after Mr Rochester proposed to Jane. The heroine is told that “the great horse-chestnut at the bottom of the orchard had been struck by lightning in the night, and half of it split away.” (Brontë Ch. 226)

Jane later observes the tree herself:

> Descending the laurel walk, I faced the wreck of the chestnut tree; it stood up black and riven: the trunk, split down the centre, gaped ghastly. The cloven halves were not broken from each other, for the firm base and strong roots kept them unsundered below; though community of vitality was destroyed – the sap could flow no more: their great boughs on each side were dead, and next winter’s tempests would be sure to fell one or both to earth: as yet, however, they might be said to form one tree – a ruin, but an entire ruin. (Brontë Ch. 243)

The description of the split tree is a sign for the future separation of Jane and Mr Rochester. This passage is presented shortly before the heroine tells Mr Rochester that she observed a strange creature in her bedroom. When finally Bertha’s existence is

revealed, the readers can be fairly certain of the protagonists' separation, despite the fact that they still love each other.

It is especially significant to prepare the recipients for future suspenseful episodes. Such references draw the readers' attention to possible dangers and make them focus on them. In doing so, the audience's involvement is increased, and they are optimally prepared to experience the highest form of intensity during a suspenseful sequence (Junkerjürgen 59). For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* Catherine treats Edgar shamefully. However, he is still unable to leave her. Nelly states: "[H]e possessed the power to depart, as much as a cat possesses the power to leave a mouse half killed, or a bird half eaten. Ah, I thought, there will be no saving him – he's doomed, and flies to his fate! And so it was" (Brontë E. 51). This passage signifies how devoted Edgar is and also suggests that this will cause problems in times to come. Hence, during future confrontations the readers are always aware of the fact; they experience an underlining feeling of suspense, which is intensified when problems arise, such as Heathcliff's return.

Analepsis is often used to inform the readers of a new character's past or what happened to characters during their absence in the story (Genette 50). For example, in *Evelina*, analepsis occurs at the very beginning, when the history of Evelina, her mother and Madame Duval are told. Hence, the audience is informed of Evelina's present situation. A further example can be found in *Pride and Prejudice*, when Wickham's true story is recounted in Darcy's letter.

Furthermore, analepsis is also used to fill in gaps and present the readers with information which has been omitted (Genette 51). This device is especially important for the creation of suspense. Information that has been withheld is provided at a later point in the narrative; mostly in form of retrospection. Thus, when the missing information is provided, the readers experience a sense of relief as they are freed from the tension felt due to the lack of knowledge.

4.1.1.2 Duration

Usually, suspense is found in separate episodes of a story. Hence, the question remains, if it can also be created globally, namely throughout the whole story. Usually, suspense is an episodic phenomenon. Consequently, suspenseful episodes alternate throughout the story with those lacking in suspense. Additionally, as the theme of a story usually continues as a central thread throughout all of the episodes, suspense also

exists at a global level (Junkerjürgen 47, 54). In accordance with Junkerjürgen, Zillmann (*Psychology* 207) distinguishes between the microstructure and macrostructure of a text. He argues that because suspense is repeatedly produced during the episodes of a story, it can be experienced throughout the whole narrative. Carroll (74) has a similar view in arguing that a reader can experience suspense in response to two different levels of a narrative. On the one hand, the recipients can react to the whole narrative. Therefore, the whole structure is perceived as suspenseful. On the other hand, they experience suspense in the episodes of a story. Consequently, the overall structure of the narrative does not have to be suspenseful as long as it contains suspenseful scenes.

Similarly, Pfister (147) talks about the scope of suspense in a text and distinguishes between final suspense and detailed suspense. Final suspense refers to a global level and mostly focuses on the final scene. This form can mostly be found in drama. In contrast, detailed suspense is restricted to shorter textual sequences and can be detected in every literary genre. Both forms usually alternate and therefore also complement each other.

When talking about the duration of time one has to distinguish between story time and discourse time. Story time refers to the scope of time covered within the narrative. In contrast, discourse time, which is also called narration time, is the time it takes for a recipient to read the text. It is very rare for both times to be isochronic (Fludernik 32).

Genette (94-95) distinguishes between four different effects or movements which can be created through the variation of narration time and story time. These variations influence the duration of a text. The movements are ellipsis, pause, scene, and summary.

During ellipsis the narration time stops while the story time continues. It is also defined as a movement without any kind of summary or descriptive pause. Hence, while reading, the audience discovers that some events of the fictional world were left out in the narration. Genette distinguishes between various forms of ellipsis. One is a clear indication of a gap (Genette 106). For instance, in *Evelina* when reading that a letter has been “written some months after last” (Burney 18) the recipients immediately know the duration of the ellipsis. A further example is in *Wuthering Heights.* Mr Lockwood reads in Catherine’s diary about her and Heathcliff’s plan to “have a scamper on the moors” (Brontë E. 15). However, this adventure itself is never mentioned. Instead Lockwood muses: “I suppose Catherine fulfilled her project, for the next sentence took up another subject: she waxed lachrymose.” (Brontë E. 15) Therefore, the readers immediately know that a passage has been omitted.

Furthermore, an ellipsis can be combined with other devices, such as prolepsis. This contributes enormously to the suspense creation process as it also indicates a future event. For instance, Nelly's claim "the twelve years […] were the happiest of my life" (Brontë E. 137) refers to a period of time which has been elided in the story. However, it also is a reference to the future and signals that the years of happiness are coming to an end.

Ellipsis is a temporal device, which is most effective in the creation of suspense. It has an accelerating effect because it is highly selective. Some information or events occurring in the story are left out or compressed as their detailed description would overburden or bore the reader. Hence, by using ellipses it is possible to create suspenseful scenes as the focus is limited to certain events in the narrative (Fludernik 33). For instance, in *Jane Eyre* when Jane says, "I now pass a space of eight years almost in silence: a few lines only are necessary to keep up the links of connection." (Brontë Ch. 71) the readers immediately know that she has leapt forward in time and that a certain period has been purposely left out: this shows them that the eight years of Jane's youth are not important for the rest of the story. Consequently, they are led to focus on the episodes following this.

A further device showing similarity to ellipsis is the cliffhanger, which usually can be found at the end of a chapter or episode. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English defines a cliffhanger as, "A situation in a story, film/movie, competition, etc. that is very exciting because you cannot guess what will happen next, or you do not find out immediately what happens next". The narration time stops, the story is interrupted and for the moment, the reader is left in the dark as to how it will proceed. Thus, the solution is retarded and suspense is prolonged until its presentation. This is in accordance with Iser who claims, a story "generally breaks off just at a point of suspense where one would like to know the outcome of a meeting, a situation, etc. The interruption and consequent prolongation of tension is the basic function of the cut. The result is that we try to imagine how the story will unfold, and in this way we increase our own participation in the course of events." (Iser 191) Hence, cliffhangers produce a heightened feeling of suspense mainly through a high degree of reader involvement. Usually, such cliffhangers occur at a point in the story when the protagonist is in great danger with only little or almost no hope of escaping (Dolle-Weinkauff 126). However, the protagonist does not always have to be in physical danger; they can also be in a state of emotional distress. For instance, in *Evelina* the first

volume ends with Lady Howard's letter to Sir John Belmont in which she requests him to acknowledge Evelina as his rightful daughter. Therefore, the readers are put into suspense as they now desire an answer from Sir Belmont. They do this because they probably empathize with Evelina and want her to come into her own. Hence, they keep on reading until the answer is presented. However, this does not occur for a long time. In the meantime the readers are presented with numerous other letters. Consequently, the audience are constantly subjected to some degree of suspense until they are able to read Sir Belmont's answer at last.

Another cliffhanger can be found in *Jane Eyre*. Mr Rochester says to the heroine the following:

> 'But I affirm that you are: so much depressed that a few more words would bring tears to your eyes […] Well, tonight I excuse you; but understand that so long as my visitors stay, I expect you toappear in the drawing-room every evening; it is my wish; don't neglect it. Now go, and send Sophie for Adèle. Good-night, my –' He stopped, bit his lip, and abruptly left me. (Brontë Ch 158)

Mr Rochester stops in mid-sentence. The readers do not know what name he wanted to give Jane. Instead the chapter ends and continues with a summary of the next days. Therefore, the readers are kept in suspense as they want to know exactly what Mr Rochester wanted to say and what his intentions are.

A pause is the opposite of an ellipsis. This means the story time is interrupted while the narration time continues. This movement is also called a descriptive pause as it is mostly used to describe a person, a landscape, or simply the thoughts of characters. Hence, the narration time it takes to describe these scenes is much longer than any action within the story (Genette 99-106). For instance, pauses are frequently used in order to present the readers with the information about the social-historical background of a character of just the surroundings or landscape the characters are in. Furthermore, this device can be used if a character in the text is contemplating certain events. For example, *Wuthering Heights* is full of scenic descriptions. The place itself is described as:

> "Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. 'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in storm weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong" (Brontë E. 2)

This description sets the mood of the novel and puts the reader into a rather gloomy state of mind. Hence, one can imagine what type of story this is going to be and therefore develops certain expectations. These again are significant for the experience of suspense.

A further example of a pause occurs in *Pride and Prejudice* when Elizabeth is at Pemerbly and hears Mr Darcy's housekeeper praising him. The story time stops in order to describe Elizabeth's reflections on what she had heard: "This was a praise, of all others most extraordinary, most opposite to her ideas. That he was not a good-tempered man, had been her firmest opinion. Her leanest attention was awakened; she longed to hear more" (Austen 208). This passage signifies Elizabeth changing her opinion about Darcy and even desiring to hear more about him. Consequently, the audience is happy about this turn of events. Now that Elizabeth has changed her attitude towards Darcy, they are held in a state of suspenseful agitation as to how the story will proceed. Hence, they long for their next meeting and experience suspense until it takes place.

In *Evelina* the recipients can find a character description:

> [Mr Branghton's] son seems weaker in his understanding, and more gay in his temper; but his gaiety is that of a foolish, over-grown school-boy, whose mirth consists in noise and disturbance. […] [H]e seems himself to have no talents, spirit, or generosity […]. Miss Branghton, the eldest daughter, is by no means ugly, but looks proud, ill-tempered, and conceited. (Burney 69-70)

Evelina goes on describing the Branghton family in a negative way. Therefore, the readers start to empathize with Evelina for having to spend her time among such unlikable people. Thus, suspense is experienced because the readers are able to anticipate that Evelina will have an unpleasant time.

The device of a scene has already been mentioned above. When using this device, the story and the discourse time are almost isochron. This device is most often used in dialogue (Genette 109). The suspense of a dialogue mainly depends on their content.

In a summary the narration time is considerably shorter than the story time. Hence events which take place over a period of days, months, or years in the novel only take up the space of a few paragraphs or pages. Consequently, such shortened episodes seem to be inferior, less important, and less suspenseful to the story than other scenes (Genette 95-96). However, summary and scene should alternate in order to have an enjoyable rhythm while reading (Genette 97).

Lastly, Fludernik (33) mentions a fifth movement, namely a slow-down or stretch. This is a device which is the opposite of a summary. Hence, the narration time is much

longer than the story time. However, Borringo (56) argues that the narration time should not be stretched too long in order to remain suspenseful. It is important to find the balance between presenting the reader with as much information as possible, but at the same time not to give too much unnecessary information. For instance, in Lady Howard's letter to Sir John Belmont she uses the following sentences in order to introduce her reason for writing:

> "I must own myself somewhat distressed in what manner to introduce the purport of my writing; yet, as I think that, in affairs of this kind, frankness is the first requisite to a good understanding between the parties concerned, I will neither torment you nor myself with punctilious ceremonies, but proceed instantly and openly to the business which occasions my giving you this trouble." (Burney 132)

With this introduction the readers are made curious about Lady Howard's request. This curiosity also has the effect of causing suspense until the reasons for writing the letter are presented.

The result of the above mentioned movements is that the author is able to create suspenseful effects. Hence, the more important a scene becomes, the more the narration time is slowed down. Therefore, long scenes are used to cover short episodes in the story (Genette 93). As these scenes are significant for the story and therefore prolonged, suspense is also increased. Thus, episodes are described in great detail, which draws the readers deeper into the story. Furthermore, the suspenseful scene is stretched and the presentation of the solution delayed. These are key methods in the suspense creation process. In contrast, there are many forms of ellipsis or summary that compensate for scene stretching (Genette 93).

However, in the end speed is very difficult to measure. The reason for this is that every reader reads a text at a different speed and tends to vary this according to the type of scene and the circumstances during reading (Genette 86). Additionally, different episodes cause the readers to change their reading speed. For instance, one tends to quicken the reading process in a suspenseful scene, especially when being curious about the outcome of a suspenseful episode (Junkerjürgen 44). Furthermore, the audience is able to decide for themselves how quickly they want to read. They can not only achieve this by determining their reading speed, but also in choosing the frequency of the rereads of a scene (Borringo 83).

4.1.2 Narrative Situations

When talking about narrative situations or agents it has to be considered that, on the one hand, there are the story characters themselves and, on the other hand, pragmatic agents. These agents are the writer, the reader, the narrator and the narratee. Each of them varies in their point of view and their observation of the events in a narrative (Graesser and Klettke 2).

As is generally known, Stanzel (47-63) argues that when talking about narrative situations one has to distinguish between the various forms of person, mode, and perspective. The person refers to the narrator. All of the analysed novels, with the exception of *Pride and Prejudice,* use a first-person narration with narrators appearing in the narratives. In *Evelina* and *Wuthering Heights* these first-person narrators change continuously throughout the story. While in *Evelina* the heroine's perspective is most prominent, the story of *Wuthering Heights* is primarily told as Nelly sees it. *Pride and Prejudice* has an authorial narrator who is not involved in the narrative itself.

The mode of narration refers to the two types of narrative agents. These are a narrator, who can take on an impersonalized or a personalized role, and a reflector (Stanzel 48). Fludernick (36) introduces a different term for a reflector, namely focalizer. In this thesis the only novel having a reflector is *Pride and Prejudice*. In this novel, the scenes are told through the consciousness of characters in the story. However, an authorial narrator frequently gives independent comments. Within the other novels the readers are always aware of the existence of the narrators. Sometimes they even talk to the audience explicitly.

Lastly, perspective refers to the point of view from which the narration is presented. Generally, perspective is very ambivalent. Depending on the perspective, the readers divide the characters of a fictional world into protagonists and antagonists. Hence, the narrative is usually presented from the protagonist's view, which makes him or her the hero or heroine. This protagonist is generally perceived as a good character (Wulff 10). Additionally, the perspective can be internal or external. However, the more suspenseful perspective is the internal one. This point of view helps the reader to identify with a character (Stanzel 49).[5] Furthermore, the internal perspective can be rather limited; it is therefore responsible for the amount and type of information provided by a text (Fill *Sprachliche Aspekte* 227). If the story is told from a narrow perspective, the audience's knowledge is also limited. Hence, the author can limit a recipient's knowledge by

[5] For identification see chapter 4.2.1

choosing how much information is provided at a certain point in the story. Consequently, the readers are eager to learn more and imagine how the story could proceed.[6] (Fill 56). However, it is also possible to guide the reader in a certain direction. If figuratively speaking, an audience is in a character's mind, they are confronted with various contemplations. The recipients not only adopt these but connect them to their own situations. In case of the protagonists being in danger or facing a problem, they can present the reader with possible paths of escape. Additionally, the audience might form their own plans about the characters' future. However, as long as these futures are unclear, the readers are left confused and in a state of suspenseful agitation as they do not know what will happen next, or how the characters will solve different crises (Gerring 95).

For instance, in *Jane Eyre* after the discovery of Mr Rochester's wife, he tries to persuade Jane to stay with him. However, Jane is determined to go, but still wavers. She contemplates her options:

> [W]hile he spoke my very conscience and reason turned traitors against me, and charged me with crime in resisting him. They spoke almost as loud as Feeling: and that clamoured wildly. 'Oh, comply!' it said. 'Think of his misery; think of his danger – look at his state when left alone; remember his headlong nature; consider the recklessness following on despair – soothe him; save him; love him; tell him you love him and will be his. Who in the world cares for *you?* Or who will be injured by what you do? (Brontë Ch. 280)

Hence, the readers have access to Jane's thoughts while she is pondering what to do. She even presents the audience with an alternative to leaving Mr Rochester. Therefore, the recipients think about how they would react if they were in Jane's position. However, even if the readers form their own plans, they do not know what Jane is going to do and therefore experience suspense.

A further example can be found in *Pride and Prejudice*. After receiving a letter from her aunt, Elizabeth knows that Mr Darcy was actually at Lydia's wedding. Although Mrs Gardiner provides Elizabeth with reasons for his behaviour, Elizabeth is not convinced:

> The vague and unsettled suspicions which uncertainty had produced of what Mr Darcy might have been doing to forward her sister's match, which she had feared to encourage, as an exertion of goodness to great to be probable, and at the same time dreaded to be just, from pain of obligation, were proved beyond their greatest extent to be true! He had followed them purposely to town, he had taken on himself all the trouble and mortification attendant on such a research;

[6] See also imagination in chapter 4.2

> […] He had done all this for a girl whom he could neither regard nor esteem. Her heart did whisper, that he had done it for her. But it was a hope shortly checked by other considerations (Austen 270)

This contemplation presents Elizabeth's point of view of the situation. However, at the end of her utterance she again doubts the truth of her thoughts and therefore gives the impression that there must still be some other explanations for Mr Darcy's behaviour. Hence, until the actual reasons are provided the readers are in suspense.

In all four novels the perspectives change frequently. As *Evelina* is an epistolary novel, the perspective depends on the writer of each letter. This has the advantage that the same events can be regarded from different points of view. Hence, the audience can get a clearer picture of the situation and satisfy their curiosity. However, the provided information is incomplete because not all of the letters written by the characters are in the novel. For instance, Evelina once writes to Miss Mirvan:

> I must own myself somewhat distressed how to answer your raillery; yet believe me, my dear Maria, your suggestions are those of *fancy*, not of *truth*. I am unconscious of the weakness you suspect; […] You wonder, you say, since my *heart* takes no part in this affair, why it should make me so unhappy? (Burney 260)

This passage shows that only Evelina's perspective of a situation is presented as Maria's letter is missing. Hence, the readers have to deduce from Evelina's letters what Miss Mirvan wrote. Therefore, suspense is experienced as not all information is provided.[7]

In *Pride and Prejudice* the perspectives change as well. For instance, while Elizabeth is visiting her sick sister, she also spends some time with the Bingleys and Mr Darcy. There she notices "how frequently Mr Darcy's eyes were fixed on her." (Austen 45) She then concludes that "she drew his notice because there was a something about her more wrong and reprehensible, according to [Mr Darcy's] ideas of right, than in any other person present." (Austen 45). Hence, from Elizabeth's point of view, Mr Darcy does not approve of her at all. However, as Mr Darcy's beginning fascination with Elizabeth has been described earlier, the audience knows the truth whereas the heroine is ignorant of the fact. This creates suspense as the recipients have to watch helplessly while the protagonists become entangled in further misunderstandings. As they are not able to change the situation, they have to wait until they are given the information about how the story is going to proceed. During that time, they are kept in suspense.

[7] See also ellipsis in chapter 4.1.1.2 and withholding information in chapter 4.3.1

A further example of regarding things from a different angle can be found in *Jane Eyre*. During a conversation after the discovery of Bertha's existence, Mr Rochester presents Jane with his impression of their first encounter and further meetings at Thornfield:

> […] I rode in sight of Thornfield Hall. […]On a stile in Hay Lane I saw a quiet little figure sitting by itself. […] I had no presentiment of what it would be to me; no inward warning that the arbitrariness of my life […] waited there in humble guise. I did not know it, even when, on the occasion of Mesrour's accident, it came up and gravely offered me help. […] I must be aide, and by that hand: and aided I was.
> The next day I observed you – myself unseen – for half an hour […]. (Brontë Ch. 276)

These passages are suspenseful as the past events are presented in a new light. The readers are shown a different perspective and can give new meaning to their formerly attained knowledge.

First-person narrations are especially suspenseful because the reader's knowledge is dependent on that of the narrator or reflector and is as limited as the character's. Furthermore, first-person narrators usually tell the audience about their feelings and thoughts they had at a certain point in the story. Even if the story is told in retrospective, little regard is paid to the attained knowledge (Fill 80). Therefore, one only knows how the characters felt and thought at that moment in the story and not what they learned from it at a later point. An example can be found in *Jane Eyre*. The whole novel is told in retrospection and Jane as a narrator frequently points this out. For instance, after talking about a dark part of her childhood she exclaims: "Yes, Mrs Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering, but I ought to forgive you, for you knew not what you did" (Brontë Ch. 14). During her childhood Jane describes her former feelings accurately. But now, looking back at that episode, she is able to forgive her former tormenter. However, this does not change the description of her feelings at the point of narration. This again contributes to suspense, as the story seems more personal. Even when the audience anticipate a happy ending, which is likely as Jane is able to forgive Mrs Reed, the problem lies in the now, and the current situation of the story, which is perceived as suspenseful. Hence, the recipient is drawn into the story and able to imagine how the characters feel and think or felt and thought at that point (Stanzel 49). For instance, in *Wuthering Heights*, the audience only know what Mr Lockwood and Nelly have observed and are able to tell.

If a first-person narrator is a character in the story, he or she usually plays a subordinate role or a mere observer. For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* the story is related from Mr Lockwood's and Nelly's perspectives. Both play a subordinate role as the novel centres around Catherine and Heathcliff. This creates suspense at a different level. The readers are not confronted with the thoughts of the protagonists, who are the focus of a romance novel. Instead, they have to evaluate the story from a different view and try to attain the truth behind the evaluation of the protagonists' actions through a third person. Consequently, the audience is not provided with all the desired information. Hence, they are kept in suspense while trying to discover the true intention and feelings of the hero and heroine. It is especially interesting when different narrators describe the same occurrence in another way. For instance, the following passage shows how Nelly describes Cathy:

> She was the most winning thing that ever brought sunshine into a desolate house: a real beauty in face, with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin, and small features, and yellow curling hair. […] [S]he could be soft and mild as a dove, and she had a gentle voice and pensive expression. (Brontë E. 137)

Therefore the audience gets the impression that Cathy is beautiful and exquisite. This image is then altered when Mr Lockwood sees Cathy. He thinks: "She does not seem so amiable […] as Mrs Dean would persuade me to believe. She's a beauty, it is true; but not an angel." (Brontë E. 217) This contrast of opinions is able to create suspense because the readers are presented with different views and do not know what to believe. Hence, the readers realise that the stories provided by each narrator are subjectively influenced. Hence, they have to discover what information is genuine.[8]

When talking about a narrative situation one should not only analyse the narrator but also the recipient of the story, the narratee. The narratee can either be a fictional character or an implied reader. If the narratee is a fictional character he or she frequently belongs to the same fictional world. The readers are often able to identify the narratee as either male or female. Sometimes the narratee is explicitly mentioned (Fludernick 23). For instance, in *Evelina* the addressees of each letter are very clear and are characters in the fictional world. In contrast, it is also possible that the narratee is an implied reader and not explicitly mentioned. However, it is still possible to identify the implied reader as an ideal reader figure. Still, the real reader is not forced to take on this role (Fludernick 23). In *Jane Eyre*, for instance, the reader is directly addressed. She does

[8] For contrasting see also Fludernick in chapter 2.4

this by using sentences such as “Let the reader add, to complete the picture” or “A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play; and when I draw up the curtain this time, reader, you must fancy you see a room in the George Inn at Millcote” (Brontë Ch. 80).

Within a text various forms of relationships between narrator and narratee exist. The first one concerns the communication between narrator and narratee in the traditional sense. However, there is a further form of communication beneath that level within the story: the communication between characters. Thus, one character tells a story to another. The first character becomes the narrator and the person the story is told to, the narratee (Fludernick 28). The most prominent example would be Nelly telling Catherine’s story to Mr Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights*. In this and the other novels it is also possible to discover further communications between characters. This is done through the use of letters. For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* Isabella uses a letter to tell Nelly what happened to her after her marriage with Heathcliff. In *Pride and Prejudice*, in a letter written by Mr Darcy, he explains some parts of his own story to Elizabeth. Lastly, *Evelina* as an epistolary novel is a constant communication of characters. In contrast, in *Jane Eyre*, Mr Rochester also tells Jane his view of their first encounters but does not use a letter. These communications between characters are important to release suspense by delivering formerly withheld information. Hence, the readers are now able to answer previously asked questions.

A final narratological device, which helps to create suspense, is the use of frame narratives. Usually they can be found at the beginning or at the end of a story. However, they can also be in the middle of a text (Fludernick 27). *Wuthering Heights* clearly is a frame narrative. Lockwood is telling Nelly’s story.

4.1.3 Suspense and Language (linguistic suspense)

The linguistic side of suspense is an important factor when analysing suspense in novels. The technique of narrating contributes enormously to the suspense of a story. It is even possible that particular scenes are perceived as suspenseful due to the way they are presented or because of the techniques used. Hence, independent of their importance for the rest of the plot, such episodes create suspense (Tan 33).

When analysing suspense in connection with language one has to consider that the breaking of linguistic rules is much more suspenseful than obeying them. Thus, within

language creativity, rarity, deviation, and a lack of naturalness contribute enormously to suspense (Fill 16).

Suspense exists at many linguistic levels, for example: lexical-semantic, syntactic, and textual pragmatic (Fill 75-76). At a lexical-semantic level suspense is primarily created through the use of words which have a cataphoric semantic meaning. For instance, words such as danger, suspicion, unexpected, suddenly, or strange are all linked to a certain meaning and arouse the recipients' curiosity. Furthermore, the use of words out of the field of horror and crime attract the readers' attention and create suspense (Fill 75). For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* Mr Lockwood describes his way of getting to this place.

> On that bleak hilltop the earth was hard with a black frost, and the air made me shiver through every limb. Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over, and, running up the flagged causeway bordered with straggling gooseberry bushed, knocked vainly for admittance, till my knuckles tingled, and the dogs howled. (Brontë E. 5)

This passage uses words which create a suspenseful atmosphere. Similarly, in *Jane Eyre* vocabulary out of the field of mystery and horror can be detected. For instance, when Jane is locked up in red-room as a child she describes the horror she experienced.

> [B]ut then, prepared as my mind was for horror, shaken as my nerves were by agitation, I thought the swift darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings; something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated: endurance broke down; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort. (Brontë Ch. 12)

All in all, when reading such passages the audience anticipates that suspenseful events will follow. This means that the use of particular words evokes a certain expectation in the reader about possible future events or outcomes. For instance, when Jane claims that her mind was prepared for horror, the recipients expect an event which is able to cause horror. However, as they do not know what is going to happen, they are in suspense. Such words or phrases are used as cataphora and can be regarded as references to future events. These cataphora occur at a point in the text where they are still regarded as undefined information. Although the audience is aware that they probably target a forthcoming event, only new information, given at a later point in the story, reveals what actually happens (Wulff 2-3). For example, in *Wuthering Heights* Nelly announces that "there is a strange change approaching". (Brontë E. 234). This clearly refers to future events. However, what this change is going to be is still unclear at the point of the utterance. Additionally, as the audience does not know the end or outcome of a story the

cataphoric elements are referring to an open situation (Wulff 4). Hence, catapohra show a great similarity to prolepsis and foreshadowing.

There are numerous ways to create suspense at syntax level. One is to retard syntactic constituents. This can occur by changing the position of a word or inserting sentences (Fill 40-41). For instance, a sentence can be prolonged through inserting clauses. Examples can be found in *Evelina*. After the chance meeting between Evelina and Lord Orville in Marybone-gardens, he visits her in Holborn. Before and during the explanations for his visits he frequently inserts clauses, which are not necessary. Examples are the following sentences uttered by Lord Orville:

> I will venture to tell her the motive which, next to enquiring after her health, has prompted me to wait on her thus early. (Burney 240)
> I should not, however, upon so short an acquaintance, have usurped the privilege of intimacy, in giving my unasked sentiments upon so delicate a subject, had I not known that credulity is the sister of innocence, and therefore feared you might be deceived. (Burney 241)

This contributes to the suspense caused by the paragraphs as the audience is not immediately presented with all the information in a compact way.

A second method is the use of a variation of syntactic structures such as ellipses, which means leaving out words, sentences or other forms of information. As investigated in chapter 4.1.1.2, ellipsis is able to create suspense. This is because elliptic sentences are more open and enable the recipients to imagine possible outcomes. Furthermore, such sentences convey a level of uncertainty. Hence, the reader has to interpret an elliptic text passage (Fill 41).

However, ellipsis does not only occur in regards to a story but also within sentences themselves. Although a sentence usually consists of at least a subject and a predicate, often completed by an object, one can discover sentences which lack essential parts. For instance, when Mr Macartney meets Evelina after being apparently saved by her, he is lost for words. He tries to tell her his story, but is unable to do so and uses incomplete sentences: “I will, Madam. – Can you – will you – I think you will! – may I then –‘ he stopped and paused, ‘say, will you --‘ then suddenly turning from me, ‘Great Heaven! I cannot speak!’ and he went back to the shop.” (Burney 216)

These types of sentences especially cause the readers to feel suspense as they want to know what Mr Macartney is trying to say. All in all, elliptic sentences are more suspenseful as they are more open and vague. This again has the consequence, that such sentences are more open to interpretation (Fill 41).

Thirdly, suspense depends on the type of sentence used. For example, a question creates more suspense than a simple declarative sentence (Fill 75). For instance, in *Jane Eyre* the heroine asks the following questions after Mr Mason was injured:

> [H]ow had he become involved in the web of horror? and why had the Fury flown at him? What made him seek this quarter of the house at an untimely season, when he should have been asleep in bed? I had heard Mr Rochester assign him an apartment below – what brought him here? And why, now, was he so tame under the violence or treachery done him? Why did he so quietly submit to the concealment Mr Rochester enforced? Why *did* Mr Rochester enforce this concealment? (Brontë Ch. 185)

In raising these questions the recipients are motivated to think about possible answers. Furthermore, they are eager to know the answers to the questions. Thus, this creates a lot of suspense, and is perceived as more thrilling than just reading mere statements. In addition, sentences which contain contrasting positions are perceived as suspenseful. A significant indicator for the existence of an opposition within a sentence or a passage is the word ‘but’. Additionally, ‘but’ is often used to change the topic, which makes the contrast between both positions more prominent (Fill 43-44). For example, in *Pride and Prejudice* Mr Darcy’s feelings when seeing Elizabeth at Pemberley are contrasted to his actual behaviour.

> They were within twenty yards of each other, and so abrupt was his appearance, that it was impossible to avoid his sight. Their eyes instantly met, and the cheeks of each were overspread with the deepest blush. He absolutely stared, and for a moment seemed immoveable from surprise; but shortly recovering himself, advanced towards the party, and spoke to Elizabeth, if not in terms of perfect composure, at least of perfect civility. (Austen 210)

Lastly in terms of syntax, a conditional sentence can contribute to suspense as it indicates the existence of various possible developments of a story. (Fill 44). However, as has been established above, the existence of only two possibilities is the most suspenseful strategy.

At a textual pragmatic level, there are three methods to be distinguished which are interesting for the creation of suspense. Firstly, anaphoric elements are used in a cataphoric way. This means that anaphoric signs such as pronouns are used in order to indicate that a piece of information has not yet been given. Hence, the recipients learn who the pronoun refers to at a later point. The later the presentation of the solution, the more suspense is created (Fill 49). Additionally, the use of an unrelated pronoun at the beginning of a story is perceived as especially suspenseful (Fill *Sprachliche Aspekte* 236). In *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* the novels start with the use of the pronouns

"I" or "we". However, who the actual narrators are is only revealed at a later point. Secondly, the narration can be presented from a limited point of view. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice* the meeting between Mr Darcy and Mr Wickham is presented out of Elizabeth's point of view.

> Elizabeth happening to see the countenance of both as they looked at each other, was all astonishment at the effect of the meeting. Both changed colour, one looked white, the other red. Mr Wickham, after a few moments, touched his hat – a salutation which Mr Darcy just deigned to return. What could be the meaning of it? – It was impossible to imagine; it was impossible not to long to know. (Austen 63)

Hence, the reasons for the men's behaviour are a mystery to Elizabeth, and consequently to the readers. Now they also share the heroine's desire to know the truth.

The third method is to interrupt the narration, mainly through flashbacks (Fill 76). If the interruption occurs at a very suspenseful point in the story, suspense can be increased (Fill 81).

4.2 Reader-based Suspense

As has been established in the chapters above, the text of a narrative itself is able to produce suspense. However, when talking about suspense, the role of the readers has to be considered as well. The recipients are significant for the suspense creation process. Suspense is evenly dependent on the readers' participation, reaction, and emotions. Junkerjürgen (29) goes even further and argues that suspense is the readers' response to a text. Frequently, the suspense of a narrative is only realised by analysing the reaction of the audience. Hence, the readers' response seems more important than the text itself, although the text originated first. Junkerjürgen argues that when analysing suspense one does not analyse the creation of a text but its perception. Wullf (2) even claims that suspense cannot be found in the text but rather in the emotions the story triggers. However, one still has to keep in mind that a text is necessary in order for the recipients to experience suspense in the first place. Hence, both the staging of the text as well as the readers' reactions are necessary for suspense. Through the use of particular literary devices one is able to link the textual level to readers' behaviour and their reaction to a text (Borringo 57). However, the readers decide for themselves whether a text is suspenseful and worth reading further. Thus, without the recipients' decision to read a

story, the narrative would not be suspenseful even if all literary and linguistic rules were obeyed (Fill 76).[9]

However, before the recipients' role in the suspense creation process can be analysed, it has to be taken into consideration that every reader is different and experiences suspense in various ways. This point is significant because otherwise it has to be assumed that the audience is solely influenced by the text itself. This is, however, very unlikely. Hence, a text can be understood or perceived differently depending on the mood or interests of a reader. Furthermore, each text is read and interpreted in a subjective manner and causes a range of different feelings in each recipient. Additionally, while reading a story, all readers superimpose their subjectivity onto a text, which causes the narrative to be dissimilar to the objectively described text. Everybody constructs his or her own story. Additionally, a reader's mood, feelings, interests, and attitude towards a text take an active part in the suspense creation process. Moreover, one has to take the audience's gender, age, and social situation into account: they contribute to their choice of text and their perception and processing of a narrative. Hence, it is claimed that the concrete situations and circumstances of a reader are most influential for the perception of texts (Vorderer 241 - 243).

A further point influencing the perception of suspense is the expectancy of the audience. Mikos (37) claims that the expectancy of feeling suspense or excitement motivates people to read a text. This also holds true for romance novels. The audience mainly expects suspenseful scenes which, due to the existence of barriers or obstacles, prevent a happy union. In contrast, excitement is mostly experienced when the protagonists meet and declare their love for each other. For instance, in *Evelina* the reader's expectancy of experiencing excitement during the protagonists' love declaration is fulfilled. After Evelina tells Lord Orville that she is "disowned for ever by [her] nearest relation" (Burney 368), he answers:

> [M]y heart is yours, and I swear to you an attachment eternal! – You prepare me, indeed, for a tale of horror, and I am almost breathless with expectation, - but so firm is my conviction, that, whatever are your misfortunes, to have merited them is not of the number, that I feel myself more strongly, more invincibly attached to you than ever! Tell me but where I may find this noble friend, whose virtues you have already taught me to reverence, - and I will fly to obtain his consent and intercession, that henceforward our fates may be indissolubly united, - and then shall it be the sole study of my life to endeavour to soften your past, - and guard you from future misfortunes! (Burney 368)

[9] See also suspense at the beginning of the story in chapter 2.3

This declaration is especially suspenseful as it combines the experience of excitement with the presentation of obstacles. The readers' attention is drawn to the fact that there is still a barrier to be overcome before the protagonists can find their happy end. This creates suspense and motivates the recipients to continue reading.

As discussed previously, suspense is among other things, a psychological phenomenon. These can be perceived as positive or negative. As mentioned in chapter 2.1 Zillmann (*Unterhaltene Ungewissheit* 70) argues that suspense creates a negative feeling in the readers and only the resolution of a suspenseful situation is seen as euphoria if the outcome is desirable for the recipients. In order to explain the reasons for experiencing euphoria after reading suspenseful episodes, Zillmann (*Psychology* 225-226) developed a system called the excitation-transfer system. Firstly, it has to be assumed that the audience are mere witnesses to suspenseful scenes. When witnessing a dangerous episode the readers experience empathic distress. The intensity of this distress depends on the level of sympathy for the characters. However, as the recipients feel distress they experience negative feelings. As soon as the events take a happy turn and have a positive outcome the distress is turned into euphoria. This distress can even intensify if the degree of suspense and the length of a scene are increased. This is due to the fact that readers still feel distress from earlier episodes in a narrative. Hence, current suspenseful scenes add to the distress experienced previously and intensify it. Consequently, the euphoria felt is also magnified. Therefore, as Zillmann argues, "the euphoric reaction to a satisfying resolution of suspense should be more intensely experienced, the greater the excitatory residues from the precipitating suspense-induced distress. […] [Hence,] the more suspense initially distresses, the more it is ultimately enjoyed." (Zillmann *Pschology* 226). For instance, in *Jane Eyre* the heroine runs away from Thornfield after discovering Mr Rochester's wife. Jane has scarcely any money and no place to go. After some troublesome days she reaches the house of the River family; ill, exhausted and nearly starving. At this point she is confronted with the greatest danger of all, namely death. This puts the recipients under a lot of distress, which is intensified because the readers are already experiencing distress caused by Jane's ill fortune concerning her failed wedding. However, she then is saved by St. John. As it has been a long time since Jane has had any luck, this has a profound effect on the euphoria and relief felt.

Similarly Tan and Diteweg (151) talk about fearful apprehension. When readers are put into a negative emotional state they are also presented with a promise that this

apprehension will be solved. The problems in a suspenseful scene should improve or, at least, the suffering should end. This promise of improvement contributes to the suspense of a text. For example, in *Wuthering Heights* after Cathy becomes widowed, her life at Wuthering Heights seems sad and empty. Lockwood describes how hostile she is and how passively she behaves. Later he even observes how Heathcliff tries to hit her. When they become aware of Lockwood's presence "[e]ach had enough decorum to suspend further hostilities: Heathcliff placed his fists, out of temptation, in his pockets; Mrs Heathcliff curled her lip, and walked to a seat far off" (Brontë E. 21). The readers are in distress as they sympathize with Cathy, who is obviously regularly abused. However, when Nelly talks about a beginning friendship between Cathy and Hareton and that she "changed her behaviour and became incapable of letting him alone" (Brontë E. 225), the readers are presented with a promise that the situation of both characters is going to improve. However, as the recipients cannot be sure about this improvement they still experience suspense.

Generally, suspense in a text is not only a psychological phenomenon which affects recipients' emotions. It also requires the active involvement of readers. The main activity involves the audience's imagination. Frequently, there are blanks in the narrative and the readers have to try to fill them with their own imagination (Bonheim 2). For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff is absent for three years. When he returns he is a wealthy man. However, what happened to him or how he came into money is not mentioned in the novel: the readers themselves have to imagine what could have happened. This is one of the most effective methods of suspense creation. Firstly, it makes the readers curious about the withheld facts. However, as they are not provided suspense is experienced. Furthermore, the readers themselves contribute actively to the suspense of a story in making up parts of it in their mind. In order to initiate this process, the existence of hints in the text is essential.

A further important factor for the stimulation of the readers' imagination is that the audience is able to visualize unhappy outcomes and that they seem likely. In this way the readers become involved because they have to create possible story developments and estimate their probabilities (Wulff 7). For instance, in *Evelina* the audience assume from the heroine's letters that Mr Macarthy wants to kill himself. She tells the Reverend Villars:

> I plainly perceived the end of a pistol, which started from his pocket, by hitting against the stairs. I was inexpressibly shocked. All that I had heard of his miser occurring to my memory, made me conclude, that he was, at that very moment,

> meditating suicide! Struck with the dreadful idea, all my strength seemed to fail me; - I […] grew almost stiff with horror. (Burney 183)

Consequently, as they think that one of the characters is in danger of committing suicide and can visualize it happening, suspense is generated. Even after Evelina has supposedly prevented this, the suspense does not grow less: the recipients still fear that it could happen at a later point. They are only relieved when the truth about Mr Macarthy, and why he is carries a gun, is presented.

A further example can be found in *Jane Eyre*. Jane tells the readers about Helen Burn's illness:

> Helen was ill at present: for some weeks she had been removed from my sight to I knew not what room upstairs. She was not, I was told, in the hospital portion of the house with the fever patients; for her complaint was consumption, not typhus: and by consumption I, in my ignorance, understood something mild, which time and care would be sure to alleviate. (Brontë Ch. 67)

The way in which Helen's illness is presented, enables the audience to foresee a bad outcome to it and even her death. Furthermore, the recipients know that this is very likely; especially because Jane refers to her own naivety concerning the severeness of Helen's sickness. Suspense is felt because the readers still hope that Helen will recover in spite of the odds being against her survival.

When imagining these developments, recipients usually draw from their own biographical experience. These are partly individualistic but mostly socially constructed. This frequently follows certain patterns. Hence, it is possible that the majority of readers experience suspense at the same point in a narrative if they share a common culture (Mikos 47).

4.2.1 Identification – Empathy – Sympathy

Fludernick (47) claims that in order to experience suspense, it is not enough to just read about the characters' actions. It is also important that the audience attach themselves empathically to the characters' situation. This is possible if the readers feel for a character and hope for positive story developments. There are various factors which contribute to a recipient's emotional involvement. Some theorists claim that identification is necessary for experiencing emotional attachment. In contrast, others argue that recipients only need to empathise with figures. Others again state that the experience of sympathy is sufficient.

The importance of emotional involvement can be seen when regarding the possible solutions or endings of an episode, such as victory or failure. Usually, a scene is perceived as being most suspenseful if each solution is equally probable. However, this only holds true as long as the readers have a neutral attitude towards a story development. If they get emotionally involved with one side, they invest feelings and the suspense increases as they read. It can even be heightened if the preferred outcome is unlikely to happen (Wenzel 24). To sum up, if scenes or characters appeal to the recipients' emotions the suspense experienced is stronger and more intense (Dolle-Weinkauff 120). For instance, if the readers were not emotionally attached to the heroine in *Jane Eyre*, they would not care whether she marries Mr Rochester or St. John. In contrast, when they empathize with Jane they do not want her to end up with St. John; the audience experiences suspense as long as this possibility still exists.

Suspense is often produced through the clash of contrasting elements. These are also responsible for emotional involvement (Borringo 47). Additionally, contrasts create asymmetry in the story. Hence, readers have the urge to solve the problems. This leads to an interesting paradox. On the one hand, the audience is motivated to read a text in order to experience suspense and other emotions, which are often produced through the introduction of conflicts. On the other hand, they want to solve them in order to be relieved of this suspenseful feeling (Borringo 41).

On form of conflict can be found in *Jane Eyre*. The conversations between the heroine and Mr Rochester are interesting discussions in which they often take different positions. This is a fact which Jane even enjoys. After Bertha set Mr Rochester's room on fire, Jane does not entirely believe him that Grace Poole was the offender.

> I wanted again to introduce the subject of Grace Poole, and to hear what he would answer; I wanted to ask him plainly if he really believed it was she who had made last night's hideous attempt; and if so, why he kept her wickedness a secret. It little mattered whether my curiosity irritated him; i knew the pleasure of vexing and soothing him by turns; it was one I chiefly delighted in, and a sure instinct always prevented me from going too far; beyond the verge of provocation I never ventured; on the extreme brink I liked well to try my skill. (Brontë Ch. 137)

This contemplation shows that the conversations between Jane and Mr Rochester are full of conflicts. This creates suspense as the readers never know how the hero will react. The suspense is further enhanced as they now eagerly await a further encounter.

This however, is delayed again; Mr Rochester undertakes a journey, which introduces a further obstacle possibly leading to conflicts: the presentation of a rival.[10]

Pfister (144) is a theorist who still lists the identification of a recipient with a fictional character as one of the necessary factors in creating suspense. The more the recipients identify with a character the more they become involved in the story. They eagerly follow the plans, deeds, and risks a character undergoes. However, the degree of identification is not only determined by the readers but also by the text itself. A text can offer information which enables the audience to get to know characters and sympathize with them. This can be achieved by presenting them with information about the situation, motivation, and characteristics of the protagonists at an early stage in the story. Thus, the readers are able to understand the characters. Consequently, during certain episodes in the narrative, suspense is experienced more intensely and even increases if the protagonists are at risk of being harmed or getting hurt in any way. For example, in *Evelina* her character is already mentioned in the preface. She is described as being, "Young, artless, and inexperienced [and as] the offspring of Nature, and of Nature in her simplest attire" (Burney 10). This already shows Evelina's good nature and innocence; a characteristic which can be very appealing to the readers. Furthermore, it is possible, partly due to her innocence and inexperience that they already have a positive attitude towards her and wish her well.

Furthermore, suspenseful scenes have the potential to double the emotional effects caused by identification. This is due to the fact that recipients do not only experience their own fear but also have to deal with that of the characters: the experience of fear is therefore twofold (Borringo 55). For instance, in *Evelina,* after a visit to the opera, Sir Clement promises Evelina to drive her home in his carriage. However, when the heroine realises that he is going a different way she panics. Later she even claims that "[n]ever, in [her] whole life, [has she] been so terrified" (Burney 100). Similarly, the recipients start to fear for her; they are confronted with Evelina's terror as well as with their own. A further example can be found in *Pride and Prejudice.* At a ball in Netherfield, Elizabeth's family behaves inappropriately. Hence, "Elizabeth was in agonies." (Austen 87) She is ashamed of her own family and afraid that this will be of consequence for Jane's and Mr Bingley's future. As the readers share this fear, their emotional distress is doubled.

[10] For rivalry and jealousy see chapter 6.2

However, the term identification is problematic. This is analysed by Friedberg (36) who writes that, "Identification is a process which commands the subject to be displaced by an *other*; it is a procedure which refuses and recuperates the separation between self and other […]. Identification demands sameness, necessitates similarity, disallows difference."

This would mean that readers believe to be the same person as the character. However, while reading, the recipients are well aware of the fact that they are not in the place of a fictional character. More likely, they witness scenes and respond to them emotionally. Hence, when reading a story the audience does not identify with characters but feels empathy for them (Zillmann *Psychology* 210).

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English (499) empathy is "the ability to understand another person's feelings, experience, etc.". This definition already suggests that although readers see a character as a separate person and do not have exactly the same feelings, they are able to understand them and can have similar emotions. Hence, the experience of empathy can be regarded as a response to the actions and circumstances involving a character in a book; and is triggered by an understanding of their feelings and the reactions to them. If such characters are threatened, suspense is experienced as an empathic reaction to a figure's situation in the story (Zillmann *Psychology* 215). For instance, when Jane returns to Thornfield, she describes the following situation:

> I saw a blackened ruin. […] And there was the silence of death about it: the solitude of a lonesome wild. […] In wandering round the shattered walls and through the devastated interior, I gathered evidence that the calamity was not of late occurrence. […] And oh! Where meantime was the hapless owner of this wreck? In what land? Under what auspices? […] I had some questions to ask […]. But […] I scarcely knew how to begin, such horror had I of the possible answers. (Brontë Ch. 376)

This passage introduces a mystery which horrifies the heroine.[11] Instead of finally seeing her great love Mr Rochester again, she only finds a ruin. Hence, she fears for the inhabitants and is afraid that something horrible has happened to them. As the readers empathize with Jane, they can understand her feelings. Furthermore, they experience suspense as they also want to receive some answers.

A further point to be noted when regarding suspense as an empathic reaction is that the readers do not only respond emotionally, but also physically. Hence, when reading

[11] See also schemata of mystery in chapter 5.2

scenes that cause a high level of suspense, recipients sometimes show bodily reactions. For example, they shift their position or straighten up. Furthermore, emotional reactions, such as crying or laughing can occur. (Zillmann *Psychology* 216).

Generally, as soon as readers are able to understand characters and their feelings they react empathically. Therefore, they experience suspense if a particular figure is threatened, in danger, or in distress. Hence, these feelings shift to the contrary if faced with a disliked character or an antagonist; then counter-empathy occurs. Thus, suspense is felt if the antagonists are on the winning side and euphoria if they are humiliated or destroyed (Zillmann *Psychology* 217). In the romance novels analysed in this thesis, antagonists in the traditional sense cannot be found. However, these novels are full of unsuitable partners, and the audience does not want the heroine to end up with them. Therefore, euphoria is experienced when their advances are diverted and they are rejected. For instance, in *Pride and Prejudice* Mr Collins is a rather boring and unappealing character. The recipients are really afraid that Elizabeth has to marry him. Hence, when she rejects him they rejoice. This phenomenon is investigated more closely in chapter 6.2.

On the other hand, it is not always necessary for an audience to feel strongly towards protagonists: recipients only have to find story figures likeable for them to experience suspense. However, some form of sympathy is required (Zillmann *Unterhaltene Ungewissheit* 69).

To sum up, empathy and sympathy are important factors for the experience of suspense. However, the occurrence of any of these emotions depends on the characters in the story. Hence, one usually only experiences empathy if the characters show human traits which makes their fate interesting (Tan 82). Junkerjürgen (41) lists various conditions which are important for the experience of empathy or sympathy towards a character. Firstly, one is more likely to empathize with a figure that is similar to oneself. Secondly, stories need protagonists with intact morals and immoral antagonists. Thirdly, a protagonist does not only have to be morally good, but also likeable. The recipients should be informed about their aims, attitudes, and weaknesses in order to feel empathy for them. Lastly, the readers need to know about the thoughts and motives of the characters to enable them to become emotionally attached to the figures.

4.2.2 Rereading

The novels analysed in this thesis are well known among a broad readership and are still read frequently until today. Moreover, these books are read numerous times by the same people. Hence, the same text fascinates recipients over and over again without losing all of its suspenseful effects (Carroll 71). So the question remains as to why people keep reading the same books repeatedly and are still able to feel suspense when doing so.

As elaborated in chapter 4.3.3, uncertainty is often seen as a key component of suspense. Recipients are only able to experience suspense if they do not know the outcome of a situation. This is because they long to know what will happen next. However, it is well known that people read novels again and again. This creates a paradox. How are readers able to experience suspense if they are already acquainted with the story and the element of uncertainty is missing (Carroll 71)? Gerrig (100) calls this anomalous suspense. This means that people experience suspense even though they already know the outcome of a novel.

There are various theories which try to explain this paradox. As some regard uncertainty as a necessary requirement for suspense, it is argued that recipients know all the events in the story and the experience of suspense is impossible. Consequently, rereading should not happen at all. However, as it is clear that people experience suspense during rereading this theory is insufficient (Brewer 119).

A second theory focuses on a shift of motivation. This theory distinguishes between a first and a second reading. It argues that these readings vary according to the type of text, which either belongs to high or popular literature. It is claimed that in both forms suspense occurs during the first reading as uncertainty still exists. However, when reading the novels for a second time, the motivations to read are different and therefore shift. For instance, instead of reading for mere entertainment purposes, the audience now lays the main focus on the characters or just finds the narrative simply interesting. These motivation shifts only occur in high literature. This holds true for the novels analysed in this thesis. Frequently, these books are not primarily read out of the desire to experience suspense. However, as the audience also experiences suspense during a second reading and as novels belonging to popular literature are also reread, this theory is also not completely applicable (Brewer 120-121).

A third theory also deals with a shift of motivation. However, this theory does not distinguish between high and popular literature but between the different motivations of

the readers. One major motivation to read a book is to experience excitement. Lewis (6) defines excitement as "the alternate tension and appeasement of imagined anxiety". Hence, when experiencing anxiety and therefore excitement, recipients also feel suspense. However, there is a second motivation for reading a novel: reading because of the atmosphere a novel conveys. Lewis (16-17) then distinguishes between different types of readers. He argues that people who only read a story once read it for excitement. However, the rereaders of novels have other motives. They do not look for surprise[12], as this can only occur during the first reading, but for surprisingness. Thus, only during a second reading is the audience able to appreciate the quality of the surprises and excitement in the text. Hence, "[w]e do not enjoy a story fully at the first reading. Not till the curiosity, the sheer narrative lust, has been given its sop and laid asleep, are we at leisure to savour the real beauties." (Lewis 17).

All in all, it can be argued, that when rereading a novel, people appreciate the atmosphere of a book. Consequently, depending on the number of readings of a text, one can distinguish different affective reactions (Brewer 120). This theory can definitely be applied to romance novels of the 18th and 19th centuries. They reflect the age they are written in and reciprocate its atmosphere. Furthermore, they provide the readers with likeable characters, whom they want to read about repeatedly. However, this theory does not sufficiently explain why suspense is felt nonetheless.

One fitting theory to explain this is the willing suspension of one's memory. This means that during a second reading the recipients choose to ignore their knowledge acquired during a first reading (Brewer 120). Therefore, at turning points in a story they start to reconstruct all of the possible alternative outcomes. Hence, they imagine the bad endings although they know that the danger is going to vanish.

> The high probability of the disastrous states and their powerfully negative features can awaken the same sort of anxiety people undergo when recalling their narrow escapes in real life. In retrospect, people are safe just as narrated protagonists are known to be safe after earlier narrations; but tension still arises from mental reconstruction of what might (or even ought to) have happened. (de Beaugrande and Colby 50)

Consequently, when ignoring their memory it is possible to enjoy a book as if it was a first reading; therefore, people are able to experience suspense (Brewer 120).

A further theory suggests that there is no change in emotions because recipients identify with the characters in a novel. As the characters' emotions in a story remain the

[12] For a definition of surprise see chapter 2.2.2

same, the readers' emotions do not alter either. Thus, emotions such as suspense, which were experienced during the first reading, are also felt during the second one (Brewer 121). For instance, in romance novels when the introduced barriers seem to separate the protagonists for ever, the recipients, due to prior readings, know that the obstacles will be overcome. However, they imagine the possibilities of this not happening. Hence, they still experience suspense as in the first reading. Similarly, when a reunion finally occurs, excitement is felt during each reading.

The next theories are also concerned with the readers' memory. Memories cannot only be willingly suspended, they can also be inaccurate. Furthermore, it is natural to just forget parts or scenes of a story. Hence, when rereading, the audience is able to repeat their experience of suspense (Brewer 122). Similarly, Lewis (6) claims that when reading a book only once, the recipients remember parts of it, but not all of the details. He states that "reading [a certain] chapter of the book curiosity or suspense about the escape of the heroes from their death-trap makes a very minor part of one's experience. The trap I remember for ever: how they got out I have long since forgotten." Hence, people usually remember dangerous situations or characters being torn apart in some way. However, they tend to forget the details of a situation. Hence, one often remembers the basic elements of the narrative; details such as how a dangerous situation was resolved are forgotten. This has the positive effect that during a repeated reading, readers are able to enjoy the details of a story again (Brewer 122).

A second theory concerning memory claims that the human capacity to retain information is limited. Consequently, some scenes which were skimmed over the first time become suspenseful during the second reading. However, they are still considered to be less suspenseful (Brewer 122).

To sum up, rereading occurs constantly; in particular the novels discussed in this thesis are so popular that they are read over and over again. People are still able to experience suspense during these repeated readings because they either forget scenes and their outcomes or want to forget them. Furthermore, during a second reading they are able to appreciate the details of a story and discover new aspects of it, which can contribute to a new level of suspense. Hence, one reason for rereading romance novels is that one wants to re-experience the emotions enjoyed during the first reading.

4.3 Withholding Information, Anticipation, and Uncertainty

When talking about suspense, one cannot disregard either the amount or the lack of information provided by a text: the choice of how much information is presented in a text can influence its intensity. Furthermore, the development of suspense is also dependent on the readers' anticipations and uncertainties. Their involvement and imagination are significant factors for the creation and intensity of suspense.

4.3.1 Withholding Information

The creation of suspense by withholding information occurs at the textual level, at the story level, and through the readers' involvement. Fludernick (47) argues that suspense is only generated because significant information is withheld. Similarly, Pfister (142) claims that suspense comes into existence because the characters of a story and the audience are only partially informed of the plot. Hence, it is possible that the readers are presented with facts which are not yet known to some or all of the characters in the narrative or the other way round. This divergence of knowledge between the characters and the audience contributes enormously to the suspense of a text and makes it interesting (Graesser and Klettke 4).

For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* Catherine and Nelly have to following conversation:

> 'Nelly, will you keep a secret for me?' she pursued, kneeling down by me, and lifting her winsome eyes to my face with that sort of look which turns off bad temper […].
> 'Is it worth keeping?' I inquired, less sulkily.
> 'Yes, and it worries me, and I must let it out! I want to know what I should do. Today, Edgar Linton has asked me to marry him, and I've given him an answer. Now, before I tell you whether it was a consent or denial, you tell me which it ought to have been.' (Brontë E. 55)

In this passage the readers are immediately informed of facts, which are known to Catherine but not to Nelly and the readers. Hence, it is intended that by withholding information the audience are kept in suspense until they are given information about Catherine's decision.

A further example can be found in *Pride and Prejudice*. While Elizabeth is visiting Charlotte, Maria tells her: 'Oh, my dear Eliza! pray make haste and come into the dining-room, for there is such a sight to be seen! I will not tell you what it is. Make haste, and come down this moment.' (Austen 135). Once again, the recipients share

their lack of knowledge with one of the characters. Thus, together with Elizabeth they are curious about what put Maria in such agitation, which again creates suspense.

As mentioned above, among other techniques, the withholding of information at the textual level generates suspense. Fill (56) claims that it is even the most important textual device in suspense creation. It deals with the question of how information is distributed within a story. Usually, at the beginning of a text some interesting information is left out or only hinted at. This encourages the audience to go on reading: mainly because their interest is piqued and they are curious to know how the story is going to proceed (Fill 28).[13]

There are various possibilities of creating suspense by distributing information. Fill (56) argues that there are five methods which make a text suspenseful. The first one is to hint at the missing information and prepare the reader for a later solution. For instance, in *Jane Eyre*, hints about Mr Rochester's marriage are dropped, although this is not explicitly stated. He explains:

> I have a past existence, a series of deeds, a colour of life to contemplate within my own breast, which might well call my sneers and censures from my neighbours to myself. I started, or rather […] was thrust on to a wrong tack at the age of one-and-twenty and have never recovered the right course since: but I might have been very different (Brontë Ch. 118).

This speech already hints at a troublesome past, which has consequences for the present. However, the story behind this utterance is only presented at a later point. A further hint for Bertha's existence can be detected after Mr Mason got injured and Mr Rochester states: "'We shall get you off cannily, Dick: and it will be better, both for your sake, and for that of the poor creature yonder. I have striven long to avoid exposure, and I should not like it to come at last. […]'" (Brontë Ch. 187). Although the readers believe Grace Poole to be the person injuring Mr Mason, they start to doubt it. They ask themselves what secret Mr Rochester is hiding. In referring to an avoidance of detection, the audience believe that some important information is being kept from them and other characters; and are gripped by suspense. This is also affirmed by the heroine when she states:

> I believed that his moodiness, his harshness, and his former faults of morality […] had their source in some cruel cross of fate. I believed he was naturally a man of better tendencies, higher principles, and purer tastes than such as circumstances had developed, education instilled, or destiny encouraged. I thought there were excellent materials in him; though for the present they hung

[13] See also chapter 2.3

> together somewhat spoiled and tangled. I cannot deny that I grieved for his grief, whatever that was, and would have given much to assuage it. (Brontë Ch. 128-129)

Thus, it becomes clear that there is something which is direly bothering Mr Rochester; and this is the cause of his puzzling and extreme behaviour. As neither the heroine nor the readers know what it is, the suspense is increased.

Furthermore, it is possible that hints only point to future developments. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice* various references concerning Mr Darcy's attraction towards Elizabeth can be detected. At an early point in the story it is mentioned that "[h]e began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention" (Austen 52) and that "[s]he attracted him more than he liked" (Austen 53). However, his actual declaration of love for Elizabeth occurs more than a hundred pages later. Still, this mention in advance of his attraction can be regarded as a hint at his later proposal.

The second way is to hold the information back as long as possible and only give it at a very late point (Fill 56). For instance, in *Evelina* the heroine is mortified because of a letter supposedly written by Lord Orville:

> But this dream was soon over, and I awoke to far different feelings; upon a second reading, I thought every word changed, - it did not seem the same letter, - I could not find one sentence that I could look at without blushing; my astonishment was extreme, and it was succeeded by the utmost indignation. […] If he thought my letter ill-judged, should he not have pitied my ignorance? have considered my youth, and allowed for my inexperience? (Burney 258)

Hence, the readers share Evelina's confusion about the reasons for his behaviour being so out of place. They want answers to all of the questions asked. However, it is revealed at a later point that Lord Orville was "far from having ever written [Evelina] a single line" (Burney 355) and that it was actually Sir Clement who sent it. Hence, the solution revealing the true circumstances of the letter is held back for a long time. A further example is the introduction of a mysterious gentleman Evelina encounters at the Pantheon. She describes:

> At the same table with Lord Orville, sat a gentleman, - I call him so only because he *was* at the same table, - who, almost from the moment I was seated, fixed his eyes steadfastly on my face, and never once removed them to any other object during tea-time, notwithstanding my dislike of his staring must, I am sure, have been very evident. (Burney 107)

This description immediately causes a dislike towards this gentleman. However, who he really is or how he came to be in Lord Orville's company is not mentioned. Evelina

only calls him Lord ---. Therefore, the recipients experience suspense because they are neither given details of the story nor discover the intentions of this Lord. The solution to his identity is only given far on in the novel when Evelina meets him in Bristol. It is Lord Merton.

Similarly, in *Pride and Prejudice* the information about what happened to Mr Wickham and Lydia after their elopement is held back. The readers, together with Elizabeth, worry about them and the damage their behaviour causes. Only when a letter arrives from Mr Gardiners announcing Mr Wickham's and Lydia's marriage is the suspense relieved. However, as it turns out later this letter does not tell the entire truth. It is Mr Darcy who managed to find them and persuade them to marry. This also shows a third possibility of distributing information. It is a different development to what the readers might expect from earlier hints (Fill 56). In this example, the letter from Mr Gardiners does not mention Mr Darcy's involvement and therefore this comes as a surprise when Lydia talks about it. Thus, one can draw similarities between withholding information and surprise.[14]

Fourthly, the audience has to deduce the information themselves (Fill 56). For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* after Heathcliff's return, Nelly says the following:

> I asked, as [Heathcliff] departed, if he went to Gimmerton?
> 'No, to Wuthering Heights,' he answered: 'Mr Earnshaw invited me, when I called this morning.'
> Mr Earnshaw invited *him*! and *he* called on Mr Earnshaw! I pondered this sentence painfully after he was gone. Is he turning out a bit of a hypocrite and coming into the country to work mischief under a cloak I mused: I had a presentiment, in the bottom of my heart, that he had better have remained away. (Brontë E. 70)

Nelly's contemplations draw the readers' attention to the fact that the story does not provide the complete information about Heathcliff's intentions. They do not know why he is suddenly staying with a man, who he detests. Hence, they have to find out what could be the reasons for this, which again creates suspense.

Finally, information provided previously, can appear in another light at a later point in the story (Fill 56). For instance, in *Jane Eyre* there are many mysterious occurrences such as the scary laughter of Grace Poole or Mr Mason's severe injury. However, only when the readers learn who is really behind all this, does it all make sense. This also gives an interesting twist when rereading. The audience is now able to pay closer attention to the hints and see the scenes in a new light.

[14] For a definition of surprise see chapter 2.2.2

Additionally, the suspenseful effects of withholding information can be increased by the use of various literary devices. The first one is the perspective of the narrator. For instance, a first person narration is limited per definition. This also holds true for an authorial one with only one focalizer.[15] In the same way as the narrators, the readers also have a limited view. It is even possible that they have to discover certain information, which characters in the story might already know. A second device is the use of a long discourse time. In this way the presentation of missing information can be delayed (Fill 56).[16]

All in all, a narrative alternates between presenting information and hinting at what could be missing. Therefore, it is possible that when the readers are finally presented with the solution to an open question, they are, at the same time, also given new information pointing to new problems. The resolution of the new ones must wait once again. This has the effect that when reading a novel the recipients constantly try to attain a better overview and insight into the story. When being presented with a solution they are satisfied for the moment and therefore rewarded. However, when new questions arise they become frustrated (Tan 33). To sum up, the audience is constantly torn between hope and fear, content and frustration.

4.3.2 Anticipation

Anticipation is essential for the experience of suspense. Wulff (1) defines anticipation as a process of, "Calculating, expecting, and evaluating a coming event". Anticipation comprises four stages. Firstly, given information has to be perceived as a point in a story from which future events start to develop. This can also involve hints. Secondly, the scenes following have to be based on the information provided. Thirdly, the future developments have to be the outcome of the possible alternatives of a story. These alternatives have various degrees of probability: their likelihood is calculated through the readers' anticipation. Lastly, the anticipated possibilities are evaluated, which then creates suspense. Hence, suspense requires anticipation.

For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* after Heathcliff's return, his and Edgar Linton's dislike for each other is apparent. Finally, Mr Linton explodes and tells Heathcliff:

> 'I have been so far forbearing with you, sir, […] Catherine wishing to keep up your acquaintance, I acquiesced – foolishly. Your presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous: for that cause and to prevent worse

[15] See also chapter 4.1.2
[16] See also chapter 4.1.1.2

> consequences, I shall deny you hereafter admission into this house, and give notice now that I require your instant departure.' (Brontë E. 83)

When Mr Linton stands up to Heathcliff, the readers are able to visualize further conflicts: because they are acquainted with Heathcliff's character, they are able to anticipate that these could be of a violent nature. This creates suspense, which is even further increased when Catherine exclaims: "Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend – if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own."(Brontë E. 85). This utterance confirms their worst thoughts. However, as they do not know how the characters are going to behave they are kept in suspense.

A further example occurs when Heathcliff encounters Cathy and Nelly during a walk. He takes this opportunity to announce that he wants Cathy and Linton to meet so "[t]hat the two cousins may fall in love, and get married." (Brontë E. 156) Although the recipients are thus informed about Heathcliff's plans, they do not yet know if he is going to succeed or what is going to happen. However, this is definitely a point where they are able to imagine the various directions the story could take. Depending on the story development and the desired and anticipated outcomes of the audience, the suspense varies in its extent.

In *Evelina*, the heroine writes the following after being at the theatre: "But, really, I think there ought to be a book, of the laws and customs *à-la-mode*, presented to all young people, upon their first introduction into public company." (Burney 84) Furthermore, the Reverend Villars reminds her: "Remember, my dear Evelina, nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman: it is, at once, the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things." (Burney 166) When the importance of a woman's reputation is stressed in such a way, it can be assumed that it is at risk in the future. Hence, occurrences putting Evelina's reputation at risk are anticipated.

Anticipation is also a significant requirement in creating suspense in connection with the duration of a story. Within a narrative it is possible that the readers are put into an emotional state in which they fear for a character over a longer period of time. The duration the process of anticipation is essential for the experience of distress and suspense. The longer the duration of the anticipation time the greater is the distress and therefore the experienced suspense (Paterson and Neufeld in Junkerjürgen 51). Hence, anticipation, especially over a longer period of time, is also an important factor indetermening the degree of suspense.

For instance, in *Jane Eyre* the heroine is sent to the breakfast-room. However, she does not know who or what awaits her:

> I would have asked who wanted me: I would have demanded if Mrs Reed was there; but Bessie was already gone […] I slowly descended. […] I now stood in the empty hall; before me was the breakfast-room door, and I stopped, intimidated and trembling. What a miserable little poltroon had fear, engendered of unjust punishment, made of me in those days! I feared to return to the nursery, and feared to go forward to the parlour; then minutes I stood in agitated hesitation; (Brontë Ch. 24)

This passage clearly depicts Jane's agitation and fear, which the readers are able to understand and possibly share.[17] This is even increased because Jane describes her emotions in detail and mentioned the duration of her agitation. Because the audience does not know what awaits her, they start to think about the various possibilities. Furthermore, they are able to anticipate something negative awaiting the heroine. This continues during Jane's conversation with Mrs Reed and Mr Brocklehurst. They evaluate the likelihood of each anticipated alternative; therefore, the suspense is maintained until they know what will happen to the heroine.

4.3.3 Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a last important factor used to generate suspense especially in connection with the amount of information provided. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English* uncertainty is defined as "something that you cannot be sure about". Hence, uncertainty combines the requirements of missing information and anticipation. Therefore, if a piece of information is missing and the readers are only provided with hints, they cannot be sure about future developments and begin to anticipate certain outcomes.

Zillmann (*Unterhaltene Ungewissheit* 68-69) argues that uncertainty is necessary for suspense creation. He claims that suspense and the solving of mysterious circumstances are very old forms of entertainment. However, both need uncertainty in order to be effective. Furthermore, in order to achieve a positive reaction from the audience, the outcome of a confrontation has to be uncertain.

Cupchik (189) claims that uncertainty is concerned with predictions and therefore future events. These can either refer to the characters' experiences or to the outcomes of their actions. Predictions are usually related to the experience of suspense. The reason

[17] See also chapter 4.2.1

for this is that when uncertainty occurs, readers make predictions about the future (Cupchik 196).

For instance, in *Jane Eyre* the heroine advertises in order to get an employment as a governess. Then she eagerly waits for an answer. As it is uncertain whether she will receive one at all, suspense is experienced. Jane states:

> The succeeding week seemed long: it came to an end at last […] I thought more of the letters, that might or might not be awaiting me at the little burgh whiter I was bound, than of the charms of lea and water. […] [At the post office an old dame] opened a drawer and fumbled among its contents for a long time, so long that my hopes began to falter. At last, having held a document before her glasses for nearly five minutes, she presented it across the counter […]. (Brontë Ch. 75)

This passage clearly shows that the uncertainty of Jane receiving a reply overwhelms everything else. However, when she finally receives a letter, the readers are not told who answered and if the answer pleases Jane. Although they probably start making predictions, they cannot be sure about them. This not only prolongs the uncertainty, it grows stronger, and with it the resulting suspense.

Another example can be found in *Wuthering Heights*. After overhearing a conversation between Catherine and Nelly, Heathcliff runs away. However, the readers can only anticipate his flight as it is uncertain for a long time. The first hint of his absence is given when Catherine exclaims "'I wonder where he is - I wonder where he *can* be." (Brontë E. 60) When midnight comes and the search for him has been unsuccessful, Nelly says that "there's no use waiting longer on that foolish boy" (Brontë E.61). The next day dawns and Nelly observes: "Coming down somewhat later than usual, I saw, by the sunbeams piercing the chinks of the shutters, Miss Catherine still seated near the fireplace." (Brontë E. 62) This shows that Catherine waited all night for his return. This seems to be a sign that Heathcliff actually ran away. However, as it is still uncertain the readers experience suspense until they know the truth. Finally Nelly states that "Heathcliff had never been heard of since the evening of the thunder storm." (Brontë E. 63). The recipients now know for sure that Heathcliff has just disappeared. However, this also introduces a new element of uncertainty: Where has the hero gone to? This again contributes to the suspense.

Chatman (59) argues that uncertainty is not a necessary requirement for the existence of suspense. He claims that frequently readers know how a story is going to end. Thus, the suspense is taken out of a story. However, Chatman still admits that usually the

means of how an ending of a story comes about are uncertain. Therefore, there is at least a partial uncertainty in a text.

In romance novels readers frequently expect a happy ending, but they cannot be sure about it. However, the degree of uncertainty is probably not very high. Finally, as recipients generally empathize with the characters in a story, they still experience suspense and anxiety because there is always the possibility that it could end unhappily.

5. Narrative Schemata of Suspense

In literature various narrative schemata exist. Some are traditional with a starting point, the occurrence of obstacles, and a solution. Others are more specific where each schema typical of a certain type of narrative is followed more accurately. In connection with suspense creation Wenzel (26-28) distinguishes between three different types of schemata: surprise, mystery and suspense proper. The schema of surprise has already been analysed in chapter 2.2.2.

In contrast to the schema of surprise, the schemata of mystery and suspense proper are significant for suspense creation. Furthermore, they frequently occur in the novels analysed in this thesis as they are full of mysteries and dangers, physical as well as psychological. Therefore, is it important to analyse the structure of such schemata and how they contribute to suspense. Both focus on different themes. The first one centres around curiosity, while the latter focuses on suspense itself. There are various differences between those two schemata, especially in connection with the temporal order of the story and its narratological presentation (Wenzel 28). Generally, the mystery schema is orientated towards the past. Readers wonder about occurrences which happened in the past. On the other hand, the schema of suspense proper focuses on the future as the readers do not yet know what is going to occur and wonder about it. A further difference is the number of possible solutions. In the schema of mystery one has as many possible solutions as one has suspects, whereas in the traditional suspense schema the reader is only presented with two solutions (Carroll 75).

However, there are also similarities between both schemata. They can be divided into five phases. Firstly, they have an initiating suspense creating event which then is intensified in a second phase. The third phase plays with the emotion of the readers. In a fourth phase obstacles arise which prolongs the suspense. In the end the suspense is resolved and the solution presented (Wenzel 28).

When regarding the following schemata of suspense it has to be kept in mind that narratives do not follow them strictly. The reason is that they are rather flexible and phases can be changed, intertwined, or even left out. A second reason is that within a narrative, arcs of suspense are not restricted to only one sequence. Frequently, there are numerous suspenseful threads of a story within a novel, which run parallel to each other or can be combined. Hence, suspense schemata can be used in various ways (Wenzel 32). Koch (41) fittingly claims that “actual suspense has indeed many ways and guises that make an impression by very moderate application of optimum means.”

5.1 Suspense

Traditionally, a suspense structure starts with an initiating event, which can result in good or bad outcomes for one of the characters. Furthermore, the readers start to hypothesize about possible story developments following the initiating event. Before the outcome is revealed at the end, various obstacles and intervening acts occur (Brewer 113). Hence, the readers anticipate a positive or negative outcome but do not know at what point in the story it will occur. Thus, until the solution is presented every episode possibly revealing it is suspenseful. Readers are constantly eager to learn about the outcome. This suspenseful feeling can be prolonged by inserting scenes which introduce further barriers before presenting the end.

5.2 Mystery

The main characteristics of the mystery schema are the presentation of a mystery or riddle and the attempt to solve it. Hence, it is most typical for a detective novel (Wenzel 29). However, traces of the schema can also be found in the romances analysed in this thesis. In order to analyse how suspense is created by the introduction of mysteries, Wenzel developed a schema on the basis of the existing schemata of Dietrich Weber and Roland Barthes. His schema consists of five phases (Wenzel 29).

Phase one is concerned with recognition and uncertainty. In this phase, a riddle is introduced and realised by the reader. This can occur in various ways. Either the mystery arises suddenly or is presented in several steps (Wenzel 29). The introduction of the mystery is closely linked to curiosity.[18] The recipients need to be curious about the solution of the riddle. This is a great motivation to continue reading. Furthermore, it keeps the readers in constant suspense until the solution is presented. In *Evelina* a mystery is immediately introduced at the beginning of the novel namely Sir Belmont's behaviour. Reverend Viallars present the audience with the story of Evelina's mother Evelyn:

> Madame Duval […] treated [Evelyn] with the grossest unkindness, and threatened her with poverty and ruin. Miss Evelyn, to whom wrath and violence had hitherto been stranger, soon grew weary of this usage; and rashly, and without a witness, consented to a private marriage with Sir John Belmont, a very profligate man, who had but too successfully found means to insinuate himself into her favour. He promised to conduct her to England – he did. […] Disappointed of the fortune he expected, by the inexorable rancour of the

[18] See also chapter 2.2.5

> Duvals, he infamously burnt the certificate of their marriage, and denied that they had ever been united! (Burney 16-17)

This passage presents the reader with information about past occurrences. It is perceived as suspenseful because the past deeds are of consequence for the present situation.[19] Furthermore, the story raises a lot of questions. Why did Sir Belmont actually refuse to acknowledge the marriage? Was it due to greed? Why did he abandon his wife and refuse to accept Evelina as his child?

In *Pride and Prejudice* one of the greatest mysteries involves Lydia's and Mr Wickham's elopement. When Elizabeth receives some information concerning this, she tells Mr Darcy:

> 'I am only distressed by some dreadful news which I have just received from Longbourn.' She burst into tears as she alluded to it, and for a few minutes could not speak another word. Darcy, in wretched suspense, could only say something indistinctly of his concern, and observe her in compassionate silence. At length, she spoke again. 'I have had a letter from Jane, with such dreadful news. It cannot be concealed from anyone. My youngest sister has left all her friends – has eloped; - has thrown herself into the power of – of Mr Wickham. They are gone off together from Brighton. *You* know him too well to doubt the rest. She has no money, no connections, nothing that can tempt him to – she is lost for ever.' (Austen 229-231)

This paragraph creates suspense at various levels. Elizabeth announces that something dreadful has happened. However, she does not immediately say what it is. Hence, the presentation of the answer to this question is delayed.[20] The text then goes on to describe Mr Darcy's suspense. As he and the audience do not know the reasons for Elizabeth's distress, they share this feeling.[21] The duration of the hero's suspense is stressed as the heroine is unable to recount the details and only starts to speak at again "at length". Although a period of time is thus accounted for, the readers know that Mr Darcy spent a long time in suspenseful expectancy, which again increases the recipient's suspense and curiosity.[22] Finally Elizabeth answers the question of what has happened. In using elliptic sentences the heroine's distress is intensified. Therefore, the readers learn of Lydia's elopement and its catastrophic potential.[23] Hence, Elizabeth seems to be in a desperate situation, which causes emotional distress and therefore

[19] For the suspenseful effect of analepsis see chapter 4.1.1.1
[20] For duration of suspense see chapter 4.1.1.2
[21] For missing information see chapter 4.3.1; for sharing the feelings of characters see chapter 4.2.1
[22] See also summary in chapter 4.1.1.2
[23] See also suspense and language in chapter 4.1.3

suspense.[24] Numerous questions are raised. The readers ask themselves, for instance; about the plans and reasons behind the elopement; where the elopers are at the moment and what is happening to them. In addition they are worried about what will happen to Elizabeth and her family.

In *Jane Eyre* the main riddle concerns the strange occurrences at Thornfield. Soon after her arrival Jane notices the following:

> While I paced softly on, the last sound I expected to hear in so still a region, a laugh, struck my ear. It was a curious laugh; distinct, formal, mirthless. I stopped: the sound ceased, only for an instant; it began again, louder: for at first, though distinct, it was very low. It passed off in a clamorous peal that seemed to wake an echo in every lonely chamber; though it originated but in one, and I could have pointed out the door whence the accents issued. (Brontë Ch. 92-93)

This passage introduces the mysterious incidents. From this moment on Jane observes Grace Poole's strange behaviour when she starts working there. After Mr Rochester's arrival, the occurrences become even stranger and also dangerous.[25]

Lastly, in *Wuthering Heights* a mystery is introduced during Mr Lockwood's visit at the Heights. It concerns Catherine's former room. Zillah tells Mr Lockwood that Heathcliff "never let[s] anybody lodge there willingly" (Brontë E. 12). The recipients' curiosity about the mysterious room grows when Zillah states that "they had so many queer goings on, she could not begin to be curious." (Brontë E. 12) This utterance suggests that those mysterious occurrences are normal at Wuthering Heights. Therefore, the readers' curiosity is triggered.[26] They wonder about their nature and whether anything else is happening at this place.

Phase two is the reflexion phase. Hence, the observers of the mystery in the story express some form of reaction to the riddle. This can be expressed through horror, surprise, or bewilderment, especially if the mystery comes as a surprise. In this way suspense is created because the readers reflect on such scenes. (Wenzel 29). In *Evelina* the readers are left in the dark about the mystery of Evelina's heritage for a long time. Hence, they always experience an underlining feeling of suspense, which is upheld because the recipients do not get any information.[27] Finally, over a hundred pages later Lady Howard writes a letter so Sir Belmont and asks him to acknowledge Evelina as his

[24] See chapter 4.2.
[25] See also danger in chapter 6.7
[26] See also curiosity in chapter 2.2.5
[27] See also chapter 4.2

rightful daughter. However, when an answer finally arrives he simply says about Evelina:

> [I]f she has a third part of the merit of *her* to whom you compare her, I doubt not but Mr Villars will be more successful in every other application he may make for her advantages, than he can ever be in any with which he may be pleased to favour me. (Burney 160)

Therefore, Sir Belmont's reaction is surprising as the readers had hoped that Lady Belmont's letter would lead to a reunion between father and daughter and present a solution as to why he left her in the first place. Hence, the questions raised by the mystery are still unanswered.

Another mystery that comes as a surprise is the elopement in *Pride and Prejudice*. This is also due to the fact that the information came suddenly and could not be foreseen by the characters and the readers.

The descriptions in *Jane Eyre* are often accompanied by a feeling of horror. It is easy for the recipients to share Jane's feelings, especially if she is bewildered: "When thus alone, I not infrequently heard Grace Poole's laugh: the same peal, the same low, slow ha! ha! which, when first heard, had thrilled me: I heard, too, her eccentric murmurs; stranger than her laugh." (Brontë Ch. 95) This graphic description of Grace Poole's behaviour contributes to the suspense of the riddle.[28]

In *Wuthering Heights* the reflection is also accompanied by a sense of horror. Mr Lockwood vividly describes his dreams, which are full of violence.[29] For instance, when he dreams that Catherine wants to enter his room through the window he describes:

> Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, 'Let me in!' and maintained its tenacious grip, almost maddening me with fear. (Brontë E. 17)

Once again the choice of words such as terror and cruel contribute to the suspense of the passage.[30] The audience expects violence and, at the same time, are horrified by it. Although this scene does not contribute to the solution of the riddle, it intensifies the recipient's confusion about the occurrences in Wuthering Heights.

The third Phase is the analytical phase. During this phase recipients start to form theories and surmise about possible solutions to the mystery. This phase is often accompanied by red herrings and misdirection. The main purpose is to mislead the

[28] See also suspense on a lexical-semantic level in chapter 4.1.3
[29] See also violence in *Wuthering Heights* in chapter 6.7
[30] For suspense on a lexical-semantic level see chapter 4.1.3

readers (Wenzel 29). If they are led up the wrong path, every new piece of information provided makes them form new theories. This again increases the suspense as they are eager to know the outcome. In *Evelina* the recipients believe the heroine to be the true heir of Sir Belmont. However, when reading that there is another Miss Belmont, they start to doubt their assumption. The discovery of her existence comes as quite a shock for Evelina and the audience:

> Lord Orville began the minuets; he danced with a young Lady who seemed to engage the general attention, as she had not been seen here before. She is pretty, and looks mild and good-humoured.
> 'Pray, Mr Lovel,' said Lady Louisa, 'who is that?'
> 'Miss Belmont,' answered he, 'the young heiress; she came to the Wells yesterday.'
> Struck with the name, I involuntarily repeated it, but nobody heard me.
> 'What is her family?' said Mrs. Beaumont.
> 'Have you not heard of her, Ma'am?' cried he, 'she is only daughter and heiress of Sir John Belmont.'
> Good Heaven, how did I start! the name struck my ear like a thunder-bolt. Mrs. Selwyn, who immediately looked at me, said, 'Be calm, my dear, and we will learn the truth of all this.' (Burney 315-316)

The information about the existence of a second Mrs Belmont comes as quite a surprise.[31] The mystery gets more complicated and new theories about Evelina's heritage are formed. The audience now believes it possible that Evelina is actually not Sir Belmont's daughter. Hence, they are misled. Still, the recipients understand Evelina's panic, which is caused by this information.[32] Hence, they hope that there must be some misunderstanding and are kept in suspense.

In *Pride and Prejudice* most of the reflection takes place during a conversation between the Gardiners and Elizabeth. Elizabeth muses about the possible reasons Mr Wickham might have to run away with Lydia:

> But why all this secrecy? Why any fear of detection? Why must their marriage be private? Oh! No, no, this is not likely. His most particular friend […] was persuaded of his never intending to marry her. Wickham will never marry a woman without some money. He cannot afford it. And what claims has Lydia, what attractions has she beyond youth, health, and good humour, that could make him for her sake, forego every chance of benefiting himself by marrying well? As to what restraint the apprehension of disgrace in the corps might throw on a dishonourable elopement with her, I am not able to judge; (Austen 234-235)

[31] For surprise see chapter 2.2.2
[32] For empathy see chapter 4.2.1

This passage raises numerous questions as to Wickham's intentions. The readers neither know what the eloper's plans are nor what consequence their actions have for other people.[33] However, Elizabeth presents the readers with topics and mysteries they can consider. They experience suspense until they are able to answer these questions.

Jane Eyre is full of misdirection as one believes Grace Poole to be the source of all the mysterious occurrences at Thornfield. Hence, readers mostly think about the possible reasons for Mr Rochester keeping her in his service. However, there are also passages signifying that there is a greater mystery involved. For instance, Jane observes a conversation between Leah and a charwoman:

> 'Doesn't she know?' I heard the woman whisper.
> Leah shook her head, and the conversation was of course dropped. All I had gathered from it amounted to this, - that there was a mystery at Thornfield; and that from participation in that mystery I was purposely excluded. (Brontë E. 144)

Jane herself now claims that there is a mystery at Thornfield. She and the readers know that some circumstances are kept from both.[34] Therefore, the recipients start to contemplate the secret. However, because Jane is convinced that Grace Poole is behind the mysterious circumstances, the audience share this opinion. Furthermore, during conversations with Mr Rochester Jane tries "to introduce the subject of Grace Poole, and […] hear what he would answer" (Brontë Ch. 137) This causes the readers to believe that Grace must be the source of everything; although, they realise that they lack information concerning the reasons for her strange behaviour. Hence, they are misled.

In *Wuthering Heights* the readers begin to form theories when they learn something about Catherine's and Heathcliff's story. They start doing so when reading some of Catherine's diary entries. Furthermore, they try to interpret Mr Lockwood's dream. Thus, in this novel the phases two and three are parallel. The recipients try to analyse the mysteries concerning Catherine's past and are presented with horrific scenes at the same time.

The fourth phase is the blocking phase. In this phase numerous obstacles are presented, which often contradict possible solutions formed by the recipients. Still, promises of a quick solution are presented. However, as the audience has to wait until it is finally revealed, the suspense is prolonged; the promise of an answer and the blocking of the solution can alternate as often as desired. This contributes enormously to the

[33] For suspense through withholding information see 4.3.1
[34] For partially informed characters and readers see Pfister chapter 4.2

build-up of suspense (Wenzel 30). In *Evelina* the blockage is Sir Belmont's refusal to see the heroine. Mrs Selwyn tries to persuade Sir Belmont to accept Evelina as his rightful daughter. However he answers the following: '[Evelyn's] daughter has been my care from her infancy; I have taken her into my house; she bears my name, and she will be my sole heiress.' (Burney 366) This speech is able to destroy all hopes of there being a misunderstanding regarding Evelina and the second Miss Belmont; Sir Belmont has raised his presumable daughter since her infancy. However, confusion concerning the truth remains. Why would Revernd Villars claim that Evelina is Sir Belmont's daughter if it was not true? As Sir Belmont refuses to see Evelina the presentation of the solution is blocked which creates a lot of suspense.

In *Pride and Prejudice* the obstacle is the long wait for a message from Mr. Gardiner or Mr Bennet giving information about the elopers' whereabouts. The audience is hoping for the issue to be clarified soon, when a letter arrives. However, it turns out to be from Mr Collins. Furthermore, the arrival of Mr Bennet makes the readers hope to receive an explanation. However, they are again disappointed.

There is no real blocking phase in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights.* In the first novel the recipients do not really expect that an answer will be presented soon. Hence, this comes as a surprise. In the second they have to wait for Nelly's story to finish before all of the mysterious situations make sense.

Finally, in the fifth phase the solution is presented. The revelation of this can occur at once or in several steps. For instance, an answer can be interrupted right at the beginning of its presentation. Furthermore, there is the possibility of giving only a part of the solution at first and presenting the whole answer to the riddle at a later point (Wenzel 30). In *Evelina* the solution is presented by Mrs Clinton as "an idea occurred to her, which seems to clear up all mystery of [Evelina] having been so long disowned. […Her] father had been imposed upon, and […] the nurse who said she had brought his child to him, had, in fact, carried her own." (Burney 373) The solution to the mystery which occupied the whole story is presented at last. Until this point, the recipients constantly experienced an underlining feeling of suspense.[35] Although it seemed impossible, the text provides a solution which satisfies the readers and consequently, relieves them of their suspense.[36]

In *Pride and Prejudice* the information supplying a convincing solution comes in form of a letter from Mr Gardiner. However, the truth that it is Mr Darcy who is

[35] For duration of suspense see chapter 4.1.1.2
[36] For suspense relief see chapter 4.2

responsible for the happy outcome is only revealed at a later point and comes as a surprise. Lydia tells Elizabeth and Jane about her wedding and mentions per accident that Mr Darcy was also present. Although both sisters promise Lydia never to talk about it, Elizabeth is unable to let it rest:

> But to live in ignorance on such a point was impossible; or at least it was impossible not to try for information. Mr Darcy had been at her sister's wedding. It was exactly a scene, and exactly among people, where he had apparently least to do, and least temptation to go. Conjectures as to the meaning of it, rapid and wild, hurried into her brain; but she was satisfied with none. Those that best pleased her, as placing his conduct in the noblest light, seemed most improbable. She could not bear such suspense; and hastily seizing a sheet of paper, wrote a short letter to her aunt, to request an explanation of what Lydia had dropped, if it were compatible with the secrecy which had been intended. (Austen 266)

Therefore, with the presentation of a solution to one mystery, a new one is introduced. Why was Mr Darcy at Lydia's wedding? This information comes as quite a surprise. Hence, the readers begin to think about possible reasons and form theories. This again creates suspense, which is even increased because the heroine has the same feelings.[37] When Mrs Gardiner's letter arrives, it provides an explanation.

> The motive professed, was his conviction of its being owing to himself that Wickham's worthlessness had not been so well known, as to make it impossible for any young woman of character, to love or confide in him. He generously imputed the whole to his mistaken pride, and confessed that he had before thought beneath him, to lay open his private actions open to the world. […] If he *had another* motive, I am sure it would never disgrace him. (Austen 267)

Hence, this passage seems to be a perfect solution to the mystery. However, it also mentions the possibility of Mr Darcy having a different motive for his actions. Therefore, this letter serves as a retarding element as it misleads the readers. The possibility of the existence of a different solution becomes more probable as Elizabeth's "heart did whisper, that he had done it for her." (Austen 270) Therefore, the recipients hope that Mr Darcy actually acted because he still cares for Elizabeth.[38] The question of Mr Darcy's motives and attitude towards Elizabeth accompanies the audience throughout the next chapter and during every meeting between Elizabeth and Mr Darcy. Thus suspense is experienced until the recipients can be certain and the solution is presented.[39]

[37] See also identification chapter 4.2.1
[38] For hope and fear as elements of suspense see chapter 2.44
[39] For duration of suspense see chapter 4.1.1.2

As mentioned above, the solution in *Jane Eyre* comes as a surprise. In *Wuthering Heights* the solution is presented step by step. Only when the readers learn about the relationship between the protagonists and their deep but destructive love, are they able to understand Heathcliff's strange behaviour concerning Catherine's room and the mysteries occurring there.

All in all, although romance novels are full of mysteries their patterns are not always strictly followed. For instance, the presentation of the solution often comes as a surprise. However, the fact that the outcome itself is surprising is not unusual.

5.3 Suspense Proper

The narrative schema of suspense proper, which Wenzel calls "Konflikt- und Bedrohungsspannung", focuses on the conflicts, danger and future developments of a text. Furthermore, it depends on the readers' involvement and plays with their emotions (Wenzel 30)[40]. The schema of suspense proper illustrates how the alternation of hope and fear is most effective in a novel or episodes of it. He also divides this schema into five different phases.

In the first phase an initiating event occurs, which presents a dangerous situation or a conflict. This is the starting point for the further development of a story. However, previous to this occurrence, one is often able to discover hints in the form of prolepsis or foreshadowing early on in the text (Wenzel 31). In *Evelina*, the starting point where the heroine is endangered is a walk with the Misses Branghton in Vauxhall. However, she is very reluctant to go with her cousins. This becomes clear when the heroine feels obliged to "most unfortunately, request Madame Duval's permission to attend them." (Burney 196) In addition, Evelina tries to oppose their plan to walk along the dark walks. Hence, the heroine's reservations already foreshadow an upcoming danger.[41] Evelina's fear is realised soon after:

> [A] large party of gentlemen […] seemed to rush suddenly from behind some trees, and meeting us face to face, put their arms at their sides, and formed a kind of circle, that first stopped our proceeding, and then our retreating, for we were presently entirely inclosed. […] I was frightened exceedingly: […] till, at last, one of them, rudely, seizing hold of me, said I was a pretty little creature. (Burney 197)

This is especially suspenseful as, at first, the readers do not know if Evelina and the Branghton sisters are in actual danger. However, it gradually dawns on them that this is

[40] See also chapter 2.4
[41] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1

the case. After encircling them, the men prevent them from running away, and one even grasps Evelina. It now is apparent that the heroine is in severe danger of being hurt. Hence, the audience fears for her, which puts them in suspense.[42]

In *Pride and Prejudice*, there are numerous dangers threatening the heroine, although they are entirely psychological. The novel is full of conflicts, especially between the two main characters. Their first conflict arises at a ball when Mr Darcy insults Elizabeth.[43]

In *Jane Eyre,* as analysed in chapter 6, there are many cases of the heroine being endangered. One example is her being in danger after running away from Thornfield. She has no money, food, or place to go. After travelling for days, all strength seems to leave her. Jane announces:

> I sank down where I stood, and hid my face against the ground. I lay still a while: the night-wind swept over the hill and over me, and died moaning in the distance; the rain fell fast, wetting me afresh to the skin. Could I but have stiffened to the still frost – the friendly numbness of death – it might have pelted on; I should not have felt it, but my yet living flesh shuddered at its chilling influence. I rose ere long. (Brontë Ch. 293)

This passage signifies that death is not far away. The detailed description of the surroundings and the bad weather reflect Jane's desperate situation and therefore contribute to the suspense. It seems to foreshadow the heroine's death.[44]

In *Wuthering Heights*, Cathy is confronted with danger after being led into a trap and locked in at Wuthering Heights. The starting point is a meeting between Cathy and Linton. He tries to persuade her to come with him to his home. Once again an upcoming danger and deceit is foreshadowed because Linton exclaims: "Catherine, Catherine, I'm a traitor too, and I dare not tell you! But leave me and I shall be killed!" (Brontë Ch. 193).[45] Hence, Linton puts Cathy under emotional pressure in order to save his own skin. His statement also causes the readers to anticipate some danger; [46] however, as they do not know why Linton is a traitor and why he is afraid, they experience suspense.[47]

[42] For hope and fear as elements of suspense see chapter 2.4
[43] See also initial meetings in chapter 6.1
[44] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[45] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[46] For anticipation see chapter 4.3.2
[47] For suspense through missing information see chapter 4.3.1

Phase two is concerned with the evoking of empathy in the audience.[48] This is especially achieved by using emotion-evoking vocabulary or presenting something from a character's perspective (Wenzel 31). For instance, expressions such as "[t]errfified to death, I struggled" (Burney 197) or "I dragged my exhausted limbs" (Brontë Ch. 292) are able to create suspense.

The third phase is concerned with changing fortunes. This means that there is a constant change between fear and hope. This is the central and most significant phase in the schema of suspense proper. The importance of this phase for the readers lies in cognitive reasons. They are repeatedly presented with the two possible solutions of conflict or danger; victory or defeat (Wenzel 31-32). For instance, in *Evelina,* some men try to assault the heroine. Hence, the readers fear for her safety and hope for her rescue. Evelina then actually manages to escape. However, before being in safety she meets another group of men, who also terrify her. Evelina describes it:

> I flew rather than ran up the walk, hoping to secure my safety by returning to the lights and company we had so foolishly left: but before I could possibly accomplish my purpose, I was met by another party of men […] In a moment, both my hands, by different persons, were caught hold of; (Burney 197).

Once again, the audience fears for her. She seemed to be safe one minute, and in the next, is in danger again.

In *Pride and Prejudice* during each meeting of the protagonists, the readers can expect a conflict and further confrontation. As the novel is told by an authorial narrator they know that most of the conflicts originate from misunderstandings. Thus, the recipients always hope that Elizabeth will be able to overcome her prejudice and Mr Darcy his pride. At the same time they are worried that their contentions could become more serious.[49] This fear grows because Elizabeth becomes acquainted with Mr Wickham. He fosters Elizabeth's negative opinion about Mr Darcy and claims that "[t]he world is blinded by his fortune and consequence, or frightened by his high and imposing manners, and sees him only as he chooses to be seen." (Austen 68) Mr Wickham goes on to explain his ill fortune caused by his former friend. As the readers are not given any reason as to why they should doubt him, they ask themselves why Mr Darcy acted so cruelly. Before this conversation the recipients were able to believe that Mr Darcy is a decent person, especially because issues have also been presented from his

[48] See for importance of empathy see chapter 4.2.1
[49] For authorial narrator see also chapter 4.1.2

perspective.[50] However, after Mr Wickham's story the conflict between Elizabeth and Mr Darcy seems unsolvable. This becomes further entangled because Colonel Fitzwilliam tells Elizabeth that Mr Darcy "congratulated himself on having lately saved a friend from the inconveniences of a most imprudent marriage" (Austen 159). Elizabeth immediately concludes that those two persons are Jane and Mr Bingley. Hence, in her eyes, Mr Darcy is responsible for her sister's unhappiness. As there seems no explanation for Mr Darcy's behaviour a union seems impossible. However, after reading Mr Darcy's letter the readers renew their hopes that there is still a possibility for a happy ending.

In *Jane Eyre* the female protagonist is close to death after her flight from Thornfield. When she arrives at a house, the audience hopes that she will be rescued. However, when Jane is sent away by the housekeeper, the readers are frightened that she is going to die. They see their fears confirmed as Jane exclaims "But I must die if I am turned away." (Brontë Ch. 296)

In *Wuthering Heights,* the recipients hope that Cathy and Nelly are able to flee after Mr Heathcliff imprisons them in his own home. This wish is particularly strong as Cathy is desperate to go back to her sick father. The audience wish that she will be able to see him before his death.[51] Additionally, they fear for Cathy and Nelly during their stay: both have to spend the night in agitation, locked up in a room. Finally the next morning arrives:

> At seven o'clock [Heathcliff] came, and inquired if Miss Linton had risen. She ran to the door immediately, and answered, 'Yes.' 'Here, then,' he said, opening it, and pulling her out. I rose to follow, but he turned the lock again. I demanded my release. […] I thumped on the panels, and rattled the latch angrily; and Catherine asked why I was still shut up? He answered, I must try to endure it another hour, and they went away. I endured it two or three hours; at length, I heard a footstep, not Heathcliff's. (Brontë E. 201)

Now Nelly has to endure her imprisonment alone. Heathcliff takes Cathy away and the recipients do not know where to or what will happen to her. They share Nelly's confusion and desperation.[52] As the readers find out Nelly has to stay in the room for five days. The audience does not know what happened to Nelly or Cathy during this

[50] For the influence of perspective see chapter 4.1.2
[51] for hope and empathic feelings see chapter 4.2.1
[52] For influence of perspective on suspense see chapter 4.1.2; for identification see chapter 4.2.1

time, which again is suspenseful.[53] However, Nelly is finally able to flee, which makes the readers hope that she is able to rescue Cathy as well.

This leads to the fourth phase which introduces retarding elements. This phase corresponds to the blocking phase in the schema of mystery. Hence, the promise of a solution and its further delay can alternate. However, retarding elements are not restricted to the fourth phase. They can also be used in earlier ones to prolong the suspense in a text. (Wenzel 31). In *Evelina,* the heroine's rescue seems certain when it turns out that Sir Clement is among the men surrounding her. However, there is one last retarding element: a gentleman who refuses to let Sir Clement have Evelina all to himself. Evelina describes the following: "[O]ne of them, in a passionate manner, vowed he would not give me up, for that he had the first right to me, and would support it." (Burney 198) Therefore, the audience still fear for her safety.

In *Pride and Prejudice* the protagonists seem to be able to overcome their differences. However, then Elizabeth learns about her sister's elopement and believes that she has lost any chance of being together with Mr Darcy for ever. Elizabeth thinks that "never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain." (Austen 231) Therefore, the readers rejoice because Elizabeth finally admits her love for Mr Darcy. However, they now have to fear that Lydia's behaviour has ruined any chance of the protagonists' happiness. These contrasting feelings create suspense.

In *Jane Eyre* the only barrier standing in the way of the heroine's rescue is the housekeeper's refusal to help her. Jane tells the audience:

> This was the climax. A pang of exquisite suffering – a throe of true despair – rent and heaved my heart. Worn out, indeed, I was; not another step could I stir. I sank on the wet doorstep: I groaned – I wrung my hands – I wept in utter anguish. Oh, this spectre of death! Oh, this last hour, approaching in such horror! (Brontë Ch. 296)

This passage is especially suspenseful through the use of the descriptive language. In their mind's eye, the readers are able to picture how Jane, who is completely exhausted, slumps down to the doorstep; all their hopes for her rescue are dashed.

In *Wuthering Heights* the person barring the way to Cathy's rescue, is Linton. He refuses to tell Nelly where Heathcliff hides the key to Cathy's room. Every sentence Linton says makes him more unsympathetic. For instance, he tells Nelly the following:

> 'I can't stay with [Cathy] […] She cries so I can't bear it. And she won't give over, though I say I'll call my father. I did call him once; and he threatened to

[53] For ellipsis see chapter 4.1.1.2

> strangle her, if she was not quiet; but she began again, the instant he left the room; moaning and grieving all night long, though I screamed for vexation that I couldn't sleep.' (Brontë E. 203)

These utterances show what an egoistic person Linton is. He only thinks of himself, while Cathy is abused by his father.[54] Therefore, the readers see him as an antagonist and pity Cathy because she is now married to such a weak character.[55] In particular, suspense is experienced because they want Linton to help Nelly but are unable to influence his actions. Hence, they feel desperate.

Finally, in the fifth phase a decision occurs and the solution is presented. In contrast to the schema of mystery the presentation of only a part of the solution would not be sufficient. In the schema of suspense proper there are usually only two possible outcomes. Hence, the phase ends with the elimination of one of them. However, the presentation of the solution can be further postponed by the introduction of a last minute crisis (Wenzel 32). In these examples a last minute crisis occurs in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights*. In the former, Lady de Bourgh remains a possible threat to the union. The readers do not know the extent of her influence over her nephew. In *Wuthering Heights* the crisis manifests itself in the form of Nelly's failed attempt to rescue her mistress. However, in contrast to the dangers faced before, a last minute crisis is a manageable risk for the now superior character (Koch 40). In all four novels the scenes end positively. Evelina is finally rescued by Sir Clement. Mr Darcy still loves Elizabeth and wishes to marry her. Jane is rescued by St John and Cathy manages to escape by herself.

[54] For violence see also chapter 6.7
[55] See also antagonists in romance novels in chapter 4.2

6. Suspense at the Story Level

Suspense which is created at story level is probably most accessible for readers. Usually, the plot and the protagonists' story receive the audience's attention. Furthermore, the content of a narrative motivates the recipients to continue reading. Therefore, the story itself should keep the audience interested.

Generally, the primary motivation to read a romance novel is not to experience suspense. However, there are various themes which are not only able to keep the readers interested but also subject them to suspense. One reason is that as the audience expects to find certain themes and motives in a romance novel; they anticipate particular scenes. This builds up suspense. As previously established, romance novels do not focus on the ending but on events that lead to a presumably happy ending. The recipients constantly ask themselves what exactly will be presented in the novel. Consequently, they are experiencing suspense which will only vanish if their curiosity is satisfied. As suspense is also a form of staging (Dolle-Weinkauff 125), the way of presenting the topics treated in this chapter is important. Most of them are able to create suspense, especially if one plays with the readers' expectations.

6.1 Initial Meetings

First encounters are probably one of the most important themes in a romance novel. As established in chapter 6.1 initial meetings are a necessary element. When reading a romance novel, readers know that an initial meeting has to occur and just speculate on how it will happen. Consequently, the audience wait eagerly for the occurrence of this scene. This puts them in suspense. A factor which further intensifies this effect is the emotional attachment to the heroine.[56] Generally, by the time the first encounter takes place, the recipients have built up an emotional relationship to the heroine to some degree. This is mostly because most romance novels are presented out of the heroine's point of view. However, it is also possible that the readers are also already attached to the hero. Generally, they are emotionally involved when reading about the first meeting and able to understand the heroine's feelings; may they be positive or negative.

To sum up, a first encounter is required in order for a romance to take place. However, these meetings do not have to initiate a relationship immediately. It is even possible that the protagonists do not like each other. Hence, the encounters can have a positive as well as a negative outcome. For instance, in *Pride and Prejudice* Mr Darcy insults

[56] For emotional involvement see also chapter 4.2.1

Elizabeth deeply during their first encounter. After Mr Bingley points out to Mr Darcy that one of Jane's sisters is pretty and very agreeable, he answers:

> 'Which do you mean?' and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, 'She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. […]' (Austen 13)

This statement shows that initially Elizabeth and Mr Darcy do not think highly of each other. Consequently, at the beginning the readers do not know that Mr Darcy is actually the hero of the novel. The protagonists' antipathy is even increased throughout the novel due to Elizabeth's prejudice and Mr Darcy's pride. However, soon after their initial meeting Mr Darcy's attitude towards Elizabeth changes as he becomes attracted to her. He realizes this while Elizabeth is visiting her sick sister Jane, who is staying at Netherfield.

> Occupied in observing Mr Bingley's attention to her sister, Elizabeth was far from suspecting that she was herself was becoming an object of some interest in the eyes of his friend. Mr Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty; he had looked at her without admiration at the ball; […] But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. (Austen 21)

After this passage the audience is able to identify Mr Darcy as the possible hero. This assumption is strengthened as the scene is told from his perspective. Hence, the recipients are now in the position to see Darcy's side as well as Elizabeth's.[57] Still, at this point it seems very unlikely that these two will end up together, especially because Elizabeth is completely ignorant of Mr Darcy's thoughts. Consequently, the readers start to think about the reasons for this. They identify obstacles and reflect on how these can be overcome. Once again, the lack of knowledge generates suspense and eager anticipation.[58]

As mentioned above, it happens that the readers do not know who the hero is. This confusion can be increased by the introduction of a false hero. These false heroes can also be regarded as barriers (Regis 33). In *Pride and Prejudice* Mr Wickham represents this role. It is also possible that some readers identify him as the hero. He appears to be gallant and a gentleman who courts Elizabeth.

[57] For suspense and perspective see chapter 4.1.2
[58] For withholding information in chapter 4.3.1

A further novel introducing false heroes is *Evelina*. In this narrative the readers are left in the dark for quite a while about who the real hero is. This is due to the fact that Evelina makes many acquaintances with men. Firstly, Mr Lovel is introduced. However, as he is described in a negative way the audience can presume that he is of no interest for Evelina. The distinction between the true and false hero becomes more difficult in the case of Lord Orville and Sir Willoughby. Lord Orville is described as a "gentleman, who seemed about six-and-twenty years old, gaily, but not foppishly, dressed, and indeed extremely handsome, with an air of mixed politeness and gallantry" (Burney 31). From this description it is immediately clear that he holds a fascination for Evelina. Consequently, the recipients also start to have a positive attitude towards him. However, soon after their first encounter Evelina hears that he talked mischievously about her. Hence, the audience now does not know how to judge Lord Orville and want to attain more information about him. Thus, they are kept in suspense until the next meeting when they can hope to find out more.[59] During the next encounter at a dance, the false hero Sir Willoughby is introduced. However, as Evelina refuses to dance with him and he persists in harassing her, he is not held in the same esteem as Lord Orville. Also during the dance, Evelina behaves stupidly and talks herself into a precarious situation. She is desperate because she does not know how to talk herself out of it again. As the recipients already empathize or at least sympathize with the heroine, they can understand her distress and suspense.[60] She finally is saved by Lord Orville. However, Evelina is afraid that he now has an ill opinion of her and reflects upon this.

> [B]ut for Lord Orville, - if then he thought me an idiot, now I am sure, he must believe me both bold and presuming. Make use of his name! – what impertinence! – he can never know how it happened – he can only imagine it was from an excess of vanity: - well, however, I shall leave this bad city to-morrow, and never again will I enter it! (Burney 50)

This reflection creates suspense at various levels. Firstly, the readers share Evelina's fear that Lord Orville could think badly about her. They are curious about his real thoughts.[61] The use of exclamation marks stresses Evelina's mistake and folly and the graveness of her impertinent behaviour.[62] Lastly, Evelina announces that she will leave London. This suggests that she will not meet Lord Orville again, and she will never be able to explain herself to him or find out what he really thinks. This is very undesirable

[59] For hope as an element of suspense see chapter 2.4
[60] See empathy and sympathy in chapter 4.2.1
[61] For the use of one's own imagination see chapter 4.2
[62] For suspense through the discourse see chapter 4.1.3

for the audience as they also want these questions to be answered. Hence, they are in suspense until Evelina announces in her next letter that she has to stay in London. Now the recipients can renew their hope for a further meeting.[63]

One of the most suspenseful initial meetings occurs in *Jane Eyre*. This is due to the fact that this encounter is accompanied by a sense of fear and danger: Jane is walking alone at night along a path. The mood and the scene are set by a detailed description. Then the readers are thrown into a state of suspense when the tranquillity of the night is disturbed.

> A rude noise broke on these fine ripplings and whisperings, at once so far away and so clear: a positive tramp, tramp, a metallic clatter, which effaced the soft wave-wanderings; […] The din was on the causeway: a horse was coming; the windings of the lane yet hid it, but it approached. […] I sat still to let it go by. In those days I was young, and all sorts of fancies bright and dark tenanted my mind: the memories of nursery stories were there […]; and when they recurred, maturing youth added to them a vigour and vividness beyond what childhood could give. As this horse approached, and as I watched for it to appear through the dusk, I remember certain of Bessie's tales, wherein figured a North-of-England spirit called 'Gytrash', which, in the form of horse, mule, or large dog, haunted solitary ways, and sometimes came upon belated travellers, as this horse was now coming upon me. (Brontë Ch. 97)

This scene contains many elements of suspense. Firstly, Jane's solitude is stressed. She is all alone in the dark night and a stranger is approaching. Jane could be in real danger: she does not know who this stranger is or what his or her intentions are. As the readers already had the opportunity to establish an emotional connection to Jane, they now begin to fear with and for her, which produces a feeling of suspense. This is heightened when Jane tells ghost stories that she heard in her childhood: by presenting the readers with stories about mysterious and dangerous creatures they are able to share and understand Jane's fear.[64] They are eager to know who is coming; however, the solution is further delayed as Jane describes the approaching creature and her fear of the Gytrash in detail.[65] The suspense of the scene is enhanced by the choice of vocabulary and the usage of a striking alliteration such as "tramp, tramp" enables the readers to imagine the horse approaching. They are probably even able to hear the sounds of thudding hooves in their heads. Such devices make the scene more realistic and draw

[63] For hope and fear as elements of suspense see chapter 2.4
[64] See also chapter 4.2.1
[65] For delaying withheld information see chapter 4.3.1

the audience deeper into the story. Consequently, the suspense experienced is much stronger.[66]

The further development of this meeting is rather unusual for a romance novel. Although initially Jane seems to be in danger, it then is Mr Rochester who finds himself helpless. He has an accident as his horse slips on the ice and falls. Because he injured his leg during his fall, he now has to rely on Jane's help. Hence, she rescues him and not the other way round. This scene again stresses Jane's independence. A further factor which intensifies the suspense of the scene is that the reader is unaware of Mr Rochester's identity. Consequently, the audience wants to know who this man is, which in turn also leads to the build-up of suspense.[67] Moreover, they even talk about Mr Rochester because Jane tells him that she works at Thornfield. Still, the hero does not reveal his identity. Therefore, a mystery is created.[68] Finally, suspense is felt even more deeply as Jane refers to claims that the meeting "marked with change one single hour of a monotonous life." (Brontë Ch. 100-101). Hence, this means that after this meeeting Jane's life may also change in the future.[69]

A rather untypical initial meeting can also be found in *Wuthering Heights*. When the protagonists meet each other for the first time they are children. However, as Catherine expects a present and not a new brother she does not like Heathcliff at the beginning. Heathcliff's introduction to the family and his encounter with Catherine is not really suspenseful; it is surprising. Mr. Earnshaw sets out for a trip and promises his children some presents. His delayed return creates suspense as the readers are curious about its reasons.[70] When Mr Earnshaw then finally arrives he brings a child with him, which comes as a surprise to the characters as well as to the readers.[71] Therefore, this initial meeting is rather untypical for a romance novel. However, the first mention of Catherine in connection with Heathcliff is far more suspenseful. Mr Lockwood reads Catherine's diary when he stays in her room for the night. He reads the passage "H. and I are going to rebel" (Brontë E. 13). This raises a lot of questions, about the identity of H. and why they want to rebel. Hence, the audience is eager to know the story behind the characters. They are kept in suspense until they can form a cohesive picture in their

[66] See suspense at a lexical-semantic level in chapter 4.1.2
[67] See schema of mystery in chapter 5.2
[68] See also chapter 5.2
[69] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[70] For curiosity see chapter 2.2.5
[71] For surprise see chapter 2.2.2

heads. Furthermore, this scene is the trigger of one of the most suspenseful ones in the novel, namely Catherine's appearance in Lockwood's dream and Heathcliff's reaction.

6.2 Rivalry and Jealousy

> [Mr Rochester saying:] 'You never felt jealousy, did you, Miss Eyre? Of course not: I need not ask you; because you never felt love. You have both sentiments yet to experience: your soul sleeps; the shock is yet to be given which shall waken it. […]' (Burney 124)

In every romance novel instances of rivalry and jealousy can be detected. They are one of the major and most suspenseful themes; both can be traced back to human basic instincts. Thus, the experience of suspense caused by these themes is deeply rooted in human nature.[72] Rivalry often comes into existence by introducing a false hero or another character in the narrative. The appearance of a rival often leads to jealousy. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English* being jealous is "feeling angry or unhappy because sb. you like or love is showing interest in sb. else".

In romance novels, rivalry and jealousy can be found in numerous forms. Furthermore, they are not restricted to the protagonists. Frequently, the jealousy of secondary characters contributes enormously to the suspense of a scene. Suspense is primarily due to the fact that by introducing a rival the happy union of the protagonists is at risk. Hence, rivals present a constant threat. Moreover, the suspense is heightened if the audience empathize with the protagonists: a danger threatening a likable character is particularly suspenseful.[73]

In *Jane Eyre* the theme of jealousy comes up continuously. Mr Rochester himself admits to being jealous. Furthermore, he believes that jealousy is the best way to win Jane's heart. After having proposed he admits: "I feigned courtship of Miss Ingram, because I wished to render you as madly in love with me as I was with you; and I knew jealousy would be the best ally I could call in for the furtherance of that end." (Brontë Ch. 231)

As the readers know from an earlier episode in the novel he was successful, even though in a different way to what he had imagined.

> I see Mr Rochester turn to Miss Ingram, and Miss Ingram to him; I see her incline her head towards him, till the jetty curls almost touch his shoulder and wave against his cheek; I hear their mutual whisperings; I recall their

[72] See Koch about SEXUS in chapter 2.1
[73] See also chapter 4.2.1

> interchanged glances; […] There was nothing to cool or banish love in these circumstances, though much to create despair. Much too, you will think, reader, to engender jealousy: if a woman, in my position, could presume to be jealous of a woman in Miss Ingram's. But I was not jealous: or very rarely; - the nature of the pain I suffered could not be explained by that word. Miss Ingram was a mark beneath jealousy: she was too inferior to excite the feeling. […] I saw he was going to marry her […] I felt he had not given her his love […] this was where the fever was sustained and fed: *she could not charm him.* (Brontë Ch. 162-163)

This shows that although Jane is actually jealous she is more hurt by the fact that Mr Rochester would marry someone who cannot please him. She is in agony when she thinks about the fact that Mr Rochester could attach himself legally to such a vain and inferior person as Miss Ingram. When empathizing with Jane the readers share this fear.[74] At the same time, they pity her as the heroine believes herself not to be in a position to be jealous because she is of lower social status. Still, she is unable to hide her pain and explodes in the end, exclaiming her real problem: Miss Ingram's inability to charm Mr Rochester. Although this is Jane's subjective observation, the readers believe it to be true; especially because she always acts sensibly despite her jealousy. Jane seems to be a reliable narrator.[75] As the recipients believe the authenticity of Jane's report, they also begin to ask themselves questions concerning Mr Rochester's behaviour. Why is he acting this way? Why is he courting Miss Ingram when he is not interested in her? These questions arouse suspense which is held for a rather long time because Mr Rochester gives his explanation six chapters later.[76] In the meantime many scenes are presented which lead to the assumption that a marriage between Mr Rochester and Miss Ingram is certain. For instance, Jane criticizes "Mr Rochester's project of marrying for interest and connections." (Brontë Ch. 164) She further expresses her surprise that Mr Rochester would comply with the rules of his social class and marry just because Miss Ingram seems an appropriate match. She claims: "[W]ere I a gentleman like him, I would take to my bosom only such a wife as I could love" (Brontë Ch. 164). This coincides with any romantic ideas the audience might have: love should not be restricted to class. Still, Jane's reflections offer the recipients a possible explanation for Mr Rochester's courtship. However, as he constantly seeks Jane's company, suspense is created once again. What is the reason for this? Mr Rochester's behaviour is highly suspect as he always discusses his marriage plans with Jane and asks for her opinion. Thus, the audience know that the true reasons behind the hero's

[74] for empathy see chapter 4.2.1
[75] See also chapter 4.1.2
[76] See also duration of suspense in chapter 4.1.1.2

actions are kept from them.[77] The suspense seems to be at its peak when Mr Rochester's marriage is certain and he seemingly sends Jane away from Thornfield:

> 'Must I move on, sir?' [Jane] asked. 'Must I leave Thornfield?'
> 'I believe you must, Jane. I am sorry, Janet, but I believe indeed you must. […] [I]t was my intention to put my old bachelor's neck into the sacred noose, to enter into the holy estate of matrimony – to take Miss Ingram to my bosom, in short ([…] one can't have too much of such a very excellent thing as my beautiful Blanche): […] I wish to remind you that it was you who first said to me […] that in case I married Miss Ingram, both you and little Adèle had better trot forthwith. […] Adèle must go to school; and you, Miss Eyre, must get a new situation.' (Brontë Ch. 220)

This passage gives the recipients the impression that Jane's rival has won. Mr Rochester sends her away and there seems to be no possibility for them to be together. For a short time the recipients' hopes are raised again when Mr Rochester exclaims that Jane must stay. However, this thought is unbearable for the heroine. She cannot stand the thought of having to see Mr Rochester marry Miss Ingram and exclaims passionately:

> 'I tell you I must go! […] Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? […] Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You are wrong! […] And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. […]' (Brontë Ch. 223)

This exclamation again shows how hurt Jane is because she thinks Mr Rochester wants to marry her rival. Furthermore, although Jane is a strong person she now shows her insecurity. She believes that her appearance is a reason for Mr Rochester not wanting her. This arouses a lot of empathy in the readers. They are now in suspense about the hero's reaction.[78] This comes as surprise as he declares his love to Jane and wants to marry her. At last, after this a long period of suspense, the recipients can experience a sense of relief: they are excited and thrilled. [79] However, one question remains as to why Mr Rochester made Jane believe that he was interested in Miss Ingram. This information is again held back for some time and therefore part of the suspense is maintained until the answer is provided.

These passages also create an interesting effect when they are reread. The audience knows that Mr Rochester is not truly interested in Miss Ingram. However, suspense is created as the motivation for reading these passages now shifts. Recipients now try to

[77] See withholding information in chapter 4.3.1
[78] See chapter 4.2.1
[79] See Zillmann excitation-transfer system in chapter 4.2 and thrill in chapter 2.2.3

discover hints betraying Mr Rochester's farce. They ask themselves if it was possible for Jane to detect his true intentions: making Jane jealous in order to win her heart.[80]

One novel streaked with the theme of rivalry and jealousy is *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff has been jealous of Mr Linton since their childhood. This is mainly because Mr Linton offers Catherine a world Heathcliff cannot. He complains to Nelly about this fact. "But, Nelly, if I knocked him down twenty times, that wouldn't make him less handsome or me more so. I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!" (Brontë E. 39) This passage already provides the readers with the reasons for Heathcliff's behaviour as an adult. Especially when rereading the novel are they able to realize the root of Heathcliff's hatred and can understand his actions to some degree.[81]

The theme of jealousy reoccurs when the protagonists are adults. After being absent for three years, Heathcliff visits Catherine at Thrushcross Grange. It is now Mr Linton who experiences jealousy. "[H]e grew pale with pure annoyance: a feeling that reached its climax when his lady rose, and […] seized Heathcliff's hands again, and laughed like one beside herself." (Brontë E. 69) This signifies a change and shows Heathcliff's acquired superiority. Although Catherine is married to Mr Linton, her heart belongs to Heathcliff. Later, Mr Linton even demands a decision: Catherine has to choose between both men.[82] Meanwhile, Heathcliff looks for ways to hurt Mr Linton. At the same time, he takes revenge, to some degree, on Catherine as he still believes that she considered him not good enough to marry her. He soon discovers the perfect way to harm both: by courting Isabella. This makes Catherine jealous and annoys Mr Linton. When Catherine talks to Heathcliff about his advances towards her sister-in-law, he simply answers: "'What is it to you? […] I have a right to kiss her, if she chooses; and you have no right to object. I'm not *your* husband: *you* needn't be jealous of me!'" (Brontë E. 81) This passage does not only show Heathcliff's intention, but also that he is still hurt. This becomes clear because "you" is stressed in his exclamation. Furthermore, this announcement can be identified as a starting point from which further suspenseful scenes follow.[83] Hence, the audience is already able to anticipate certain events and story developments.[84] For instance, is seems likely that Heathcliff will continue his courtship of Isabella in order to hurt Catherine. However, as he is not really interested in

[80] See also shift of motivation in chapter 4.2.2
[81] For rereading se chapter 4.2.2
[82] This is a theme typical for romantic suspense. See also chapter 3.3
[83] See schemata of suspense proper in chapter 5.3
[84] For anticipation see chapter 4.3.2

her, the readers are able to anticipate a negative outcome. As it turns out later, this holds true: Isabella is deeply unhappy. This also creates suspense when rereading the novel. Although the audience knows that Heathcliff will be successful in courting Isabella, they still hope that he will not. This is because they willingly suspends their acquired knowledge and reconstruct all of the possible alternative outcomes. Hence, they imagine the possibility of Isabella escaping an unhappy life with Heathcliff.[85]

Two more rivals are Linton and Hareton. Both are interested in Cathy. However, Hareton has a far more difficult position. Heathcliff defines it the following way: "there's this difference; one is gold put to the use of paving-stones, and the other is tin polished to ape a service of silver." (Brontë E. 159) However, Cathy is unable to see this and prefers Linton's company. She even mocks Hareton together with Linton. Nelly says that "[Hareton] was conscious of being insulted, and embarrassed how to resent it." (Brontë E. 160). Still, he tries to find a way to impress Cathy. He starts to learn how to read and shows her his progress. Once again, his attempts to present himself in a good light are in vain. Cathy tells Nelly:

> [I desired] him to walk away, for I came to see Linton not him. He reddened – I saw that by the moonlight – dropped his hand from the latch, and skulked off, a picture of mortified vanity. He imagined himself to be as accomplished as Linton, I suppose, because he could spell his own name; and was marvellously discomfited that I didn't think the same. (Brontë E. 181)

This reaction has the consequence that the readers empathize with Hareton and pity him. Hence, they start to experience suspense, when they read about confrontations between Cathy and Hareton. They want her to treat him nicely. However, as Cathy is completely fixed on Linton this does not happen, which results in Hareton being violent. Cathy tells Nelly the following: "He swore at us, and left Linton no time to answer, nearly throwing him into the kitchen; and he clenched his fist as I followed, seemingly longing to knock me down. I was afraid for a moment, and I let one volume fall; he kicked it after me, and shut us out." (Brontë E. 182) This signifies Hareton's tendency to act violently when he feels insulted.[86] Therefore, suspense is created when Hareton is mocked, because the audience now anticipates a violent reaction.[87] Still, Hareton's fascination concerning Cathy does not vanish. After Linton's death and therefore the disappearance of his rival, Hareton continues his attempt to impress Cathy. Although he

[85] See also chapter 4.2.2
[86] For violence see also chapter 6.7
[87] For anticipation see chapter 4.3.2

is unsuccessful at the beginning, Cathy "became incapable of letting him alone" (Brontë E. 225) at a later point.

In *Evelina,* there are numerous characters who court the heroine. As soon as she is in London, she meets Mr Lovel, Mr Willoughby and Lord Orville. However, she is only truly drawn to Lord Orville. Evelina herself does not experience any jealousy although she is a very emotional person. In contrast, Lord Orville is very jealous. Hints of this can be detected at various instances during Evelina's first visit to London. As soon as she is in contact with other men, Lord Orville shows some signs of jealousy but still tries to behave like a gentleman. For instance, after being to the opera, Evelina is at a loss how to get home. Hence, she accepts Sir Clement's offer to take her. This comes to Lord Orville's attention. So he waits for Evelina at Mrs Mirvan's house and "appeared *extremely* anxious, nay uneasy and impatient for [her] return." (Burney 102). This shows Lord Orville's growing concern for Evelina's safety. Furthermore, he feels very protective of her. This becomes clear because he is "*extremely* anxious" (Burney 102). As "extremely" is emphasized here, it shows the greatness of his concern which could results from his jealousy.[88] However, as this episode is written from Evelina's perspective, the readers cannot be sure about Lord Orville's true intention.[89] It is possible that he only acted out of good-heartedness. As the heroine herself observes; it is possible that Lord Orville "had a suspicion of Sir Clement's design, and was therefore concerned for [her] safety." (Burney 102) Hence, the readers have to use their own imagination about the hero's purpose behind his behaviour.[90] However, as Lord Orville also acts protectively in later scenes it seems likely that he acted out of jealousy. For instance, Mrs Mirvan tells Evelina that Lord Orville confided in her that as far as Evelina is concerned "he could not possibly reconcile to himself a patient neutrality" (Burney 103). The readers then discover that Lord Orville talked to Mr Lovel about his inappropriate behaviour at the play. When Evelina hears this she thinks:

> [T]hat [Lord Orville] should so much interest himself in securing me from offence, gives me, I must own, an internal pleasure greater than I can express […] Who, from seeing Lord Orville at the play, would have imagined his resentment would have hazarded his life? yet his displeasure was evident" (Burney 103).

Therefore, Evelina and the readers start to assume that Lord Orville also acts out of jealousy. Why should he otherwise go through so much trouble? A further example can

[88] See also suspense on a lexical-semantic level in chapter 4.1.3
[89] See also chapter 4.1.2
[90] For the use of the reader's own imagination see chapter 4.2

be found in the scene where the whole party meets Lord Morton for the first time. Evelina writes about him in the following way:

> And he took my hand […] As soon as I possibly could, I drew back my hand; but he frequently, in the course of conversation, contrived to take it again, though it was extremely disagreeable to me; and the more so, as I saw that Lord Orville has the eyes fixed upon us, with a gravity of attention that made me uneasy. (Burney 112-113)

However, Lord Morton's behaviour does not only foster Lord Orville's jealousy but also Sir Clement's. The latter even "seemed in misery." (Burney 113) Interestingly, Lord Orville's jealousy is able to create a feeling of thrill in the recipients.[91] This is because they know that the person Evelina admires most, really cares for her. In contrast, Sir Clement's jealousy seems insignificant as he proves to be more and more of a nuisance. Therefore, the readers do not sympathize with him and his emotions. Consequently, Lord Orville's jealousy creates suspense while Sir Clement's does not.

Lord Orville's jealousy becomes most obvious during their stay in Bristol when Evelina meets Mr Macartney again. Funnily enough, he is about the only person who is not interested in Evelina, because he is deeply in love with the second Miss Belmont. Still, Lord Orville is particularly jealous of him. This becomes very clear after he observes a private meeting between Evelina and Mr Macartney in the gardens at Clifton. Evelina promises Macartney a second meeting, which displeases Lord Orville. Evelina writes:

> [W]hile I, turning again to Lord Orville, saw his countenance so much altered, that I was frightened at what I had so hastily said. He did not again offer me his hand, but walked, silent and slow, by my side. Good Heavens! Thought I, what may he not suppose from this adventure? May he not, by my desire of meeting Mr. Macartney to-morrow, imagine it was by design I walked out to meet him to-day? (Burney 298).

This reflection arouses suspense at various levels. Evelina is deeply upset because Lord Orville may have the wrong impression from her doings. Her exclamation, "Good Heavens!" (Burney 298) underlines the intensity of her distress.[92] This again creates suspense as the readers share Evelina's fear. Because they like her, they want the heroine to be happy with the man she loves.[93] Hence, they are now eager to know if Lord Orville draws the wrong assumption from her meeting with Mr Macartney.

[91] For a definition of thrill see chapter 2.2.3
[92] For suspense at a lexical-semantic level see chapter 4.1.3
[93] See also chapter 4.2.1

However, before the answer is presented, the recipients have to finish reading Evelina's reflections.[94]

During a later conversation between the protagonists, Lord Orville's jealousy becomes apparent. Evelina offers an explanation, which he is eager to hear. However, before all the misunderstandings can be overcome, they are interrupted. Therefore, once again the readers are in suspense; Lord Orville could still have the wrong opinion of Evelina, the danger has not been not averted. During the next meetings, any attempts to resolve the issue are always delayed. As soon as the protagonists meet and Evelina starts to explain herself some occurrences prevent it. Hence, the constant interruptions and the delayed presentation of the solution, create a lot of suspense.[95] When the protagonists are finally able to resolve their misunderstanding Lord Orville overcomes his jealousy for the moment. He offers Evelina his friendship, which makes her "the happiest of human beings!" (Burney 307). Thus, the readers are thrilled with this positive outcome and hope that their relationship will develop further and possibly end with a declaration of love.[96]

It is especially interesting that Lord Orville seems to lose his gallantry as soon as he experiences jealousy. This puts Evelina in distress and the readers into suspense. The latter try to figure out how the protagonists will react and what has to happen in order for Lord Orville's jealousy to disappear. Will he outdo his supposed rival? Will he take action in order to gain Evelina's affection? Once again, the audience's desire to get answers to such questions arouses suspense.[97]

Pride and Prejudice introduces a different form of rivalry and jealousy. As observed in chapter 4.2.1, although there are no typical antagonists in the romance novels, there are unsuitable partners. In particular, the readers do not want Mr Darcy to end up with Miss Bingley. She is most jealous of the heroine during Elizabeth's stay at Netherfield where she attends to her sick sister. Miss Bingley, who is attracted to Mr Darcy, observes his growing fascination with Elizabeth. She "suspected enough to be jealous; and her great anxiety for the recovery of her dear friend Jane, received some assistance from her desire of getting rid of Elizabeth." (Austen 47) Interestingly, parts of this passage are written from Miss Bingley's perspective. Hence, the readers are presented with the view of an 'antagonist'.[98] This triggers the recipients' interest as it presents the

[94] For the occurrence of a pause see chapter 4.1.1.2
[95] See also delay in the schema of suspense proper in chapter 5.3
[96] For thrill see chapter 2.2.3
[97] See also chapter 4.3.1
[98] For "perspective" see chapter 4.1.2

scene from a different point of view.[99] Furthermore, suspense can be experienced as they ask themselves how Miss Bingley will react and what she is going to do to regain Mr Darcy's attention. Therefore, they anticipate some schemes against Elizabeth.[100] Miss Bingley tries "to provoke Darcy into disliking [Elizabeth], by talking of their supposed marriage, and planning his happiness in such an alliance." (Austen 47) This only creates suspense if the readers have already identified Mr Darcy as the hero who Elizabeth should end up with. However, it is still possible that the readers share Elizabeth's negative opinion of Mr Darcy. Therefore, Miss Bingley's actions are especially suspenseful when rereading the novel because the scenes are seen in a new light. The recipients are now certain about the fact that the protagonists are compatible and want them to end up together.[101]

A further instance of jealousy occurs during a visit at Rosings. Elizabeth and the Collins are invited to dine with Lady de Bourgh, her daughter, and her nephews Mr Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam. The heroine catches Colonel Fitzwilliam's attention. Immediately, they understand each other well and "conversed with so much spirit and flow, as to draw the attention of Lady Catherin herself, as well as of Mr Darcy. *His* eyes had been soon and repeatedly turned towards them with a look of curiosity;" (Austen 147). The emphasis on Mr Darcy's look signals his jealousy. However, he reacts calmly. Still, a change in his behaviour can be observed. He now visits Elizabeth frequently. However, his reasons are unclear. This is expressed through a reflection by Mrs Collins:

> But why Mr Darcy came so often to the Parsonage, it was more difficult to understand. […] Mrs Collins knew not what to make of him. […] He certainly looked at her friend a great deal, but the expression of that look was disputable. It was an earnest, steadfast gaze, but she often doubted whether there were much admiration in it, and sometimes it seemed nothing but absence of mind. (Austen 154)

The readers were already able to read some passage from Mr Darcy's perspective. Hence, they assume that he is interested in Elizabeth. However, Mrs Collins point of view lets the audience doubt this assumption. Thus, the presentation of a different perspective causes new uncertainty.[102] They ask about the true reasons behind Mr

[99] For "interest" see chapter 2.2.4
[100] For anticipation see chapter 4.3.2
[101] See also chapter 4.2.2
[102] For perspective see chapter 4.1.2; for uncertainty see chapter 4.3.3

Darcy's visit. Furthermore, they try to make sense of the scene in connecting their formerly acquired knowledge about Mr Darcy with his current behaviour.[103]

6.3 Desire and Yearning

The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English* defines desire as "a strong wish to have or do sth" and as "a person or thing that is wished for". Yearning goes even further as it is "a strong and emotional desire" (Oxford Dictionary). These definitions show that desire is always connected to a longing for someone or something. Consequently, this entails the person or thing that is longed for being absent or unavailable. This can create a lot of suspense. In romance novels the characters frequently experience a strong desire to be together with another figure. However, this is often impossible. The difference between the desired and the actual state creates suspense.

In *Wuthering Heights* there are numerous scenes depicting Heathcliff's desire to see Catherine. However, this yearning cannot be fulfilled as she is dead. For instance, after Mr Lockwood has a nightmare about Catherine's ghost trying to enter his room at night, he tells Heathcliff about it. As soon as Heathcliff is alone in the room "[h]e got on to the bed, and wrenched open the lattice, bursting, as he pulled at it, into an uncontrollable passion of tears. 'Come in! come in!' he sobbed. 'Cathy, do come. Oh do – *once* more! Oh! My heart's darling! Hear me *this* time, Catherine, at last!'" (Brontë E. 20).

This passage creates suspense at various levels and stresses the intensity of Heathcliff's desire. Firstly, this scene is observed by Mr Lockwood at the beginning of the novel. At this point the audience does not know the characters and their story yet. Thus, they ask themselves why Heathcliff is reacting so intensely to Mr Lockwood's mentioning of Catherine's ghost. As Heathcliff utters these sentences when he believes himself to be alone, it can also be assumed that they truly reflect his emotions. Therefore, the audience wants to know the reasons for Heathcliff's outburst. Once again, important information is omitted, which is noticeable for the recipients. Thereby suspense is created.[104] It is clear that the passage is elliptical. The information required in order to make sense of Heathcliff's action is provided in the form of Nelly's tale.[105] Because the whole story is told in retrospect, this can be regarded as analepsis.[106]

[103] See also Cupchik in chapter 4.3.3
[104] For missing information see chapter 4.3.1
[105] For ellipsis see chapter 4.1.1.2
[106] For analepsis see chapter 4.1.1.1

Secondly, linguistic devices intensify the suspense of the scene. The use of imperatives and exclamations show the intensity of Heathcliff's desire. Furthermore, the words 'once' and 'this' are written in italics. Therefore, the readers' attention is drawn to them. They ask themselves why Catherine should come *this* time; suggesting that she has not come to him before.[107] The true story, however, is still concealed from the recipients. Only at a later point in the narrative are they informed about the love between Heathcliff and Catherine and her death. However, the readers can assume from Heathcliff's exclamation that there are serious reasons as to why Catherine is unable to come. This way a tragedy is foreshadowed.[108] Additionally, the audience is curious about the occurrences leading up to Heathcliff's despair.[109] Hence, when rereading the novel this scene appears in a completely new light. The audience now knows the background story of the protagonist. Therefore, they are able to understand Heathcliff's agitation. They can now see the scene in a different light.[110]

Heathcliff's desire to see his deceased love again is stressed once more at the end of the novel. Furthermore, he sees her everywhere. When he is visiting Catherine's grave and starts digging it up he states:

> But as certainly as you perceive the approach to some substantial body in the dark, though it cannot be discerned, so certainly I felt that Cathy was there: not under me, but on the earth. A sudden sense of relief flowed, from my heart, through every limb. […] Her presence was with me: it remained while I refilled the grave, and led me home. […] I was sure she was with me, and I could not help talking to her. […] I felt her by me – I could *almost* see her, and yet I *could not*! I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my yearning – from the fervour of my supplications to have but one glimpse! I had not one. She showed herself, as she often was in life, a devil to me! (Brontë E. 210)

This scene is especially suspenseful because it shows Heathcliff's desperate yearning for Catherine. He is even willing to dig up her grave. The hero describes his emotions in great detail. Thus, the scene is stretched.[111] Additionally, this scene entails mysterious elements. He is almost able to see Catherine's ghost and believes her to be everywhere. These are clear traces of a gothic novel.[112]

On a later occasion Heathcliff verbalizes his desires:

> I have a single wish, and my whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I'm convinced

[107] See also chapter 4.1.3
[108] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[109] For curiosity see chapter 4.3.3
[110] See chapter 4.2.2
[111] See slow-down or stretch in chapter 4.1.1.1
[112] See also chapter 3.2

> it *will* be reached – and *soon* – because it has devoured my existence: I am swallowed in the anticipation of its fulfilment. […] O, God! It is a long fight, I wish it were over! (Brontë E. 236)

In this paragraph Heathcliff announces his greatest desire. However, he does not explicitly state what it is. Thus, the readers have to draw their own conclusions. They only know that Heathcliff refers to a future event, the nature of which is still unclear.[113] Hence, the audience is once again in suspense because they know that important information is missing.[114] As it turns out later, Heathcliff refers to his own death, which is not far away. Only in death can his yearning be fulfilled when he is reunited with Catherine.

In *Pride and Prejudice* the desires of the protagonists are not as strongly pronounced as in *Wuthering Heights*. Mr Darcy's beginning admiration is rather based on attraction than on actual desire. Elizabeth does not even regard Mr Darcy as a potential admirer until his proposal. However, soon after receiving an explanatory letter from Mr Darcy she starts to change her mind. When Elizabeth is visiting Pemberly she imagines her situation as if she had accepted the proposal. However, only when she meets Mr Darcy again does her attitude change completely. She is always in the dark about his thoughts, intentions, deeds, and the reasons behind them. As these scenes are presented from Elizabeth perspective, the readers are clueless as well. Hence, they share the heroine's agitation and suspense.[115] Elizabeth's primary desire now is to discover Mr Darcy's motives. For instance, when Elizabeth is at Pemberly and taking a walk with her aunt and uncle her thoughts are occupied by the hero.

> Her thoughts were all fixed on that one spot of Pemberly House, whichever it might be, where Mr Darcy then was. She longed to know what at that moment was passing in his mind; in what manner he thought of her, and whether, in defiance of everything, she was still dear to him. (Austen 212)

This shows not only Elizabeth longing to know Mr Darcy's thoughts, but also her desire to be still dear to him. She wants him to have a high opinion of her. However, until the end of the novel she does not get a clear answer to her questions. Thus, Elizabeth and the readers are held in a state of uncertainty for a long time.[116]

When Elizabeth is back home and the family's disgrace caused by Lydia's elopement is diverted, Mr Darcy and Mr Bingley visit the Bennet family. While Jane's and Mr

[113] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[114] For missing information see chapter 4.3.1
[115] For perspective see chapter 4.1.2
[116] For uncertainty see chapter 4.3.3; for duration see chapter 4.1.1.2

Bingley's reunion seems certain, Elizabeth is still in the dark. She constantly observes Mr Darcy but is unable to discover his true intentions.

> Darcy has walked away to another part of the room. She followed him with her eyes, envied everyone to whom he spoke, had scarcely patience enough to help anybody to coffee; and then was enraged against herself for being so silly! 'A man who has once been refused! How could I ever be foolish enough to expect a renewal of his love? Is there one among the sex, who would not protest against such a weakness as a second proposal to the same woman? There is no indignity so abhorrent to their feelings!' (Austen 283)

This example reflects Elizabeth's musing about her situation and Mr Darcy's motives. She is envious of Mr Darcy talking to other women. She longs to talk to him and hopes that he still loves her. However, she does not dare to hope too much. Because Elizabeth diminishes her own hopes, the recipients' hopes of a happy ending are decreased as well.[117] However, the possibility of a happy end still exists. Thus, until the readers are absolutely sure about Mr Darcy's feelings towards Elizabeth, they are kept in suspense.

In *Pride and Prejudice* the readers are also able to discover other forms of desire. For instance, Charlotte Lucas' greatest desire is to have her own home. Therefore, she "accepted [Mr Collins] solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment" (Austen 105). She fulfils her wish by marrying Mr Collins. However, as he is a very unlikeable character, the recipients frequently pity her. Still, they are relieved that it is not the heroine who ends up with Mr Collins. As this actually was a possibility, Mr Collins' marriage with Charlotte Lucas releases the readers from their suspense.[118] Furthermore, Charlotte seems content with her new life. Thus, because she is a likeable figure, the audience is glad that Charlotte has her livelihood and appears more or less satisfied with her life.[119]

In *Evelina* the heroine's desire is threefold. Firstly, she is attracted to Lord Orville and longs to see him. During her stay in London with Madame Duval she even misses him. In a letter to her friend Maria she exclaims:

> That I should ever have been known to Lord Orville, - that I should have spoken to – have danced with him, - seems now a romantic illusion: and that elegant politeness, that flattering attention, that high-bred delicacy, which so much distinguished him above all other men, and which struck us with such admiration, I now re-trace the remembrance of, rather as belonging to an object of ideal perfection, formed by my own imagination, than to a being of the same race and nature as those with whom I at present converse. (Burney 174)

[117] For shared feelings between characters and readers see chapter 4.2.1
[118] For antagonists as unsuitable partners in romance novels see chapter 4.2
[119] For sympathy see chapter 4.2.1

This passage also shows that Evelina does not enjoy her present company. Although she admires Lord Orville and secretly longs for his company, she does not want to meet him in the company she is now. Hence, Evelina's second desire is to be united with her friends. This passage is able to create suspense as it denies Evelina the fulfilment of two of her desires. Thus, the readers hope for her current situation to change.[120] The third desire concerns Evelina's heritage, which is a mystery. Thus, the desire to know the truth about it exists throughout the whole narrative. Consequently, the audience also experience a constant underlying suspense concerning the mystery of Evelina's birth.[121] This is analysed in more detail in chapter 6.4.

The yearnings of the protagonists in *Jane Eyre* can be easily detected. Although the entire novel is written from Jane's perspective it is clear for the readers that Mr Rochester desires her company. For instance, after the fire incident, Jane announces that she is going to bed, Mr Rochester exclaims: "are you quitting me already, and in that way?" (Brontë Ch. 132) Hence, he does not want her to leave him. Furthermore, she is the person on which he relies the most. When Mr Mason is wounded, he counts on Jane's help. Moreover, Mr Rochester often seeks physical contact in taking her hand. He does so after asking her not to quit him yet, when he learned about the arrival of Mr Mason, and after leading her into the room where the injured Mr Mason lies. Thus, Mr Rochester's longing for Jane seems rather clear to the audience. However, this certainty is in jeopardy when Mr Rochester starts courting Miss Ingram. Although he his full of attention to her, he still constantly wants to be in Jane's company. The recipients start to wonder about Mr Rochester's motives.

In contrast, Jane is constant in her affection to Mr Rochester and desires him at all times. During the stay of Mr Rochester's guest, she constantly observes him. She says:

> No sooner did I see that his attention was riveted on them, and that I might gaze without being observed, than my eyes were drawn involuntarily to his face; I could not keep their lids under control: they would rise, and the irids would fix on him. I looked, and had an acute pleasure in looking, - a precious yet poignant pleasure; pure gold, with a steely point of agony: a pleasure like what the thirst-perished man might feel who knows the well to which he has crept is poisoned, yet stoops and drinks divine draughts nevertheless. (Brontë Ch. 152)

This passage shows Jane's yearning for Mr Rochester. Still, the metaphor shows that she believes him to be out of her reach. This reflection is a descriptive pause. This gives the audience time to contemplate Jane's statements and her affection. They now realise

[120] For hope as an essential element of suspense see chapter 2.4
[121] See also schema of mystery in chapter 5.2

the gravity of her desire.[122] Her strong feelings also put Jane into a difficult position as it makes her vulnerable. Hence, the readers experience suspense because they fear that Jane's feelings can be hurt.[123]

Jane is frequently torn between her desire to be together with Mr Rochester and her conscience. She constantly strives for her independence. After she discovers the existence of Bertha her conscience wins over her desires and she runs away. Still, her feelings for Mr Rochester do not alter. However, Jane does not talk about it for a long time, which keeps the readers in suspense.[124] After having built up a new life Jane states: "Perhaps you think I had forgotten Mr Rochester, reader, amidst these changes of place and fortune. Not for a moment. […] The craving to know what had become of him followed me everywhere;" (Brontë Ch. 353). This statement finally releases the audience from the suspense experienced due to their uncertainty. They did not know what attitude Jane had towards Mr Rochester. Although this is now clear, the readers still experience suspense because they share Jane's feeling of curiosity about Mr Rochester's doings. Both, the heroine and the audience are only partially informed.[125]

A further instance of desire in *Jane Eyre* occurs between St John and Rosamond. St John tells Jane:

> 'It is strange […] that while I love Rosamond Oliver so wildly – with all the intensity, indeed, of a first passion, the object of which is exquisitely beautiful, graceful, and fascinating – I experience at the same time a calm, unwarped consciousness that she would not make me a good wife; […] While something in me […] is acutely sensible to her charms, something else is as deeply impressed with her defects: they are such that she could sympathize in nothing I aspire to – co-operate in nothing I undertook. Rosamond a sufferer, a labourer, a female apostle? Rosamond a missionary's wife? No!' (Brontë Ch. 330-331)

St John's declaration of love shows his deep feeling for Rosamond. It lets the readers hope that both characters will be able to spend a happy life together, especially because their feelings are mutual. However, St John also reveals his real desire: to lead the life of a missionary. He puts this desire over his love; he acts reasonably. Therefore, one can draw similarities between him and Jane. St John follows reason, as did Jane when she left Mr Rochester. She did not want to lead the life of a mistress and wanted to regain her independence. However, there is one significant difference. While St John does not see the possibility to connect his two greatest desires, Jane is able to do so. When she

[122] For pause see chapter 4.1.1.1
[123] For fearing about a character see chapter 4.2.1
[124] For the duration of suspense see chapter 4.1.1.2
[125] See Pfister in chapter 4.3.1

discovers that she is a rich woman, she can be sure about obtaining her independence. Hence, she is now able to follow her heart and go back to Mr Rochester. However, if she actually does so is unclear for some time, because St John asks Jane to accompany him to India. Their marriage would be a reasonable solution. However, as St John is a purely cerebral person unable to follow his heart in matters of love, he is an unsuitable partner for Jane.[126] Therefore, the readers fear that Jane will also react sensibly and accept his offer.[127] This puts them under suspense which is released when the heroine decides to listen to her heart and look for Mr Rochester.

A scene clearly depicts Jane's desire to see Mr Rochester after hearing his voice calling out for her:

> [My senses] rose expectant: eye and ear waited while the flesh quivered on my bones.
> 'What have you heard? What do you see?' asked St John. I saw nothing, but I heard a voice somewhere cry –
> 'Jane! Jane! Jane!' – nothing more.
> 'O God! what is it?' I gasped.
> I might have said, 'Where is it?' for it did not seem in the room – nor in the house – nor in the garden; it did not come out of the air – nor from under the earth – nor from overhead. I had heard it – where or whence, for ever impossible to know! And it was the voice of a human being – a known, loved, well-remembered voice – that of Edward Fairfax Rochester; and it spoke in pain and woe, wildly, eerily, urgently.
> 'I am coming!' I cried. 'Wait for me! Oh, I will come!' (Brontë Ch. 371-372)

When reading this passage the recipients are already in suspense because Jane agreed to marry St John. This is an undesirable ending as Jane would not be entirely happy. Surprisingly, Jane has a telepathic moment: she hears a voice calling her name. This voice seems to come out of nowhere and still Jane is convinced that she heard it. In describing the mystery of the utterance, the presentation of the solution is delayed. The scene is stretched, which generates suspense.[128] Finally, the readers learn that Mr Rochester's voice called out for Jane. This creates a mystery. How can Jane hear his voice when he is nowhere near? Was it actually him calling out for her? Before the readers get an answer to these questions, numerous obstacles are presented. Although Jane immediately travels to Thornfield she only finds a ruin. This contributes to the mystery. What happened? Where is Mr Rochester? Thus, the suspense is increased as

[126] See also antagonist in romance novels in chapter 4.2
[127] For fear as al element of suspense see chapter 2.4
[128] For stretch see chapter 4.1.1.2

well. Only at the end are the readers informed about the fact that Mr Rochester actually called out for Jane.[129]

To sum up, desires and yearning in a romance novel can take on various forms. Most prominently is the desire of the protagonists to be united with each other. However, one is still able to discover other forms of desires, such as acquiring knowledge about a character's past, motives, and intentions. As these desires are unfulfilled for a period of time, the readers are put into constant suspense.

6.4 Obstacles

As mentioned in chapter 3.1 the existence of external or internal barriers is a necessary element of a romance novel. These are especially important for suspense because they put the protagonists' happy union at risk. An example of an external barrier is a separation, which can be physical, as well as induced by society (Regis 32). The former will be analysed in chapter 6.5.

Society is an important barrier in 18th and 19th century romances. Generally, in novels the characters have to orient themselves in the society surrounding them.[130] Furthermore, within the novels analysed in this thesis the protagonists mostly come from different classes. Therefore, they have to overcome the rules set by each class.

In *Pride and Prejudice* Mr Darcy comes from a higher class than Elizabeth. Although this cannot be applied to Mr Bingley and Jane, her family still presents a problem. Mrs Hurst summarizes it: "'I have an excessive regard for Jane Bennet, she is really a very sweet girl, and I wish with all my heart she were well settled. But with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance of it.'" (Austen 33)

Hence, in the case of Jane and Mr Bingley his sisters believe that a relationship is inappropriate. Furthermore, Mr Darcy shares this opinion and persuades Mr Bingley to depart from Netherfield. While Jane initially hopes for his return, this hope is destroyed when a letter from Miss Bingley arrives. In it she announces two major obstacles: firstly, that Mr Bingley is unlikely to return and secondly that she hopes he will marry Mr Darcy's sister. Consequently, the audience is in suspense because they are clueless about how these barriers can be overcome.

As can be seen from Mrs Hurst's previous utterance, the problem of a happy union between Mr Bingley and Jane does not lie in the latter's character, but in her parents' status and behaviour. Mrs Bennet's primary aim is to get her daughters well settled. She

[129] See also schemata of myster in chapter 5.2 and elements of the gothic novel in chapter 3.2
[130] See also first requirement for romance novel (Regis) in chapter 3.1

is described as "a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married" (Austen 4). This description occurring early on in the novel gives the readers the hint that Mrs Bennet's character will lead to problems in the future.[131] Soon after the Bennet family became acquainted with the Bingleys, Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley establish that "the mother was found to be intolerable" (Austen 19). Therefore, the audience is now able to anticipate that Mrs Bennet's behaviour is actually fostering the contrary to what she wants. She scares off potential partners.[132] Hence, the recipients always fear that Mrs Bennet will destroy Jane's chance of being happy. While Mr Bingley is obviously in love with Jane and his sisters pretend to have a high regard towards her, Mrs Bennet's behaviour is able to scare him away. This is mostly due to Mr Bingley listening to the advice of his sisters and his friend Mr Darcy. Consequently, the readers are in constant suspense because they fear that Mr Bingley's and Jane's relationship will be sabotaged by her own mother.[133] This fear is even increased because they frequently read about Elizabeth feeling ashamed because of her mother's behaviour. For instance, the heroine thinks the following: "the general pause which ensued made Elizabeth tremble lest her mother should be exposing herself again." (Austen 41) The greatest embarrassment occurs at the ball at Netherfield. Mrs Bennet talks loudly about the advantages of a match between Jane and Mr Bingley and slanders Lady Lucas. Elizabeth tries in vain to get her mother to speak in a low voice, or to be quiet all together. However, "[h]er mother would talk of her views in the same intelligible tone. Elizabeth blushed and blushed again with shame and vexation." (Austen 86) This also puts the recipients in suspense as they are able to understand Elizabeth's feelings.[134] It is even possible that they also feel ashamed. Thus, they share her emotions and identify with her.[135]

All in all, the relationship between Mrs Bennet and her daughters is very difficult. This fact alone is able to create suspense because such a conflict can be traced back to the drive of FRUCTUS.[136] This theme is mirrored again in the relationship of Mr Bennet and his children and his position in the family. Although he loves his daughter and is especially fond of Elizabeth, he mostly keeps himself out of his wife's affairs. He

[131] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[132] For anticipation see chapter 4.3.2
[133] For the influence of fear on the suspense felt by the readers see chapter 4.2
[134] For empathy see chapter 4.2.1
[135] For identity see chapter 4.2.1
[136] See Koch in chapter 2.1

is rather passive. Therefore, the readers often hope that he will become more active.[137] Consequently, whenever he does, they rejoice. For instance, when Elizabeth refuses to marry Mr Collins, her mother claims that if Elizabeth does not accept him she "will never see her again." (Austen 97). Consequently, the audience now fears that Mr Bennet will oblige his wife's wish and persuade Elizabeth to accept the proposal. This is especially suspenseful because Mr Collins would be an unsuitable partner for the heroine.[138] Mr Bennet says: "'An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From the day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. – Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*.'" (Austen 97) This passage creates suspense at various levels. Mr Bennet's mention of an alternative suggests that Elizabeth is faced with a choice: to marry or refuse Mr Collins. As there are only these two possibilities, the suspense is at its highest.[139] Furthermore, he mentions Mrs Bennet's attitude before he presents his own. Therefore, the presentation of his opinion is retarded and the sentence structure contributes to the suspense.[140] When the audience finally realizes that Elizabeth will not be forced into an unwanted marriage, the suspense felt is released and they experience euphoria.[141]

As mentioned above, Mrs Bennet's behaviour causes problems for her daughters' future relationships. This also concerns Elizabeth and Mr Darcy. As soon as Mr Darcy mentions to Miss Bingley that he finds Elizabeth beautiful, she constantly teases him by mentioning the heroine's intolerable mother. Therefore, the readers fear that Miss Bingley could be successful in her attempt to make Elizabeth appear an undesirable match due to her family connection. As it turns out later, her family represents a great problem for Mr Darcy. Despite their behaviour he finally declares his love to Elizabeth. Still, he tells her that he struggled a lot because "of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination" (Austen 163). Hence, Elizabeth's family presents an external barrier which Mr Darcy chooses to disregard. However, as he treats them as inferior, an internal barrier still exists which opposes a happy union: Mr Darcy's pride. Therefore, although some of the audience's suspense is released because one barrier is removed, a new one increases it even further.

During further meetings between the protagonists, they seem to be able to lay their internal barriers aside. However, before this actually happens a new barrier is

[137] For the element of hope see chapter 2.4
[138] See 'antagonists' in romance novels in chapter 4.2
[139] For the existence of two alternative outcomes see chapter 2.3
[140] For suspense at the level of syntax see chapter 4.1.3
[141] See Zillmann's excitation-transfer system in chapter 4.2

introduced, which comes again in the form of Elizabeth's family: Lydia's elopement. When Mr Darcy hears about it he is "in earnest meditation; his brow contracted, his air gloomy. Elizabeth soon observed, and instantly understood it. Her power was sinking; everything *must* sink under such a proof of family weakness, such an assurance of the deepest disgrace." (Austen 231) Once again are the readers not only able to empathize but also identify with Elizabeth in understanding or even experiencing her shame and despair. [142]

An additional external obstacle opposing a union between Mr Darcy and Elizabeth is Lady de Bourgh's attitudes and beliefs. She thinks Elizabeth to be an unfit match for her nephew. However, this is analysed in more detail in chapter 6.6.

In *Evelina,* the heroine is presumably from a lower class than the hero, too. This is mostly because her heritage is still unclear, which presents a great problem for her social status. Lady Howard explains this problem to the Reverend Villars:

> Surely Sir John Belmont, wretch as he has shewn himself, could never see his accomplished daughter, and not be proud to own her, and eager to secure her the inheritance of his fortune. The admiration she met with in town, though merely the effect of her external attractions, was such, that Mrs. Mirvan assures me, she would have had the most splendid offers, had there not seemed to be some mystery in regard to her birth, which, she was well informed, was assiduously, though vainly, endeavoured to be discovered. (Burney 125)

This problem is further increased when Sir Belmont refuses to acknowledge Evelina as his daughter. This again creates suspense because it applies to the drive of FRUCTUS.[143] The relationship between Evelina and her father is torpedoed by his own behaviour. The problem is intensified when another Miss Belmont appears. Consequently, a mystery is introduced which makes the readers eager to know the truth.[144] Therefore, it is clear that some important information is withheld from the protagonists and the audience. Additionally, because the solution is held back as long as possible, the suspense is increased.[145]

Interestingly, Lord Orville does not care about Evelina's status. He would marry her even without her being acknowledged by Sir Belmont. Therefore, it does not present a serious obstacle for him. However, as the problem has been introduced, the readers still want an answer to this mystery. Furthermore, it is important for Evelina's state of mind. She can only be truly happy if she knows the truth about her heritage. This knowledge is

[142] For identity and empathy see chapter 4.2.1
[143] See Koch in chapter 2.1
[144] See also schema of mystery in chapter 5.2
[145] See chapter 4.3.1

important for her identity. Therefore, the audience gets the impression that the heroine can only be truly happy if Evelina knows who she is and where she comes from. She needs to be sure about her own person before being able to attach herself to another. Consequently, the mystery of her heritage creates suspense until the presentation of a solution.

At first, when Evelina is about to meet Sir Belmont, she can only hear his voice while he talks to Mrs Selwyn. During their long discussion, the audience has to fear that once again Sir Belmont will refuse to meet Evelina. However, Mrs Selwyn is finally able to persuade Sir Belmont to at least see her.

> Then, taking my trembling hand, she led me forward. I would have withdrawn it, and retreated, but as he advanced instantly towards me, I found myself already before him. What a moment for your Evelina! – an involuntary scream escaped me, and covering my face with my hands, I sunk on the floor.
> He had, however, seen me first; for in a voice scarce articulate he exclaimed, 'My God! Does Caroline Evelyn still live!' (Burney 372)

In this passage the readers are finally presented with a meeting between father and daughter. However, they cannot be sure about Sir Belmont's reaction. As Evelina describes her feelings first, the answer is prolonged and the scenes are stretched.[146] When he finally sees his wife's face reflected in Evelina, the audience know that finally, the heroine can be sure of her heritage. Thus, the mystery is solved.[147] However, one obstacle remains. Because Evelina resembles her mother Sir Belmont exclaims that he "can see her no more!" because her sight causes him too much pain. In the end, however, Sir Belmont is able to recover from his shock and gives Evelina away at her wedding. Thus, all suspense experienced is finally released.

However, before Evelina's marriage there is still one person opposing a union, the Reverend Villars. He tells Evelina to leave Lord Orville. Thus, her benefactor is the person standing in the way of Evelina's happiness. However, as the Reverend Villars only wants to protect her, the readers cannot really be mad at him. Still, together with Evelina they hope that he will change his mind.[148] When finally a letter arrives giving his blessing, Evelina rejoices. In addition, the audience shares similar feelings and is relieved that "no obstacle remained". (Burney 403)

In *Evelina* the readers are able to detect a further external barrier torpedoing the relationship between Mr Macartney and the second Miss Belmont: the law. Both

[146] For stretch see chapter 4.1.1.2
[147] See schema of mystery in chapter 5.2
[148] See also chapter 4.2.1

characters met in France and fell in love. However, as it turns out Sir Belmont had an affair with Mr Macartney's mother. Hence, the lovers would be brother and sister and therefore related. This scenario is able to create a lot of suspense because incest contradicts the human drive of SEXUS.[149] Furthermore, the recipients are unable to find a solution to this problem. Therefore, they are torn between hope and fear. They hope that a solution will present itself, but fear that this couple will not find a happy ending.[150] Consequently, when this love story ends happily at the end, the readers are thrilled. This emotion is even doubled as the presentation of the solution also solves a further mystery: the truth about Evelina's heritage is revealed.

In *Wuthering Heights* the protagonists also belong to different classes. However, this time it is the heroine who is in a higher one; although, this should not be the case as Catherine's father intended to raise Heathcliff as one of his own children. But as soon as Hindley becomes the master of Wuthering Heights, he denies Heathcliff his rightful education and a comfortable life. This is also one of the reasons why Catherine marries Mr Linton. She exclaims: "'[…] if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power.'" (Brontë E. 58)

However, this is not the only reason. Catherine mentions further advantages of a match between herself and Edgar Linton: "'And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband.'" (Brontë E. 55). Therefore, although one of Catherine's motivations is the improvement of her own social status, another one is to help Heathcliff. Hence, a marriage seems to be the perfect solution for everyone. However, Catherine still has some reservations and is unsure if she has made the right choice. Nelly has problems understanding this, especially because Catherine claims that she truly loves Edgar Linton. Nelly asks "'[…] All seems smooth and easy: where is the obstacle?'" (Brontë E. 56)

This questions hints at the existence of obstacles. Thus, the readers realise that Catherine has not revealed all her thoughts and are in suspense as they want to know them.[151] Furthermore, posing a question creates suspense as the audience is encouraged to form their own theories.[152] Soon enough, the recipients are presented with an answer because Catherine exclaims:

> '[…] In my soul and I my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong!' (Brontë E. 56)

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[149] See Koch in chapter 2.1
[150] For "hope and fear" as elements see chapter 2.4 and chapter 4.2.1
[151] For hints and missing information see also chapter 4.3.1
[152] See suspense at the level of syntax in chapter 4.1.3

> [About Heathcliff:] '[…] he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.' (Brontë E. 57)
> '[…] My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! […]' (Brontë E. 59)

These exclamations show Catherine's deep love for Heathcliff. Consequently, they arouse a lot of questions and are able to confuse the recipients. They ask why Catherine marries Linton if she knows that she will not be happy. Why is she acting against her heart? This seems predestined to lead to disaster. Therefore, they anticipate a bad outcome from her actions.[153] As is turns out later, this holds true.

All in all, one of the reasons for barriers coming between protagonists is that they come from different classes. However, Catherine also harms herself, as she marries Linton for the wrong reasons. She is well aware of the fact the she only truly loves Heathcliff. Still, she does not listen to her soul and heart. Hence, she is insecure and torn between two men. Once again suspense is created because the readers are eager for the presentation of a positive ending. But their hope is not fulfilled.

In *Jane Eyre* no person openly forbids the protagonists' love, although they are from different classes. However, as in *Evelina* another external barrier is presented: the law. At Jane and Mr Rochester's wedding, a solicitor claims that "Mr Rochester has a wife now living." (Brontë Ch. 255) This exclamation comes as quite a surprise to the audience.[154] At first, they do not want to believe it. However, after some discussions Mr Rochester confesses that he "meant, however, to be a bigamist" (Brontë Ch. 257).[155] Furthermore, his wife is presented. From this moment onwards a happy union, especially in the form of a marriage, seems impossible; this again puts the readers under a lot of suspense. In addition, the recipients now pity Jane. They feel for her, especially after Jane reflects on her situation and they see how broken she is. She concludes: "Jane Eyre […] was a cold, solitary girl again: her life was pale; her prospects were desolate." (Brontë Ch. 261) This sentence rouses empathic feelings in the recipients, which again heightens the suspense.[156] This is even further enhanced because Jane's solitude is a reoccurring theme. From her childhood onwards, she seems to be alone in the world. Her aunt and cousins never love her and torment her. Once again suspense is created because of basic instincts. Usually, the nutrition of the offspring is a biological instinct.

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[153] For anticipation see also chapter 4.3.2
[154] See also chapter 2.2.2
[155] See also Koch about SEXUS in chapter 2.1
[156] For empathy see chapter 4.2.1

However, because Mrs Reed refuses to care properly for Jane, suspense is experienced.[157] Due to the fact that Mrs Reed treats Jane unjustly, the audience pities her and develops antipathy toward Mrs Reed. She takes on the role of an antagonist. When it is certain that Jane is allowed to visit Lowood, she finally finds the strength to tell Mrs Reed her opinion:

> 'I am glad you are no relation of mine: I will never call you aunt again so long as I live. […] and if any one asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty. […] People think you a good woman, but you are bad, hardhearted. *You* are deceitful!' (Brontë Ch. 29)

This thrills the recipients because for the first time Jane is able to gain her independence.[158] She claims: "[M]y soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph, I ever felt. It seemed as if an invisible bond had burst, and that I had struggled out into unhoped-for liberty." (Brontë Ch. 30) With this exclamation the readers believe that Jane is free from her aunt's oppression. However, as it turns out later, this outburst is not without consequence. As the audience discovers at a later point, Mrs Reed confesses to Jane that she received a letter from her uncle. However, she refused to tell her about it because she "disliked [her] too fixedly and thoroughly ever to lend a hand in lifting [her] to prosperity." (Brontë Ch. 210). Hence, while Mrs Reed talks about her past behaviour, the recipients now realise that Jane's past actions are of consequence for the present.[159] Furthermore, when rereading the novel the readers see that Mrs Reed's confession also foreshadows Jane's future inheritance from her uncle.[160]

Jane is confronted a second time with her loneliness when she is at school. There, she finally finds a friend: Helen Burns. However, she dies and Jane is alone once more. Therefore, when Mr Rochester finally proposes the recipients are thrilled because Jane found a person who truly loves her. Now, however, she is alone again. This puts the audience into a lot of distress.[161]

A last external barrier is the introduction of a false hero or heroine. However, this has been investigated in chapter 6.2.

As mentioned above, there are also internal obstacles. Examples are a character's beliefs, values, temperament, and attitudes (Regis 32). In *Pride and Prejudice* the

[157] See Koch and FRUCTUS in chapter 2.1
[158] See chapter 2.2.3
[159] For analepsis see chapter 4.1.1.1
[160] For rereading see chapter 4.2.2
[161] See Zillmann in chapter 4.2

attitudes of the protagonists can be found in the title. This is the reason for an initial dislike. Elizabeth says about Mr Darcy that "[e]verybody is disgusted with his pride." (Austen 68) Consequently, the readers feel suspense because they do not know if Elizabeth will ever warm up to Mr Darcy, who they have made out as the hero of the story. As various episodes are seen from his perspective, they are able to understand some of his behaviour.[162] Still, his pride always gets in his way, even during his first proposal to Elizabeth. This becomes clear as he introduces his proposal with the words "In vain have I struggled." (Austen 161) Furthermore, he is so proud that he believes Elizabeth has to accept his hand: especially because he regards her to be inferior. Consequently, the heroine rejects him and accuses him of treating her sister and Mr Wickham badly. Only after Mr Darcy explains himself in a letter does Elizabeth realize that she has misjudged him. "She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. – Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think, without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd." (Austen 177) Thus, the protagonists are now both aware of their faults. Suspense is now created because the recipients want to know if they are able to overcome them.

6.5 Spatial Separation

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English* a separation is "a period of time that people spend apart from each other". The readers of a romance novel wish nothing more than the happy union of the protagonists. Hence, this theme is especially suspenseful because when lovers cannot be united their partnership is at stake. As analysed in the next chapter, one reason for a separation is that somebody forbids the relationship. However, there are many more.

In *Wuthering Heights,* Heathcliff leaves for three years after overhearing Catherine's conversation with Nelly. He does not return for three years. During this time Mr Linton and Catherine marry. Heathcliff's return signals a change and foreshadows negative occurrences because Nelly says "[Catherine and Mr Linton] were really in possession of deep and growing happiness. It ended. […] it ended when circumstances caused each to feel that the one's interest was not the chief consideration in the other's thoughts." (Brontë E. 66)[163]

Furthermore, in *Wuthering Heights* the greatest form of separation occurs: death. This is especially suspenseful as it is irreversible. Catherine's death comes as quite a

[162] See also chapter 4.1.2
[163] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1

surprise. Although she suffers from a serious illness, the readers do not expect the heroine to die in the middle of the novel. Consequently, they now feel at a loss and do not know how the story can proceed. However, the text provides a hint because Cathy's birth is connected with the heroine's death. As Cathy has already been mentioned at the beginning of the story, the recipients can now assume that she plays a significant role for the future developments of the plot.[164] However, information about how Cathy ends up living at Wuthering Heights is still withheld.[165] Hence, the readers are able to use their own imagination and develop some theories.[166]

Although Catherine's death comes as a surprise, the separation between the protagonists started during their lifetime: the heroine chose to marry Mr Linton. Shortly before her death Heathcliff exclaims:

> *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy? […] Because misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or satan could inflict would have parted us, *you* of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart – *you* have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine. […] Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be when you – oh God! Would *you* like to live with your soul in the grave? (Brontë E. 117)

This exclamation shows the severity of their separation. It leads to death and destruction. Catherine's death is already hinted at in this speech, although it is still uncertain. With the expression "when you – oh God!" Heathcliff lets his sentence hang in mid-air. This incomplete phrase is especially suspenseful as the readers have to interpret it.[167] Obviously Heathcliff refers to Catherine's coming death. Hence, in this way it is foreshadowed.[168] The next sentence is more explicit. Heathcliff's love for Catherine is constant and he cannot live without her. He and Catherine have similar thoughts: that they share a soul. Before marrying Edgar Linton, Catherine claims that she is Heathcliff. Hence, when Heathcliff mentions that he is unable to live without his soul, he refers to Catherine's death. Furthermore, the audience is confronted with Heathcliff's great desperation. This is also suspenseful as the recipients are presented with his human side. Consequently, they are now in suspense concerning his future behaviour.

A further example of a separation is Isabella's inability to return to Thrushcross Grange after her marriage with Heathcliff. In a letter to Nelly she writes:

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[164] For the significance of the order of time see chapter 4.1.1.1
[165] See chapter 4.3.1
[166] See also Bonheim in chapter 4.2
[167] For suspense at the level of syntax see chapter 4.1.3
[168] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1

> Inform Edgar that I'd give the world to see his face again – that my heart returned to Thrushcross Grange in twenty-four hours after I left it, and is there at this moment, full of warm feelings for him, and Catherine! *I can't follow it though* – (those words are underlined) they need not expect me, and they may draw what conclusions they please; (Brontë E. 99)

This letter clearly signifies Isabella's desperation. It becomes even clearer because her perspective is presented.[169] Thus, the audience is able to understand her agony and empathize with her.[170] As Nelly remarks, Isabella underlines the words stating her inability to follow her heart and go back home: by drawing special attention to this sentence, suspense is created at a syntactic level.[171] Lastly, her obvious omission of information as to why she cannot return, generates suspense.[172] Isabella's desperation grows as Nelly has to tell her that Edgar wants that "his household and the household [in Wuthering Heights] should drop intercommunication, as nothing good could come of keeping it up." (Brontë E. 107) Therefore, because of Isabella's spatial separation from her brother, Edgar also distances himself emotionally from her. As Isabella's unhappiness seems to be permanent, the readers are in distress: this gives way to euphoria when she manages to run away.[173]

In *Jane Eyre* separations occur in various forms. The most significant of all, is the heroine's choice to leave Mr Rochester after discovering that he is still married. She does not want to live the life of a mistress and tries to regain her independence. She tells him straightforwardly that she "will not be [his]" (Brontë Ch. 279). In stressing the word "not" she emphasizes her determination. This exclamation shocks Mr Rochester deeply and he asks her "'Jane, do you mean to go one way in the world, and to let me go another?'" She answers simply by saying, "'I do.'" (Brontë Ch. 279). This again creates a lot of suspense as Jane appears to be very certain about her choice; there seems to be no way that they can stay together. She runs away, starts a new life and gets a new job, which makes her comparatively happy. Jane states:

> I felt I became a favourite in the neighbourhood. Whenever I went out, I heard on all sides cordial salutations, and was welcomed with friendly smiles. […] At this period of my life, my heart far oftener swelled with thankfulness than sank with dejection: and yet, reader, to tell you all, in the midst of this calm, this useful existence […] I used to rush into strange dreams at night: dreams manycoloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy – dreams where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure, with agitating risk and

[169] For perspective see chapter 4.1.2
[170] For empathy see chapter 4.2.1
[171] See chapter 4.1.3
[172] See chapter 4.3.1
[173] See also Zillmann's excitation-transfer system in chapter 4.2

> romantic chance, I still again and again met Mr Rochester, always at some exciting crisis; and then the sense of being in his arms, hearing his voice, meeting his eye, touching his hand and cheek, loving him, being loved by him – the hope of passing a lifetime at his side, would be renewed, with all its first force and fire. Then I awoke. (Brontë Ch. 324)

This passage clearly depicts Jane's great desire to be reunited with Mr Rochester. Although she leads a comfortable life something is missing: the man she loves. The readers experience suspense because they are able to understand Jane's yearning. They want her to get her happy ending. However, as Mr Rochester is married and Jane went through great trouble so that he is unable to find her, this hope seems to be in vain.[174]

Another person who is separated from Mr Rochester is Bertha; she is also locked away from the rest of the world. The readers do not know about her existence for a long time. However, they are frequently able to detect hints. For instance, during a conversation between Jane and Mr Rochester, he announces:

> 'When I was as old as you, I was a feeling fellow enough […] but Fortune has knocked me about since' (Brontë Ch. 115)
> 'When fate wronged me, I had not the wisdom to remain cool: I turned desperate; then I degenerated […] since, happiness is irrevocably denied me, I have a right to get pleasure out of life: and I *will* get it, cost what it may.' (Brontë Ch 118-119)

This speech hints at Mr Rochester's past marriage, which he regards as a curse. However, as he does not tell Jane about it, the readers are made curious. Additionally, as they are not presented with an answer they experience suspense.[175] Furthermore, this passage is foreshadowing Mr Rochester's attempt to find happiness in marrying Jane, who is the person he loves.[176]

Further hints of Bertha's existence can be detected when she is able to break free from her prison, which presents a threat to all the inhabitants of Thornfield. However, this only becomes clear when rereading the novel. As the recipients then know how dangerous Bertha's actions were, they experience suspense at different episodes in the story.[177] For instance the readers are now in the picture as to who laid the fire in Mr Rochester's room or injured Mr Mason. Hence, when reading the novel repeatedly the audience are able to understand Mr Rochester's behaviour and why he is always so secretive.

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[174] For empathy see chapter 4.2.1
[175] For curiosity see chapter 2.2.5
[176] For foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[177] See also rereading in chapter 4.2.2

When Bertha's existence is finally revealed, Jane describes the long route to her prison. This shows the isolation of Bertha's room and that Mr Rochester intended to separate her from the rest of the world. However, he is unable to keep her completely out of his life. Her existence prevents the protagonists from marrying and leads to their separation.

In *Evelina* there is no real separation between the protagonists. However, Evelina and Lord Orville do not see each other for a long time. Hence, when they meet again in Marybone-gardens, the recipients experience excitement because they are held in constant agitation about the possibility of a further encounter. Hence, over a long period of time they experience an underlining feeling of suspense.[178] Although this is the only form of separation which actually occurs between the protagonists, a potential one is mentioned at another point in the novel. During Evelina's stay at Berry Hill, the Reverend Villars tells her in a letter to leave Lord Orville. As Evelina is an obedient girl she announces:

> But I will leave this place, - leave Lord Orville, - leave him, perhaps, for ever! […] The more I consider of parting with Lord Orville, the less fortitude do I feel to bear the separation; - the friendship he has shewn me, - his politeness, - his sweetness of manners, - his concern in my affairs, - his solicitude do oblige me, - all, all to be given up!- No, I cannot tell him I am going, I dare not trust myself to take leave of him […] I follow your advice, avoid his sight, and shun his society! (Burney 322)

This passage clearly depicts Evelina's inner conflict between obeying the person who has been like a father to her, and the person she loves. This becomes especially clear by the language she uses. She enumerates his qualities in elliptic sentence structures.[179] Furthermore, she emphasizes the pain a separation would cause before complying with the Reverend Villars' request. Therefore, the audience are now frightened that Evelina will actually leave him and that the protagonists will be separated by distance. However, her next letter already announces a delay of her plans and the readers begin to renew their hopes that the hero and the heroine can stay together.[180]

In *Pride and Prejudice* there is one attempt to separate the protagonists; Lady de Bourgh tries to do so at the end of the novel. However, she is unsuccessful. Hence, the main characters are never actually forced to keep a spatial distance. Still, they frequently do not see each other for a while. Their lack of contact is particularly

[178] For duration of suspense see chapter 4.1.1.2
[179] See also chapter 4.1.3
[180] For hope and fear as elements of suspense see chapter 2.4

suspenseful after Elizabeth refuses to marry Mr Darcy; the readers do not know if there is still a chance of the protagonists being united. Thus, as in *Evelina* they are agitated until a meeting occurs. This suspense is intensified as Elizabeth constantly muses about her mistake: being prejudiced. For example, she believes that "[i]n her own past behaviour, there was a constant source of vexation and regret" (Austen 180).

Additionally, there is a separation concerning the secondary characters which is far more dramatic. Mr Bingley and Jane seem to be completely happy until he suddenly and surprisingly leaves Netherfield for London "without any intention of coming back again." (Austen 100) Thus, although this relationship seemed so promising, it now appears to be torpedoed for ever. The suspense is more intense as the readers do not know the exact reasons for his departure.[181] When Jane also travels to London, the audience renew their hopes that they will meet again. However, any hopes they have are destroyed by one of Jane's letters to Elizabeth. After Jane receives a visit from Miss Bingley she writes the following about Mr Bingley:

> [I]f he had at all cared about me, we must have met long, long ago. He knows of my being in town, I am certain, from something [Miss Bingley] said herself; and yet it should seem by her manner of talking, as if she wanted to persuade herself that he is really partial to Miss Darcy. […] Miss Bingley said something of his never returning to Netherfield again, of giving up the house, but not with any certainty. (Austen 127)

This passage clearly signals to the audience that Mr Bingley does not intend to see Jane. However, they wonder about his reasons. He seemed to be so agreeable and madly in love with Jane in the country. His behaviour does not make any sense. Thus, the recipients contemplate the true reasons. This puts them into a state of suspense.[182] Because it seems unlikely that Mr Bingley will return to Netherfield, a meeting between him and Jane now seems impossible, and their separation final. However, at the end of the sentence, Jane mentions that this plan is not certain yet. Therefore, the readers are given some hope that a happy ending is still possible.[183]

6.6 Forbidden Love

As previously mentioned, the union of the protagonists is a desire that accompanies most people when reading a romance novel. Hence, any reasons preventing this union create suspense. Furthermore, the theme of forbidden love can be traced back to the

[181] See also suspense creation through withholding information in chapter 4.3.1
[182] For suspense creation through reader involvement see chapter 4.2
[183] For hope as an element of suspense see chapter 2.4

drive of SEXUS. A wish for connection between two people is rooted in every human being. Therefore, a prohibition creates suspense.[184] The characters' happiness can be ruined by external circumstances and by other characters who forbid them to be together. The former has been analysed in chapter 6.4. Frequently, prohibitions do not only prevent relationships between the protagonists, but also between secondary characters.

In *Pride and Prejudice* Lady Catherine de Bourgh is the character who tries to prevent a relationship between Mr Darcy and Elizabeth. This, however, only happens after the protagonists see one another as a possible partner. At this point in the story Elizabeth does not dare to believe that Mr Darcy still desires to marry her. Thus, Lady de Bourgh's visit comes as a surprise. The readers ponder the reasons of this visit and are in suspense until the answer is given.[185] Lady de Bourgh announces:

> 'A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told, that not only your sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that *you*, that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, my own nephew, Mr Darcy. Though I *know* it must be a scandalous falsehood; though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.' (Austen 294)

> 'Let me be rightly understood. This match, to which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place. No, never. Mr. Darcy is engaged to *my daughter*. […]' (Austen 296)

Hence, she tries to oppose a possible marriage between her nephew and Elizabeth. This creates suspense as the audience has to fear that Lady de Bourgh is going to be successful in her attempt. It soon turns out that she has no influence on Elizabeth. However, the danger of her having power over Mr Darcy still exists. As it turns out later, the protagonists defy Lady de Bourgh and marry without her consent. Thus, the suspense experienced by the recipients is released. Lady de Bourgh's attempted intervention is an element frequently found in romance novels.[186]

In *Jane Eyre* there is no person forbidding the protagonists' love. The servants only frown upon it. This is mostly due to the age difference and because Jane is a governess. Nevertheless, their engagement is accepted. The only thing opposing their marriage is the law, as it forbids bigamy. However, this is analysed in chapter 6.4.

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[184] See Koch chapter 2.1
[185] For "surprise" see chapter 2.2.2
[186] See Regis: additional elements of romance novels in chapter 3.1

In *Evelina* there is nothing really forbidding the union of the protagonists. However, the Reverend Villars once tries to persuade Evelina to leave Lord Orville. In addition, there are instances where secondary characters face problems concerning their love. As in *Jane Eyre* the law is the barrier preventing a union between Mr Macartney and the second Miss Belmont. However, both prohibitions have been investigated in chapter 6.4.

Lastly, in *Wuthering Heights* Mr Linton forbids his daughter to see her cousin Linton. He explains his reasons to Cathy later.

> 'No, it was not because I disliked Mr Heathcliff, but because Mr Heathcliff dislikes me; and is a most diabolical man, delighting to wrong and ruin those he hates, if they give him the slightest opportunity. I knew that you could not keep up an acquaintance with your cousin, without being brought into contact with him; and I knew he would detest you, on my account; so for your own good, and nothing else, I took precautions that you should not see Linton again. […]' (Brontë E. 161-162)

This shows the audience Mr Linton's perspective, which seems sensible. Thus, the readers believe that he made the right choice.[187] However, as Cathy refuses to listen to her father or accept his reasons, they have to fear that evil will come out of her future behaviour. She blames her father for keeping her away from her cousin. Therefore, the recipients now anticipate that she is going to take action in order to undermine her father.[188] However, they are still uncertain as to how she will go about it.[189] Thus, they have to wait in suspense for this information.

6.7 Danger

As investigated in the chapters above, danger is frequently seen as an essential element for the creation of suspense. Lewis (7) has established: "the greater the danger the greater is the fear, and, therefore, the experience of suspense." However, romance novels are not usually associated with danger. Still, one is able to find dangerous instances. Those frequently comply with the schema of suspense proper.[190] Many dangers are psychological. For instance, the characters' attitudes or beliefs can present a threat to their happiness. Other dangers are external, such as the obstacles mentioned in the chapters 6.4-6.6, and are able to prevent a union. This chapter focuses on physical dangers threatening the characters.

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[187] See also perspective in chapter 4.1.2
[188] For anticipation see chapter 4.3.2
[189] For uncertainty see chapter 4.3.3
[190] For examples of dangerous scenes in the novel see also chapter 5.3

In *Jane Eyre* the protagonist is in danger of being physically harmed although she is not aware of it. Bertha frequently comes near Jane. However, amazingly she does not hurt her. There are many instances mentioning her visits. For instance one can read the following in the novel: ”This was a demoniac laugh – low, suppressed, and deep – uttered, as it seemed, at the very keyhole of my chamber door.” (Brontë Ch. 129) The description of the laugh suggests that the person to whom it belongs might be dangerous.[191] Furthermore, the question is raised as to who this person is and why she comes to Jane’s door.[192] As it turns out Jane is safe. However, it is Mr Rochester who is at great risk of being killed as Bertha set his bed on fire.

> I became further aware of a strong smell of burning. Something creaked: it was a door ajar; and that door was Mr Rochester’s, and the smoke rushed in a cloud from thence. […] I thought no more of Grace Poole, or the laugh: in an instant, I was within the chamber. Tongues of flames darted round the bed: the curtains were on fire. In the midst of blaze and vapour, Mr Rochester lay stretched motionless, in deep sleep. (Brontë Ch 130)

When reading this passage the recipients are already in suspense because they wonder about the demonic laugh Jane heard at her door. Then the real danger is introduced bit by bit. When Jane realises that something is burning, the audience are aware of an actual threat. When they finally know that Mr Rochester is about to burn in his sleep, they are in suspense because they do not know if the scene will end happily. As in the protagonists’ first meeting, it is Jane who is able to save and help Mr Rochester. His initial reaction is to accuse her of being a sorceress. Hence, he relates Jane to supernatural mysterious superstitions. Suspense is experienced because the information about who is the true offender is withheld from the audience. Hence, a mystery is introduced, which is able to create a lot of suspense.[193] Still, the readers try to find a logical explanation for the strange occurrences. This is delivered by Jane and Mr Rochester. During Jane’s description of the fire, she mentions Grace Poole. Furthermore, Mr Rochester tells her that Grace was the offender. However, this is a misdirection, which becomes clear when rereading the novel.[194] In addition, suspense is even increased because Jane, as the narrating character, doesn’t know the whole truth behind this mysterious occurrence; therefore, the readers are only partially informed,

[191] For suspense on a lexical-semantic level see chapter 4.1.3
[192] For missing information see chapter 4.3.1
[193] See also schema of mystery in chapter 5.2
[194] See also schema of mystery; for rereading see chapter 4.2.2

too.[195] However, when the recipients read the novel for the first time, they can only assume this, especially because Mr Rochester behaves so strangely. However, when rereading the story, they are aware of Jane's ignorance. Therefore they experience suspense because they empathize with Jane and are unable to communicate the truth to her.[196]

Jane is in an extremely precarious situation the night before her wedding day; in all likelihood she could have been seriously harmed. Later, she tells Mr Rochester about it:

> I heard a rustling […] a form emerged from the closet; it took the light, held it aloft, and surveyed the garments pendent from the portmanteau. […] I had risen up in bed, I bent forward: first surprised, then bewilderment came over me; and then my blood crept cold through my veins. […] The shape standing before me had never crossed my eyes within the precincts of Thornfield Hall before;" (Brontë Ch. 249-250)

This passage contributes to the mystery. The readers are at a loss as to who this figure could be. Furthermore, through the choice of vocabulary such as: "my blood crept cold through my veins" (Brontë Ch 249) the suspense is increased.[197] At a later point, the audience learns that Jane was in greater danger than previously believed because Mr Rochester exclaims: "I thank Providence, who watched over you, that she spent her fury on your wedding apparel" (Brontë Ch. 273). Consequently, the readers now realise Jane's luck. Furthermore, when rereading the scene they know about the real danger and experience a different form of suspense. Therefore, scenes which previously seemed mysterious and puzzling are perceived as suspenseful during repeated reading.[198]

Jane is frequently confronted with physical danger. This starts in her childhood when her cousin abuses her. During an argument between the two of them, Jane describes his aggressiveness: "He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant, a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent suffering". (Brontë Ch 7) This passage shows the terror of her childhood. Suspense is experienced because the readers empathize with Jane, who is physically hurt by her cousin and even bleeding.[199] This scene results in psychological abuse by her aunt. Jane is locked into a room, where she experiences terror and finally faints. She

[195] See also limited point of view in chapter 4.1.2 and Pfister about partially informed characters and recipients in chapter 4.3.1
[196] See chapter 4.2.2
[197] See suspense at a lexical-semantic level in chapter 4.1.3
[198] See rereading in chapter 4.2.3
[199] For empathy see chapter 4.2.1

even becomes so ill that Bessie fears that "she might die" (Brontë Ch. 14). Hence, the audience know that Jane is in actual danger of being seriously harmed. They are in constant suspense because they hope that she is able to escape her childhood home. Hence, when she finally is able to go to Lowood, they rejoice.[200] However, there she also suffers to some degree. When observing Helen Burns being punished she exclaims: "I am far younger than you, and I could not bear it." (Brontë Ch. 47) Helen answers the following: "'Yet it would be your duty to bear it, if you could not avoid it: it is weak and silly to say you *cannot bear* what it is your fate to be required to bear.'" (Brontë Ch. 47) This announcement already foreshadows that Jane is going to experience more sufferings and that she has to find the strength to bear them.[201]

In *Wuthering Heights* many of the characters are in physical danger, especially because the book is full of violence. The readers are confronted with this for the first time during Lockwood's visit to Wuthering Heights. Numerous instances of violence happen there. For instance, Lockwood observes a fight between Heathcliff and Cathy. "Heathcliff lifted his hand, and the speaker sprang to a safer distance, obviously acquainted with its weight." (Brontë E. 21) The recipients wonder about the characters' stories and want to know what has happened to make them the persons they are now. Hence, suspense is experienced until Nelly starts telling her story.[202]

Additionally, the protagonists are well acquainted with violence as they have experienced it since their childhood. Hindley frequently hits Heathcliff. For instance, Nelly tells a story about how Heathcliff provokes Hindley: "Hindley threw it, hitting him on the breast, and down he fell, but staggered up immediately, breathless and white;" (Brontë E. 27) Their violent attitudes remain in their adulthood. For instance, Hindley tells Isabella that he plans to kill Heathcliff. He "cannot resist going up with [a pistol] every night, and trying [Heathcliff's] door. If once [he] find[s] is open, he's done for!" (Brontë E. 102). Therefore, whenever the audience read about such violent instances, they are able to imagine a bad outcome, as this is very likely. Hence, they experience suspense as the use of violence rouses questions about the reasons for such behaviour.[203] Furthermore, as such violent scenes frequently lead to a threatening situation, the recipients anticipate a further dangers.[204] For example, Nelly tells Lockwood how she found Isabella's dog:

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[200] See Zillmann's excitation-transfer system in chapter 4.2
[201] For suspense creation through foreshadowing see chapter 4.1.1.1
[202] For missing information see chapter 4.3.1
[203] For missing information see chapter 4.3.1
[204] For anticipation see chapter 4.3.2

> My surprise and perplexity were great to discover, by touch more than vision, Miss Isabella's springer, Fanny, suspended to a handkerchief, and nearly at its last gasp. I quickly released the animal, and lifted it into the garden. I had seen it follow its mistress upstairs, when she went to bed; and wondered much how it could have got out there, and what mischievous person had treated it so. (Brontë E. 94)

This passage presents the audience with another riddle which creates suspense.[205] However, due to prior experience the reader anticipates a bad outcome to this mysterious situation. Soon after, this suspicion is confirmed as Nelly finds out that Isabella has eloped with Heathcliff.

Catherine is also not unfamiliar with violence, but she mostly presents a danger to herself. She is torn between two men; the one she married and the one she truly loves. She exclaims: "I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own. That will be a prompt way of finishing all" (Brontë E. 85). This is also the start of Catherine's illness which then leads to her death. The story does not provide a solution to avert this. Thus, the readers do not experience the desired relief and are kept in suspense until they are presented with a satisfying solution.[206]

In *Evelina*, there are three instances, where the heroine is in real danger of getting physically hurt. Firstly, the heroine is nearly assaulted at Vauxhall.[207] The other two instances occur in connection with a carriage ride. Interestingly, in all of those scenes Sir Clement is involved. He is always involved when Evelina is in physical danger. Consequently, he takes on the role of an antagonist and becomes an unlikeable character. As soon as he is in a powerful position the readers are in suspense because they are afraid that he could do as he likes and harm the heroine.[208]

For instance, after a visit to the opera Evelina loses her party and is desperate. Her rescue presents itself in form of Sir Clement. He offers to bring her home in his carriage. However, during the ride he makes advances. While Evelina tries to ward him off, she realizes that they are going the wrong way. From minute to minute she becomes more desperate. At the same time the suspense is increased.

> I began to wonder that we were not in Queen-Ann-Street, and begged he would desire the coachman to drive faster. […]
> I now began to apprehend that [Sir Clement] had himself ordered the man to go a wrong way, and I was so much alarmed at the idea, that, the very instant it occurred to me, I let down the glass, and made a sudden effort to open the

[205] See also schema of mystery in chapter 5.2
[206] See also chapter 4.2
[207] See chapter 5.3
[208] See also chapter 4.2.1

> chariot-door myself, with a view of jumping into the street: but he caught hold of me […]
> Never, in my whole life, have I been so terrified. I broke forcibly from him, and putting my head out of the window, called aloud to the man to stop. Where we then were I know not, but I saw not a human being, or I should have called for help. (Burney 99-100)

This passage clearly depicts the heroine's desperation, especially as she is ready to jump out of the carriage. All of Sir Clement's attempts to calm her down are in vain. The readers now share Evelina's terror, which is constantly growing.[209] Furthermore, the use of words or phrases such as "terrified" and "he caught hold of me" intensify the suspense.[210]

The only novel which is suspenseful without putting the characters in physical danger is *Pride and Prejudice.* However, as has been seen in the chapters above, there are obstacles and threats which endanger the union of the protagonists.

6.8 Happy Ending

A happy ending is the desired outcome for all romance novels. However, it is not perceived as being especially suspenseful. This is mostly because it is expected from a certain point onwards, especially if the declaration of love has already occurred. Still, the presentation of a happy ending is important in connection with the relief of suspense.[211] When the protagonists finally declare their love for each other, the recipients' suspense is released and they feel euphoria, excitement, and thrill. This can also be accompanied by physical reactions.[212] Furthermore, a happy ending is a necessary element of every romance novel.[213]

Evelina ends with the happy marriage of the heroine with Lord Orville. She concludes in a last letter: "All is over, my dearest Sir, and the fate of your Evelina is decided! This morning, with fearful joy, and trembling gratitude, she united herself for ever with the object of her dearest, her eternal affection!" (Burney 406) Hence, the audience is presented with the desired solution and all suspense is gone.

Similarly, *Jane Eyre* and *Pride and Prejudice* end with the marriage of the protagonists. However, the recipients are also provided with further information. Frequently, they ask themselves what happens after the marriage. This curiosity again

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[209] For identity and empathy see chapter 4.2.1
[210] See suspense at a lexical-semantic level in chapter 4.1.3
[211] See chapter 4.2
[212] See thrill in chapter 2.3.3; see also Zilmann's excitation-transfer system in chapter 4.2
[213] See Regis in chapter 3.1

can lead to suspense.[214] These two novels deliver an answer. In *Jane Eyre* the heroine says: “My Edward and I, then, are happy: and the more so, because those we most love are happy likewise.” (Brontë Ch. 400) She then goes on to describe the tales of the other characters. This can also be found in *Pride and Prejudice*. In addition, the removal of the last obstacle is presented: Lady de Bourgh is finally able to accept the protagonists’ love.

In *Wuthering Heights* there is no happy ending in the traditional sense. Instead the secondary characters finally find love and are happy at last. When Hareton and Cathy decide to marry, Nelly states: “The crown of all my wishes will be the union of those two. I shall envy no one on their wedding day: there won’t be a happier woman than myself in England! (Brontë E. 230) Hence, the readers feel suspense relief as the two characters that had to face many hardships, are finally rewarded and joyful. The two protagonists, on the other hand, are both dead at the end of the novel. However, this is the only way that enables them to find their happy ending: in death. A conclusion is presented in that a young shepherd observes the protagonists’ ghosts: “’They’s Heathcliff, and a woman, yonder, under t’Nab […].’” (Brontë 244) Although Nelly claims that she was unable to see anything, the readers can choose to believe that the Catherine and Heathcliff have found their happiness.

[214] See chapter 2.2.5

7. Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate whether suspense can be found in romance novels of the 18th and 19th centuries. Furthermore, it aimed to illustrate in what ways and at which levels suspense is created and if a novel is still suspenseful when it is reread. An analysis of the four romance novels: *Evelina, Pride and Prejudice, Jane Eyre,* and *Wuthering Heights,* was carried out to answer these questions. The results shown are based on these answers.

It can be concluded that in these romance novels suspense is created at various levels. Firstly, the genre itself can be suspenseful. This is mainly because the way the story is told and what happens in it is uncertain. Secondly, suspense can be created at the text level: the order and duration of time of scenes help to make them suspenseful. In terms of order, the use of foreshadowing is a device that is most effective for the creation of suspense as the readers are able to anticipate a future danger or threat. Furthermore, the narrative situation and the use of linguistic devices contribute to the suspense of a story. In addition, the readers influence the creation of suspense, especially if they are emotionally involved and identify or empathize with characters in the novel. Many suspenseful scenes are created because the fictional characters and the recipients are only partially informed. Hence, they are uncertain about future occurrences in a story and anticipate certain events. Lastly, the novels analysed in this thesis are popular all over the world and are frequently reread. Therefore, it has been established that rereading is still able to produce suspense, although the motivation for a repeated reading shifts. However, this is not always necessary as readers also experience suspense as they forget parts or details of the story or willingly suspend their memory. Hence, one reason that the novels in this thesis are frequently reread is that they still are able to produce suspense in one way or another.

This thesis has also shown that in all four novels analysed, suspense is created at the story level because they contain scenes about rivalry, jealousy, desire, physical and psychological obstacles, separation, forbidden love, and danger. Furthermore, the initial meetings are suspenseful because they set the story in motion and the happy endings release all suspense and thrill the readers. Additionally, in all of the novels analysed there are numerous instances of mysteries and threats which follow certain schemata. All of these occurrences contribute to the build-up of suspense in the stories. Moreover, this research has shown that suspense, caused by the presentation of suspenseful

subjects at the story level, is intensified when it is combined with that created at the text level and through reader involvement.

In conclusion, all of the novels analysed are able to create suspense at both the story and the discourse levels. Furthermore, they present the audience with likable characters, with whom they can empathize and thus increase their emotional involvement and experience of suspense. Hence, all four novels analysed in this thesis can be perceived as very suspenseful. This can be seen as an explanation for their popularity until today and is one of the reasons why they are so frequently reread.

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APPENDIX

German Abstract

Die folgende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Spannungserzeugung in Liebesromanen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. Um dies zu erforschen wird eine Analyse von vier repräsentativen Romanen aus dieser Zeit vorgenommen. Bei den Romanen handelt es sich um *Evelina* von Frances Burney, *Pride and Prejudice* von Jane Austen, *Jane Eyre* von Charlotte Brontë und *Wuthering Heights* von Emily Brontë. Diese Bücher sind bis heute beliebt und werden wiederholt von denselben Personen gelesen. Es wird nun versucht darzulegen, dass ein Grund dafür die Existenz von Spannung in den Texten ist. Dazu wird eine systematische Analyse präsentiert. Zuerst wird ermittelt, wie Spannung durch den Text auf der Diskursebene erzeugt wird, mit speziellem Fokus auf die Einflüsse von Zeit, Perspektive und Sprache. Des Weiteren wird die Partizipation des Lesers berücksichtigt, weil dieser zum großen Teil bei der Spannungserzeugung beteiligt ist. Anschließend legt die Arbeit den Einfluss von Informationszurückhaltung und partieller Informiertheit dar. Zuletzt erfolgt eine intensive Analyse der Spannungserzeugung auf inhaltlicher Ebene. Es wird ermittelt, welche Motive in Liebesromanen als besonders spannend empfunden werden und ob diese mit Hilfe der textlichen Darstellung und der Beteiligung des Lesers Spannung hervorrufen.

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