Scris de Maria Comanescu
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My motives for attempting to write a study on Jane Austen, and moreover, on Jane Austen as seen from an Aristotelian perspective, will most probably seem odd at a first glance, as I am going to begin with a description of the modern society's philosophy, which is best comprised in the word *relative*.

Indeed, today, such expressions as *common sense* or *common knowledge* – which denote universal recognition of certain basic values – have almost lost their meaning, because every person can come up with his or her own "original" idea of what
truth
, or
beauty
, or
good
, or
right
, or
compulsory
is. Everyone has his or her idea of what being happy means, and every idea is different from

each other. As will be illustrated further on, Alasdair MacIntyre points out that people now argue on the basis of their "feelings and attitudes."
[1]
I would also add moods and whims. {jcomments on}

But the question that must be raised is: why have people lost all their guidelines? Why can there no longer be found any common values, common beliefs, or common principles? Why does life seem to be made-up differently for each particular man, in the sense that the final target towards which we are aiming, seems to vary with each one of us? Why is there no concept of a *good life*
as Aristotle would have called it, which can be appreciated by all human beings.

My theory is that when people began to think about their immediate desires in the first place and when they made themselves believe that happiness really is what they want it to be, then they lost control. Of course, throughout history there have always been isolated cases of persons who lived according to their momentary wishes, good or bad. But the turning point was when people started to regard this as a philosophy of life. Perhaps they did not take into consideration the fact that not even one person wants at all times the same things – the wishes and desires mentioned above have the "quality" of being seldom constant and often illusory. From this point on, people had to begin to avoid *responsibility*, because being responsible means to assume a well defined pattern of principles and act in accordance with it, even if those principles imply a certain amount of pain and sacrifice – but any amount of suffering was the one thing this new philosophy abhorred. Then naturally followed *con fusion*
, because when one wanted to escape being held responsible for a deed or even a thought, one gave ambiguous answers; these answers also had the advantage of not binding anyone to any future course of action. No more straight forward
Yes
or
No
. The most important thing was always to have the freedom to do as you like. Of course, all this confusion which was raised was explained by giving a never encountered before importance to their
feelings
. They said that was the way they felt at that particular moment, so that was what they expressed, or the way they acted in response to that feeling. No matter the feeling was totally different the very next moment. And now everything became
relative
, because of course, few people have the same moods or feelings. Certainly, there cannot exist any more rules, or boundaries, when this philosophy has been embraced, because everything is

subjective
, hence the unrestraint society we live in. And there always will appear the lonesome and estranged people who will blame the others for not understanding them and for persecuting

them.

Briefly, this is how the decadence of morality began. It is not only my belief that when emotions took the lead our culture began to digress, but I also share the same opinion in this matter with Alasdair MacIntyre – who develops it in his book, *After Virtue*, where he uses the term "emotivist" to describe our modern society
[2]
– and with an earlier critic, Irving Babbitt – who puts it forward in his book,
Rousseau and Romanticism
, where he basically blames the "romantic imagination" for the "emotional sophistry" that has haunted the decades following the eighteenth century.
[3]

I am going to give a brief presentation of these two books, so the new philosophy of life, which detached itself from the traditional philosophy of morality,[4] be better illustrated and understood: its origin, the terms which best characterize it, and how it dominates and rules the modern society.

The reason why I am stressing the particularities of this philosophical trend is the fact that the author I am writing about, namely Jane Austen, is one of the few writers of literature who so evidently – through the ideas she expresses in her novels – opposed it. I am going to argue that her position regarding the object, or aim of our life cannot possibly be described by the term *rela tive*
, while the model of life she is proposing through her characters is one of
responsibility
.

As both MacIntyre and Babbitt agree on the fact that the weakening of the power of morality began in the eighteenth century – although they do not ascribe it to the same causes, as will be seen further on – it is all the more remarkable that Jane Austen was a representative of that same century but all the same remained part of the moralist tradition, as I am going to show. I will explore her novels from an Aristotelian perspective, and my aim will be to stress the similarities between Aristotelian thought and the ideas and principles illustrated by Jane Austen in her major works (*Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park* , *Emm a* and *Per suasion*

), especially in what regards the problem of the virtues and the central role they play in the pursuit of happiness.

In his book, *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre describes our age by using the epithet "emotivist." What he is referring to, more precisely, is "our moral condition," as he calls it, and by that he seems to understand people's incapacity of adopting a certain position in a debate on the basis of "elaborated and rationally defended conceptions" as part of a theoretical and social context; what today's moral discourse amounts to are "expressions of attitude and feeling." [5]

In the second chapter of his book, MacIntyre claims that:

Emotivism has become embodied in our culture. But of course in saying this I am not merely contending that morality is not what it once was, but also and more importantly that what once was morality has to some large degree disappeared – and that this marks a degeneration, a grave cultural loss.[6]

Now, here MacIntyre makes at least two important statements: one is that up to a certain point, people used to cherish, or live according to morality, and the other one is that from a certain moment in history, they began to lose, at first their respect for morality, and afterwards, gradually, even the notion of morality itself – today few people know what morality is, let alone lead a moral life.

The question that naturally follows is what made morality disappear from our culture? And when exactly was the breach, or when did it start?

MacIntyre suggests that the reason for the decadence of morality lies in the "decisive failure of the Enlightenment project of providing a rational vindication of morality"[7] which paved the way for Nietzsche and his new philosophy. This – the Enlightenment – was the threshold between the classical philosophy of morality, that which emerged from Aristotle, and the anarchical philosophy developed by Nietzsche.

But here I need to explain what MacIntyre understands by the "Enlightenment project," why he considers it a failure and in what way he thinks that the moral principles began to fade in that period. Basically, it all started with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and his notion of a certain "function of man," [8] or essence of man [9] which is fulfilled through practicing the virtues. MacIntyre defines ethics as

the science which is to enable men to understand how they make the transition from man-as-he-happens-to-be to man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature. Ethics therefore in this view presupposes some account of potentiality and act, some account of the essence of man as a rational animal and above all an account of the human *telos*. The precepts which enjoin the various virtues and prohibit the vices which are their counterparts instruct us how to move from potentiality to act, how to realize our true nature and to reach our true end. To defy them will be frustrated and incomplete, to fail to achieve that good of rational happiness which is peculiarly ours as a species to pursue. (52)

The "Enlightenment project"[10] rejected the ideas of "function of man" and of *telos*, yet maintained the claims of morality. However, MacIntyre argues that when not sought for achieving a true, supreme *telos*, virtues lose their value and moreover, the laws of moderation may even appear contrary to human nature:

Since the moral injunctions were originally at home in a scheme in which their purpose was to correct, improve and educate that human nature, they are clearly not going to be such as could be deduced from true statements about human nature or justified in some other way by appealing to its characteristics. The injunctions of morality, thus understood, are likely to be ones that human nature, thus understood, has strong tendencies to disobey. (55)

In short, MacIntyre claims in *After Virtue*[11] that there was, at a certain point in history, a rupture in the way thinkers regarded and presented morality. There was, firstly, the Aristotelian tradition which presented morality and the life of virtue as specific to humans, as characteristic to man's nature. To live in accordance to virtue meant for Aristotle to fulfill one's function as a human being and thus, to reach one's *telos*. One important fact is that for Aristotle morality did not represent something restrictive, but rather a way of living, resulting from understanding that actually this *is* the best way to live. Then, the "Enlightenment project" in a way reversed the view on morality. The main thinkers of this "project" doubted that there was such a thing as a "function of man" or "nature of man," or a *telos*. However, they tried to explain and preserve morality through various kinds of "rational justifications,"
[12]
which completely changed, though, the nature of virtue. Virtues were now presented as restrictions, as rules, as boundaries or commands which dictate what we "ought" or "ought not" to do. Nevertheless, whatever is restrictive is also bound to be considered by some as contrary to human nature, as they wish to interpret it. Moreover, morality even came to be considered later on and up to our days as a trespasser of our liberty. In MacIntyre's view, the "Enlightenment project" was a mistake, failed, and opened the way for philosophers like Nietzsche who could now easily question and combat morality. And Nietzsche observed as no other the fact that when the moral principles begin to fade, the question arises, whether what was objectively called *good*, *right* and *obligatory* still means the same thing, or whether these words do not, by any chance, change their meaning – just like *taboos* - – according to every epoch's or, even, every person's subjectivity (the "let will replace reason" ideology)?
[13]

MacIntyre "go[es] on to argue that Aristotle and Nietzsche represent the only compelling alternatives in contemporary moral theory."[14]

As I have already announced above, there is another very interesting theory concerning the decay of morality and the lack of responsibility which came along with it, namely that of Irving Babbitt[15], who claims that it was basically Rousseau's influence which brought about the actual loss of ethical values, in favour of the romantic ideas. [16]

Of course, Babbitt regards Rousseau as the main representative of romanticism, which is seen as "a recoil, not from classicism in general, but from a particular type of classicism."[17] Here, there is need for a clarification, because it should be pointed out that Babbitt – in the same way in which MacIntyre considers Aristotle and Nietzsche "the only compelling alternatives in contemporary moral theory" – considers classicism (as understood in the tradition of Socrates and Aristotle) and romanticism (as represented by Rousseau) the only compelling alternatives of all times.

Now, it is most important to emphasize the main difference between classicism and romanticism, as Babbitt presents it. His theory is that this difference mainly lies in the concept of the *imagination*:

[…] for the Greeks, the genius was not the man who was in this sense unique, but the man who perceived the universal; and as the universal can be perceived only with the aid of the imagination, it follows that genius may be defined as imaginative perception of the universal. The universal thus conceived not only gives a centre and purpose to the activity of the imagination, but sets bounds to the free expansion of temperament and impulse, to what came to be known in the eighteenth century as nature.[18]

Thus the classic imagination is that "fiction, only with the help of which one can perceive a supersensous order."[19]

According to romantic conception, the imagination is to be free, not merely from outer formalistic constraint, but from all constraint whatever. This extreme romantic emancipation of the imagination was accompanied by an equally extreme emancipation of the emotions.[20]

Naturally, Babbitt does not claim that Rousseau was the first to submit himself to the romantic imagination, but only that he was unique in his determination to "hold fast to his vision and to refuse to adjust it to an unpalatable reality. To study his imaginative activity is simply to study the new forms that he gives to what I have called man's ineradicable longing for some Arcadia, some land of heart's desire."[21]

My purpose for describing – even shortly – Irving Babbitt's theory is the fact that he comprises and illustrates a very important trend, which can be felt even today. As I have stated before, I tend to agree with Babbitt that moral decay is a natural consequence of people's following their own desires and pleasures. Babbitt argues that this subjugation to their wishes became possible when people renounced what he calls the classic imagination (which was only a tool for comprehending a potential, perfect order to which they aspired) for the sake of the romantic imagination (which became their master).

The trend which I mentioned as being a very modern one is the flight from responsibility. Babbitt says that "aside from its quality of not being ethical but Arcadian or pastoral" the romantic imagination "wanders irresponsibly in a region quite outside of normal human experience."[22]

My aim for introducing these two works in my study about Jane Austen, ought by now to be clear: apart from the fact that both authors observe and describe this certain movement of swerving away from morality – which started some time ago (MacIntyre, as well as Babbitt agree on the eighteenth century as being the turn point, when morality at least began to be doubted) and still continues – each of them also propounds a theory explaining this estrangement: MacIntyre calls it "emotivism," the trend when people renounce the universal values, the *common* beliefs, for the sake of turning these values into mere interpretations of their subjectivity, by making them *relative* to their feelings and emotions. This, he claims, is the heritage of Nietzsche's philosophy. Babbitt had also taken notice of this estrangement from morality, even before MacIntyre, and he also assigned it to the exaggerated role the emotions had been attributed in becoming supreme masters over people's minds and actions. He called it the "emotional sophistry" tendency and he considered the surrendering to the "romantic imagination" as the main cause for its development – that is, more explicitly, when people began to fly from taking the
responsibility
of accepting the world as it really is, but instead began to build their own "dream land" or "Arcadia" and live in it according to their desires and pleasures as if it were the true world. He holds Rousseau as the main representative for this movement because he was the first who theorized it in such a manner as to have an impact upon generations after generations.

However, there were some, although few, who remained true to the moralist tradition, and by remaining thus they utterly opposed the new trend which had begun to become more and more popular.

One of the authors of literature, who succeeded in maintaining and expressing through her novels a true ethical position, as will appear in the following pages, is Jane Austen.

As has been seen, the main characteristics of the new philosophical trend which both MacIntyre and Babbitt describe – because although they give different accounts of how it developed, both authors in fact are criticizing the same tendency, that of departing from morality, namely from the ethical tradition which emerged from Aristotle – are *relativism* and the *flight from responsibili ty* .

And by studying Jane Austen from an Aristotelian perspective, I am at the same time aiming to underline the way in which she opposed *relativism* and the *flight from responsibility*.

Further on, I should specify from the beginning that although I do find the resemblance between Aristotelian thought and the philosophy of life which can be comprised from Jane Austen's novels as most astonishing – as many literary critics do[23] – yet I am not seeking to prove that Jane Austen must necessarily have read the writings of Aristotle, but rather, I adopt the position of Gilbert Ryle, who sustains the idea that she most probably was indirectly acquainted with Aristotelian philosophy – perhaps through Lord Shaftesbury's works.
[24]

Gilbert Ryle, who mainly argues in his essay "Jane Austen and the Moralists" that Jane Austen was "a moralist in a thick sense [in that she was] deeply interested in some perfectly general, even theoretical questions about human nature and human conduct,"[25] and other authors who have observed and discussed this similarity of thought in Aristotle's philosophy and Jane Austen's novels will be cited in this study. Some of the most frequently mentioned here are: Alasdair MacIntyre with
After Virtue
, in which he mentions Jane Austen as possessing a very Aristotelian view on virtue, nevertheless with Christian influences; in a study dedicated in full to Jane Austen's philosophy of the virtues, Anne Crippen Ruderman, adopts in
The Pleasures of Virtue
more or less the same interpretation of Jane Austen as MacIntyre, only she develops it more.

Allan Bloom reserves a whole chapter for Jane Austen in his book *Love and Friendship* in which he basically argues that Jane Austen's aim in her novels was to promote a happy combination between romantic love and friendship as understood in Aristotelian terms. Combating Bloom's theory, Mary Beth Garbitelli and Douglas Kries bring forward a new interpretation of Jane Austen by which they hold her as fundamentally Aristotelian, in the sense that she considers the life of virtue and of contemplation as the best life, and that she presents happy marriages not with any romantic notions, but as beautiful and rare examples of cases in which the contemplative life meets the domestic life. Another useful study is David Gallop's essay "Jane Austen and the Aristotelian Ethics," in which he argues that although it is improbable that Jane Austen read any of the writings of Aristotle, she is basically an Aristotelian and she must have been born one (actually Gallop begins his discussion from an observation made by S. T. Coleridge who says that we are all either born Aristotelians or Platonists).

These are a few of the works which are central for the development of my study. They are crucial because their authors have highlighted some of the great resemblances between the philosophy of Aristotle and that of Jane Austen. However, what I attempt here is a more comprehensive study that will more thoroughly discuss a rich number of Aristotelian themes which appear in Jane Austen's novels and that will underline their interrelations in a new way.

My aim is to show that Jane Austen not only belongs to the Aristotelian moralist tradition, but also that her novels present recipes for the kind of life one is willing to live. Jane Austen is an Aristotelian moralist because she is interested in and she explores human character, human behaviour and human nature, while holding truth and virtue as reference points. She indirectly contrasts characters to one another – for example Elinor to Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* – in order to highlight the features of morality. Society, at the same time, represents for Jane Austen a context for moral reflection, for observing a large variety of characters; it is not in itself a main object of interest. Her novels present in a way recipes, in that they provide detailed principles which have to be observed in order to achieve happiness.

My approach is framed by a cultural critical perspective of the sort put forward by Alasdair MacIntyre with reference to the history of moral thought. I will look indeed at Enlightenment moral thought as expressed in Jane Austen's novels. Her case represents an interesting one, because she pertained more to the Aristotelian moralist tradition than to what Alasdair MacIntyre named the "Enlightenment project" of her own time. This was so, because as I will show further on, she promoted virtue as the best way to live, not as coercion. The argumentation will be based on a close comparative analysis of Jane Austen's main novels and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, by means of which I seek to illustrate how the great majority of the fundamental themes which he discusses in connection with the good life are also identifiable

in Jane Austen's writings as crucial for happiness.

I should proceed by pointing out that my approach to Jane Austen is centered on the idea of *ha ppiness*
.
[26]
I find it crucial in a discussion about Jane Austen's philosophy of life, because, by merely taking a look at the endings of each of her major novels, we have to observe what special attention she pays to giving a detailed account of how her heroines stand regarding this matter of their future happiness:

[…] The event which it authorized soon followed: Henry and Catherine were married, the bells rang and everybody smiled; and, as this took place within a twelve-month from the first day of their meeting, it will not appear, after all the dreadful delays occasioned by the General's cruelty, that they were essentially hurt by it. To begin perfect happiness at the respective ages of twenty-six and eighteen, is to do pretty well; and professing myself moreover convinced, that the General's unjust interference, so far from being really injurious to their felicity, was perhaps rather conductive to it, by improving their knowledge of each other, and adding strength to their attachment, I leave it to be settled by whosoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience. (NA 165)

[…] and among the merits and the happiness of Elinor and Marianne, let it not be ranked as the least considerable, that though sisters, and living almost within sight of each other, they could live without disagreement between themselves, or producing coolness between their husbands. (SS 374)

[…] I [this is a quote from Elizabeth Bennet's letter to her aunt whom she informs about her engagement to Mr. Darcy] am the happiest creature in the world. Perhaps other people have said so before, but not one with such justice. I am happier even than Jane; she only smiles, I laugh. (PP 258)

With so much true merit and true love, and no want of fortune and friends, the happiness of the

married cousins must appear as secure as earthly happiness can be. (MP 479)

The wedding was very much like other weddings, where the parties have no taste for finery or parade; […] But, in spite of these deficiencies, the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union. (E 367)

Anne, satisfied at a very early period of Lady Russell's meaning to love Captain Wentworth as she ought, had no other alloy to the happiness of her prospects than what arose from the consciousness of having no relations to bestow on him which a man of sense could value. (P 179)

It is obvious, from these quotes, that Jane Austen regards happiness as essential for her characters in order to become fulfilled. In other words, it can be argued that she holds happiness as the main and most important target that is to be sought by any human being in this life, which is very much in accord with how Aristotle talks about happiness in his *Nicomachean Ethics* .[27]

But it is not simply the importance Jane Austen attributes to the concept of happiness which relates her to Aristotle, but also the fact that she seems to also embrace his idea, according to which there is a nature common to all human beings, which enables them to share in fact the *same* kind of happiness or good life, and moreover, which forbids them to distort the truth or reality and call a good thing bad or a bad thing good.
[28]

Now this is a hard thing to accept indeed, taking into consideration what has been said above about *relativism* – precisely about the way in which people pursue their pleasures and desires taking them for happiness, by means of which of course happiness becomes subjective and a different concept for each person.

Jane Austen, on the other hand, again like Aristotle, considers the *virtues* as essential in

achieving *true* happin
ess [29]
– as I am going to show that she hints throughout her novels – which places her in the camp opposing
relativism
, because by providing a definite model for reaching the good life, she is excluding in fact the various subjective meanings of happiness.

Also, in her heroines we do not find just a simple *desire* for happiness, but something which resembles very much a sense of *duty*
as well. They do not merely want happiness; they seem to realize it lies within their nature to pursue it. They seem to make it their
responsibility
whether they reach it or not. Here again, Jane Austen is true to the moralist tradition, when she praises the
responsible
life
, and even criticizes the flight
from
responsibility – as she does through various characters, one of them being Mr. Willoughby from *Sense and Sensibility*
.
[30]

I shall conclude my introduction by making a brief presentation of every forthcoming chapter. It should be kept in mind, however, through the whole of this work, that my first purpose is to underline and highlight the similarities between central Aristotelian themes and concepts, and the ideas and principles Jane Austen expresses in her novels. The method I shall employ will be that of selecting important subjects discussed and developed by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* as being
crucial for the good life or happiness, and endeavoring to show and argue that these same subjects are recognizable and moreover, hardcore to Jane Austen's heroes' and heroines' philosophy of life.

I shall begin, in the first chapter, with a discussion about *pleasure*, as it is often either confused with happiness itself, or altogether excluded from happiness attained through virtue – as Catherine Morland of *Northan*
ger Abbey
sought to do. However, both Aristotle and Jane Austen seem to hold it as a constitutive part of happiness, and most important, for them both the truest sort of pleasure proves to be that

feeling of fulfillment, contentment, comfort and satisfaction, conferred by the awareness of having done your duty as a human being; not lust or desire or passion. In fact, Aristotle, as well as Jane Austen reach the conclusion that any other kind of pleasure is but a fake pleasure, because it surely brings along regret, torment and wretchedness in the end.

In the second chapter, I shall approach the Aristotelian concept of *the mean* and show how it is illustrated in the novels of Jane Austen, especially in
Sense and Sensibility
. The virtues, which in both Aristotle's and Jane Austen's views are the means through which happiness is attainable, appear to be middles between extremes. In other words, proportion and equilibrium are cherished in any person in any situation – and Elinor Dashwood is an ideal case in this sense.

The third chapter is about *proper pride*, a quality praised by Aristotle in his description of the "magnificent man," and which suits very well the way in which Mr. Darcy of
Pride and Prejudice
is portrayed. This chapter also explores the misfortunes which may arise from misjudgment and prejudice and the central role of
justice
in the good life of an individual, as well as that of a whole community.

The forth chapter brings into discussion the fundamental Aristotelian theme of *habit*, and the way it may come to represent "the second nature of a person." Jane Austen most aptly illustrates how the education which a certain person has received and the habits that person has acquired are not only tightly intertwined, but they may also affect the later behavior of that particular person. In
Mansfield
Park
we are provided with a large variety of characters, each with his or her own principles, imposed by their habits, good or bad. In this novel the idea of happiness as a superior pleasure of
contemplation
is introduced, again very much in accord with Aristotle's philosophy.

The fifth chapter is about *friendship*, a virtue which Aristotle finds mandatory for the person who seeks happiness. Many different kinds of friendship exist, however, as he observes – some of which are better and more durable than others. The same is emphasized by Jane Austen in her novel *Emma* – which is, in my opinion, a book about friendship – but also in her other novels.

The sixth and last chapter finally explores the role of *good fortune* in achieving happiness. Actually, both Jane Austen and Aristotle support the fact that every person makes his or her own happiness, independently, or at least, not wholly dependent upon good luck. The most important thing for not being unhappy is
constancy
in virtue, which is sure to bring true happiness in the end, as heroines like Anne Eliot prove.

By comparing the ideas put forward in the novels of Jane Austen I seek to prove that she actually belongs to the Aristotelian moralist tradition, a tradition which acknowledged the existence of universal values, true for all humans and not *relative* to each individual, and which maintained the fact that living a good and virtuous, and above all
responsible
life is the right way and the only way to happiness.

Nota Karamazov.ro: Urmatorul capitol din lucrare va fi publicat peste o saptamana.

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[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Claims of *After Virtue*" (*Analyse & Kritik* 6 (1984): 3-7), 4.

[2] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (3rd ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 12.

[3] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), x-xi.

[4] Alasdair MacIntyre observes in *After Virtue*: "The Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition of the

virtues is, like some, although not all other moral traditions, a tradition of enquiry. It is characteristic of traditions of enquiry that they claim
truth
for their central theses and
soundness
for their central arguments. Were it otherwise, they would find it difficult either to characterize the aim and object of their enquires or to give reasons for their conclusions." (xii) In this work I am referring to this kind of moralist traditions (and especially to Aristotle's philosophy), which held truth and the virtues as a basis for their debates on human nature and human conduct, unlike the modern moral philosophies which, to use MacIntyre's words again, "give an account for
all
value judgments whatsoever." (12)

[5] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Claims of *After Virtue*," 6.

[6] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 22.

[7] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 50.

[8] In his *Nicomachean Ethics* (*The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Vol. 2. Ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), Aristotle begins the discussion about the "function of man," first by observing that everybody and everything else –and he gives the examples of a flute-player, a sculptor, any part of the body, a carpenter etc. – and even plants have a function of their own in this world. Aristotle therefore concludes, that there has to be a "function of man" and he seeks to find what is "peculiar to man" in order to be able to state his function. This characteristic of man is, according to Aristotle, "an active life of the element that has a rational principle." Now, Aristotle continues, while a lyre-player is called a good lyre-player when he plays his lyre very well, what does it take for a man to be called good and what is human good? "Human good turns out to be activity of soul in conformity with excellence, and if there are more than one excellence, in conformity with the best and most complete." (1097b23-1098a16) Thus, a good man is one who lives in accordance to virtue.

[9] When MacIntyre refers to what Aristotle calls "the function of man," he usually uses one of the phrases "essence of man," or "human nature." (51-61)

[10] As part of the "Enlightenment project" MacIntyre mentions Hume, Kant, Diderot, Smith, Kierkegaard.

[11] In the following paragraph I am merely rendering in short what MacIntyre develops in the fifth chapter of *After Virtue*, which is about the failure of the "Enlightenment project." (51-61)

[12] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Claims of *After Virtue*," 4.

[13] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 114.

[14] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Claims of *After Virtue*," 5.

[15] Irving Babbitt was Professor of French Literature in Harvard University from 1894 until his death in 1933. T. S. Eliot describes him in his essay called "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (*Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot* . Ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt Inc. (1975): 277-284) as "a stout upholder of tradition and continuity, […] with immense and encyclopaedic information." (278) T. S. Eliot likewise observes in this same essay that "The centre of Mr. Babbitt's philosophy is the doctrine of humanism."(277) And Babbitt himself explains in *Rousseau and Romanticism* what being a humanist means: "to be a good humanist is merely to be moderate and sensible and decent." (xxi) He continues: "The past is not without examples of a positive and critical humanism. I have already mentioned Aristotle." (xxi) Babbitt actually concludes: "the point of view I am myself seeking to develop is Aristotelian. Aristotle has laid down once for all the principle that should guide the ethical positivist." (xxi)

[16] However what Babbitt states in the Introduction should not be overlooked: "[…] The Rousseau who has moved the world – and that for reasons I shall try to make plain – is Rousseau the extremist and foe of compromise; and so it is to this Rousseau that as a student of main tendencies I devote almost exclusive attention. I am not, however, seeking to make a scapegoat even of the radical and revolutionary Rousseau. One of my chief objections, indeed, to Rousseauism, as will appear in the following pages, is that it encourages the making of

scapegoats." (xviii)

[17] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 3.

[18] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 41.

[19] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 19.

[20] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 70.

[21] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 74.

[22] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 358-359.

[23] "We know not whether Miss Austen ever had access to the precepts of Aristotle, but there are few, if any, writers of fiction who have illustrated them more successfully."The quote is from R. Whately's "Modern Novels" (*Quarterly Review* 47 (1821): 352-63). Other authors who observed this resemblance of thought and who will be cited in the study are: Alasdair MacIntyre with his *After Virtue*, Anne Crippen Ruderman with her *The Pleasures of Virtue*, Allan Bloom with his *Love and Friendship*, David Gallop with his "Jane Austen and the Aristotelian Ethic," Gilbert Ryle with his "Jane Austen and the Moralists" and others.

[24] Gilbert Ryle says in his essay "Jane Austen and the Moralists" (*Oxford Review* 1 (1966). Rpt. in *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*. Ed. B. C. Southam. London: Routledge, 1968): "Shaftesbury had opened a window through

which a relatively few people in the eighteenth century inhaled some air with Aristotelian oxygen in it. Jane Austen had sniffed this oxygen. It may be that she did not know who had opened the window. But I shall put an edge on the issue by surmising, incidentally, that she did know."

[25] Gilbert Ryle, "Jane Austen and the Moralists," 286.

[26] Whenever the term *happiness* shall be used in this study, it will be with strict reference to what is generally understood through the concept of *Aristotelian happiness*. Mortimer Adler summerises this concept in his book, *Aristotle for Everybody* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978): "Living well, or happiness is the ultimate or final end of all our doing in this life – that which we seek for its own sake and for the sake of no further good beyond it." (93)

[27] Jane Austen repays her deserving heroines with happiness as the supreme prize at the end of each novel and Aristotle says in his *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Happiness, then, is something complete and self-sufficient, and is the end of action." (1097b21-22)

[28] As Michael Pakaluk puts it in his book called *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005): "Aristotle believes that human beings have a definite, common, and objective nature, and that, as a result, we have in common some ultimate goal." (13) See also in relation to this theme Aristotle's discussion of the "function of man" in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, 1097b23-1098a16.

[29] Aristotle says that apart from good fortune which can influence success or failure in life, the "excellent activities [virtues] or their opposites are what determine happiness or the reverse." (1100b10-11)

[30] The narrator, seeming to express Elinor's thoughts pities Mr. Willoughby, as he is held responsible for the misery and unhappiness which he finds himself in, by injuring others through unvirtuous behaviour: "and the connection, for the sake of which he had, with little scruple, left

her sister to misery, was likely to prove a source of unhappiness to himself of a far more incurable nature." (SS 324)