Very little social behaviour happens in private in this world. They are always look some. Jane Austen's novels show both that women have very little freedom but also everybody has very little freedom because we are all being watched by somebody.

Most of our activities are happening in a kind of half way public private space and they are always subject to gossip, to conversation, to a kind of watchfulness and to judgement of course. These are the things that she herself is particularly interested in exploring in her novels.

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We're so used to thinking of Jane Austen as a modern novelist in her concern for love. But it's worth remembering that women especially women in Jane Austen's day had extremely restricted freedoms. And young women and young men had very limited opportunities for courtship and for meeting under proper circumstances.

One reason that Jane Austen uses the dance so often in her novels, a dance or a ball, whether it's five families who know one another or whether it's a more former ball. It's because the dance floor itself allowed young women and young men a certain amount of room to experiment.