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***THE AFTER-MODE OF THE SELF: HELEN FIELDING AND THE INTEREST IN 'THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER' (BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY)***

**Keywords:** *after-modernism, fairy-tale tradition*

**Abstract:** *Helen Fielding is not a very subtle novelist. Jane Austen – whose Pride and Prejudice she claims she is echoing in Bridget Jones's Diary – is oceans of sensibility away. While the Victorian novelist has an eye open to a future use of the stream of consciousness, the After-modernist Helen Fielding has both eyes willfully shut in order to avoid catching the faintest glimpse of it. Her Diary is a way of concealing, not in the least revealing, her heroine's feelings and thoughts. At her sincerest, Bridget Jones is only concerned with hiding her real nature from the reader. Fielding's suspense comes from the reader's finding the heroine out. All on his own and even – it would seem – against all the author's attempts to sidetrack him.*

*Helen Fielding writes the novel of a contemporary failure which ends with the prospect of the long-lost fairy tale. Bridget Jones's Diary is food for the fed-up reader at the turn of the third millennium: a reader who has seen too much, has mocked at and decoded too much, has heard too many abstract theories and has seen too much sex on the page. This reader will either kick the book for the screen, or force the tale to gratify his craving for love interest, for 'they lived happily ever after.'*