

Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations and a Note on the Text	viii
Introduction	1
<p>The introduction outlines the publication history of <i>Sense and Sensibility</i>, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>, and <i>Emma</i>; and gives a summary of this Guide.</p>	
CHAPTER ONE	6
<p>Contemporary Reviews</p> <p>Chapter One looks at the critical responses of Austen's immediate contemporaries, for example at their insistence on the novels' unexceptional moral message. The chapter also discusses Sir Walter Scott's essay on <i>Emma</i>, in which he draws attention to her 'dexterity of execution'.</p>	
CHAPTER TWO	22
<p>Victorian Reviews, ca. 1865–80</p> <p>Chapter Two discusses the late Victorian view of <i>Sense and Sensibility</i>, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>, and <i>Emma</i>. Critics such as Anne I. Thackeray, Leslie Stephen, Richard Simpson see the novels as reflecting Austen's benevolent and lady-like character.</p>	
CHAPTER THREE	42
<p>Early to Mid-Twentieth Century Critical Responses</p> <p>Chapter Three looks at the emergence of Janeites and Anti-Janeites; at the shift from a view held by critics such as Henry James, who saw Austen as a praiseworthy but unconscious artist, to the beginnings of serious Austen criticism in the works of A. C. Bradley, R. Farrer, Mary Lascelles, D. W. Harding, F. R. Leavis and Lionel Trilling.</p>	
CHAPTER FOUR	62
<p>Later Twentieth-Century Critical Responses: Feminism</p> <p>This chapter looks at the influence of the rise of feminism on Austen criticism, which becomes obvious when comparing the approach of critics writing before the 1970s, such as Tony Tanner, with that of critics writing post 1980, such as S. Gilbert and S. Gubar.</p>	

VI CONTENTS

CHAPETR FIVE	76
Later Twentieth-Century Critical Responses: Literary, Cultural, and Historical Context	
Chapter Five considers how, following Marilyn Butler's seminal study, critics such as Mary Waldron, Isobel Armstrong, Claudia Johnson, all see Austen as being involved in her historical, cultural and literary context and her novels as expressing this consciousness.	
CHAPTER SIX	96
The First Decade of the Twenty-First Century	
Chapter Six shows how alongside the continuation and variation of historicist approaches, for example applied by Kathryn Sutherland, a New Aestheticism emerges that goes back to focusing on the text, notably used by David Miller. The majority of studies combine close reading with a contextual approach.	
CHAPTER SEVEN	124
Film and Television Adaptations	
This Chapter discusses studies of the film and television adaptations of <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> , <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , and <i>Emma</i> . Critics such as Kathryn Sutherland, L. Troost and S. Greenfield investigate issues such as which elements have been changed and how; for example the portrayal of women.	
Conclusion	134
Summary of the Guide; the influence of gender on criticism of <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> , <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , and <i>Emma</i> over the centuries; critical trends in each period.	
Notes	140
Bibliography	151
Index	165

Introduction

For almost 200 years, readers at various times and in diverse places and circumstances have interpreted Jane Austen's novels – readers reading with different attitudes and differing widely in what they find appealing. Austen's works have continuously risen in popularity: from holding a position of relative obscurity in the Romantic period, they have come to achieve extraordinary critical and popular acclaim in the early twenty-first century. This Guide illustrates key examples of the many different responses to three of Austen's novels: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Emma*.

Sense and Sensibility was Jane Austen's first published novel, appearing in October 1811. The title page read 'SENSE AND SENSIBILITY: | A NOVEL. | IN THREE VOLUMES. | BY A LADY.' LONDON: | PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, | By C. Roworth, Bell-yard, Temple-bar, | AND PUBLISHED BY T. EGERTON, WHITEHALL'. As was to be the case with all her novels that appeared during her lifetime, *Sense and Sensibility* was thus already classified as a novel on the title page, in spite of the widespread practice among contemporary novelists, including popular and successful writers such as Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) or Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849),¹ of calling their works romances or tales, thus avoiding the negative connotations, at that time, of the term novel.² *Sense and Sensibility* was published by Thomas Egerton, on commission, which meant that both the risk and the profits were the author's. She covered her costs and made about £140 out of the first edition of about 750 to 1,000 copies, which cost fifteen shillings per three-volume set.³ An average first edition of a novel consisted of 500 to 750 copies, so Austen's first novel was already more successful than that of an average novelist.⁴ The edition was sold out by July 1813.⁵ During her lifetime the novel went through a second edition, which appeared in October 1813.

Pride and Prejudice was even more successful. It was again published by Egerton, at the end of January 1813. Its title page read 'PRIDE AND PREJUDICE': | A NOVEL. | IN THREE VOLUMES. | BY THE | AUTHOR OF 'SENSE AND SENSIBILITY.' | LONDON: | PRINTED FOR T. EGERTON, | Military Library, WHITEHALL'. | 1813. Again, it was thus classified as a novel on the title page, and was published anonymously. This time Egerton had bought the copyright, for £110, and as *Pride and Prejudice* went through three editions during Austen's lifetime he profited by it. The first edition consisted of

about 1,250 to 1,500 copies,⁶ which must have been disposed of fairly quickly, as the second edition was issued in October 1813, at a price of eighteen shillings.⁷ *Pride and Prejudice* was noticed by three contemporary Reviews, *The British Critic* in February 1813, *The Critical Review* in March 1813, and *The New Review* in April 1813. In terms of numbers of contemporary editions, then, *Pride and Prejudice* was Austen's most successful novel.

Although both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* were not published until the 1810s, Austen had written earlier versions of both these novels in the 1790s. That of *Pride and Prejudice*, then called 'First Impressions', had even been offered to the publisher Thomas Cadell the younger (1773–1836), who refused even to look at the manuscript.⁸ She revised both manuscripts considerably before she offered them again for publication.

Emma belongs in its entirety to this later period of Austen's life as a novelist. It was published by John Murray (1778–1843), who was also the publisher of the celebrated poet Lord Byron (1788–1824), and whose imprint was more prestigious than that of Egerton. *Emma* was again published on a commission of ten per cent, in December 1815. It was again published anonymously and dedicated by permission to the Prince Regent (George Augustus Frederick (1762–1830), Prince Regent 1811–20, reigned as King George IV 1820–30). The title read 'EMMA: | A NOVEL. | IN THREE VOLUMES. | BY THE| AUTHOR OF 'PRIDE AND PREJUDICE', | &c.&c. | LONDON: | PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY | 1816. Of the first edition of 2,000 copies, 1,250 had been sold by October 1816, at twenty-one shillings (one guinea). The first edition of *Emma* brought Austen £221, but, as the second edition of *Mansfield Park* had involved a loss, Austen only received £38 and eighteen shillings for it.⁹ *Emma* was reviewed in more contemporary Reviews than any other of her novels: in eight British periodicals and at least three foreign ones.¹⁰

The numbers of editions and reviews indicate that Austen was more successful with her contemporaries than most novelists were, but also that she was not in any way to be compared to the two literary giants of her day: Walter Scott, both as a poet and as a novelist, and Lord Byron as a poet. However, her popularity with both critics and the public was to increase steadily to make her one of the most celebrated authors of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

This Guide traces the most important criticisms that these three novels have inspired over the last 200 years. The first chapter begins by looking at the reviewing culture in the early nineteenth century, when reviewing periodicals were numerous and of unprecedented influence, and when to get discussed at all in a periodical was already an achievement. The chapter proceeds to consider contemporary reviews

of Austen's novels, which emerge as superior to most novels, amusing and morally unexceptional, but not works of innovation or genius. Chapter 2 looks at Victorian Reviews, in the years between 1865 and 1870. Austen's works became increasingly popular in the course of the nineteenth century, and especially in the second half of the century. This chapter draws on articles in reviewing periodicals to analyse critical responses of readers such as the historian and essayist Thomas Babington Macaulay (1809–59), the critic Richard H. Hutton (1826–97), the novelist Julia Kavanagh (1824–77), the novelist and biographer Margaret Oliphant (1828–97), the critic and scholar Sir Leslie Stephen (1832–1904), the writer and scholar Richard Simpson (1820–76), the journalist, philosopher, scientist and critic G.H. Lewes (1817–78), and the writer Anne I. Thackeray (1837–1919). While individual articles on Austen's works had appeared in the preceding decades, more reviews were published now, largely in connection with the publication of the first biography of Austen: *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (1870), by her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh (1798–1874). In early-nineteenth-century reviews, Austen's life and person had not played a part, since she published all three novels anonymously. However, her name was known to Victorians, and her character is emphasised by reviewers, most of whom take up the image of Austen that the *Memoir* gives, of a dutiful, kind, and domestic woman, who saw herself first and foremost as a daughter, aunt and sister rather than an author. Reviewers portray her novels as reflecting her sweet and essentially feminine character.

Chapter 3 discusses the emergence of 'Janeism' as well as the critical counter-reactions this phenomenon provoked. The term itself was coined by the literary scholar George Saintsbury (1845–1933), a great admirer of Austen's. The prevalent critical and public attitude to Austen in the early twentieth century was one of holding her in esteem and affection, and seeing in her the benevolent maiden aunt who regarded writing as a leisure pursuit. Foremost literati such as Henry James (1843–1916) praised her, but insisted that she had written without an artistic or technical consciousness – a natural genius and literary amateur. The American novelist, short-story writer and humorist Mark Twain (pseudonym of Samuel Longhorne Clement, 1835–1910) famously deprecated her, while the English poet, novelist and short-story writer Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) wrote a short story about 'Janeites'. The early twentieth century also saw the beginnings of a serious critical approach to Austen's texts in the appreciations of critics such as A.C. Bradley (1851–1935), and Reginald Farrer, a view which was confirmed by R.W. Chapman's scholarly edition of Austen's texts (1923). The novelists E.M. Forster (1879–1970) and Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) also admired Austen, as well as taking her seriously as a writer of literature. Arguably the most significant part in dispelling the

notion of Austen as an inartistic and amateurish writer was played by Mary Lascelles' 1939 study *Jane Austen and her Art*. A devout Janeite, Lascelles analysed the structure of the novels and showed their artistic complexities. The chapter goes on to discuss the views of critics such as D.W. Harding and Marvin Mudrick (1921–86) who insisted on Austen as an ungentele writer, critical of her society and readership. The studies of Q.D. Leavis (1906–81), F.R. Leavis (1895–1978), Lionel Trilling (1905–75) and his view of Austen as inherently moral, are also looked at. In spite of all the differences between the critics writing in the first half of the twentieth century, they all applied an a-historical approach. Also, they all contributed to Austen's place in the literary canon as a serious author no longer being disputed by the middle of the century.

Chapters 4 and 5 look at the second half of the twentieth century, when *SS*, *PP*, and *E* provoked more criticism than ever before. The chapter traces the developments of Austen criticism in the context of larger critical movements: from New Criticism, Formalism and Structuralism to New Historicism, Feminism and postcolonial readings. While critics in the 1960s and 1970s mostly focus on style and form, looking at a text as an aesthetic object, more recent discussions see the text within the political and social context of its genesis, and connect the text to the author's biography. Arguably the most influential study in the second half of the twentieth century was *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (1975) by Marilyn Butler (born 1937). She applied a textual approach in combination with an awareness of the author and her context: closely analysing the texts, Butler showed that, far from being ahistorical and apolitical, Austen's writings are full of signs that convey political opinion. While critics after Butler might disagree with her view of Austen as espousing Tory politics, the majority of them agree with Butler in seeing Austen as a writer deeply conscious of her political and social context, and the novels as reflecting this consciousness. While New Historicism and its concern with a text's historical, cultural, social and political context dominates criticism in the second half of the twentieth century, there are two distinct approaches within this larger movement (which are sometimes combined): the political–historical perspective outlined above, and a feminist perspective. The latter comprises studies of the role of women in Austen's fiction as well as of her own position as a woman writer in the early nineteenth century – or a combination of the two.

Chapter 6 considers trends in the first decade of the twenty-first century. It sees a continuation of the historicist trends described above, but it also produces studies that go back to an exclusive focus on the text, notably David Miller in his *Jane Austen or The Secret of Style* (2003), in which he argues that the text is absolutely impersonal in that it reveals nothing about gender, age, marital status, social position etc., which renders Austen's narrative a truly omniscient one. Many critics

combine a close reading of the texts with placing Austen and her novels in their historical context. An important example here is Peter Knox-Shaw's *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment* (2004). His approach starts with Butler's view of a conservative Austen; he disagrees with this, since he views her as more in line with the Enlightenment. Arguably the most significant study in this decade is Kathryn Sutherland's *Jane Austen's Textual Lives* (2005). Sutherland here shows how Austen has been constructed, through biographies, portraits, films, editions of her novels, illustrations, into what each editor, biographer, etc, believes her to have been.

Chapter 7 discusses studies of the film adaptations of Austen's novels: in the late twentieth century, more people come to Austen through film versions of her novels than through the novels themselves. The chapter looks at the rise in adaptations from the mid-1990s onwards as well as at critics' attitudes towards these translations of Austen's plots.

As the above outline suggests, this Guide offers a chronological account of critical perspectives, which will make it possible to point up developments in criticism and see critics in their respective contexts. This presentation emphasises every reader's being part of an 'interpretive community'¹¹ and thereby heightens awareness of our own 'horizons of expectations'.¹²

Index

- amusement, 8, 10–14, 16, 20, 35, 58, 99, 100
 Armstrong, Isobel, 86, 90, 93–4
 artistic, novel and novelist as, 3, 4, 19,
 28–9, 31–2, 3–7, 46–7, 49, 51–2,
 121–2, 135–6
 Austen-Leigh, J. E., *Memoir*, 3, 22, 24,
 28–9, 32, 38, 40, 42, 59, 125–6, 136

 Bradley, A.C., 3, 47–8, 52, 136
British Critic, The, 2, 6, 9, 11–14, 16–17, 21
 Burney, Frances, 35, 52, 82, 121
 Butler, Marilyn, 4, 5, 70, 76–9, 82–4, 86,
 88, 90, 94, 102, 138
 Byron, Lord George Gordon, 2, 17, 106,
 111–13

 Castle, Terry, 64–6, 138
 Chapman, R. W., 3, 50–2, 116, 137, 152–3
 Coleridge, S. T., 111–12
Critical Review, The, 2, 6, 9, 11–12, 14,
 16–17, 135

 Davies, Andrew, 124, 128, 130–1
 Deresiewicz, W., 111–13
 Dickens, Charles, 31

 Egerton, Thomas, 1–2, 113, 151

 Farrer, R., 3, 49, 52, 136–7
 Feminism, 4, 62, 66, 69, 70–1, 75–6,
 118–21, 127, 129
 Fielding, Henry, 7, 80, 97

 Garrod, H. W., 44, 136
 Gender, 4, 9, 12, 22, 26, 44, 62, 66, 69–70,
 75, 82, 89–90, 94, 96, 118, 120–1, 133–9
 Gilbert, S., 66–9, 138
 Godwin, W., 8, 76, 107
 Goethe, J. W. Von, 85
 Gubar, S., 66–9, 138

 Harding, D.W., 4, 55–60, 137
 Harris, Jocelyn, 104

 Humour, 20–1, 2–7, 31–5, 37, 39–40,
 42, 51
 Hutton, R. H., 3, 24–5, 136

 Instruction, 8, 10–11, 15, 20, 31, 85, 131
 Irony, 24–6, 28, 35–8, 55, 57, 61, 71, 89,
 104, 132, 136–7

 Jacobin novels, 76–8, 87–8, 91
 James, Henry, 3, 46–7, 52, 59, 81, 136
 Janeites, 3–4, 42–6, 52, 59, 61, 136–7
 Johnson, Claudia, 44–5, 59, 90–4,
 103, 120
 Johnson, Samuel, 47–8, 52, 70, 86, 103, 121–2
 Jones, V., 90, 120–1

 Kirkham, Margaret, 69–70
 Knox-Shaw, Peter, 5, 102–3, 138

 Lamont, Claire, 87, 100–2, 116, 152
 Lascelles, Mary, 4, 52–4, 137
 Leavis, F.R., 4, 59–60, 137
 Looser, D., 76, 118–20, 129

 Malthus, T., 111
 Mandal, A., 113–15
Memoir, see Austen-Leigh
 Miller, David, 4, 96–100, 107, 138
 moral, morality, 4, 8–15, 18–22, 24, 27–9,
 31, 33–6, 45, 54, 57–60, 70, 74, 77, 79–80,
 83–6, 90–3, 107–9, 120–1, 135, 137
 Mudrick, M., 4, 55, 57–61, 137
 Murray, John, 2, 17, 113

 Oliphant, Margaret, 3, 26, 40

Quarterly Review, The, 6, 17, 49

 Radcliffe, Ann, 37, 82
 realism, 8, 10–15, 18–19, 21, 29–31, 33, 35,
 47, 54, 80, 89, 91, 114, 132, 135
 Richardson, Samuel, 7, 52, 70, 80
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 85, 111,

- Saintsbury, George, 3, 43–5, 136
Sales, Roger, 82–3
Scott, Sir Walter, 1–2, 6–7, 17–19, 21, 25,
31–3, 36, 38–9, 42, 50, 70, 101, 106,
111–12, 114, 135
Shakespeare, William, 14, 15, 33, 36–8, 43,
48–9, 80–2, 105, 135–6
Shelley, Mary, 70
Simpson, Richard, 3, 31, 36–8, 136
Southam, Brian, 22, 47, 59
Stafford, Fiona, 52, 134
St Clair, William, 63, 107
Stephen, Leslie, 3, 31, 40, 42, 59
style, 4, 8, 11–12, 14, 18, 20–1, 37, 54, 62,
70, 96–9, 107, 138
Sutherland, Kathryn, 5, 115–17, 124–5,
128, 138, 152
Tanner, Tony, 80–1, 87–9, 138
Thackeray, Anne Isabella, 3, 22–4,
26, 136
Thackeray, William M., 25, 31, 35, 42, 97
timeless, timelessness, 60, 63, 76, 79–81,
90, 137
Todd, Janet, 106–7, 117, 121, 152
Trilling, Lionel, 4, 60–1, 137
Troost, Linda, 127–30, 139
Trott, Nicola, 47, 54
Waldron, Mary, 83–6
Wollstonecraft, Mary, 7, 63, 70, 82, 87–8,
102–3, 107, 120
Woolf, Virginia, 3, 50–2
Wordsworth, William, 106, 111–13
Wright, Andrew, 54–5