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## Introduction

Topicality: English writer, who first gave the novel its modern character through the treatment of everyday life. Although Austen was widely read in her lifetime, she published her works anonymously. The most urgent preoccupation of her bright, young heroines is courtship and finally marriage. Austen herself never married. Her best-known books include PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (1813) and EMMA (1816). Virginia Woolf called Austen "the most perfect artist among women." Jane Austen focused on middle-class provincial life with humor and understanding. She depicted minor landed gentry, country clergymen and their families, in which marriage mainly determined women's social status. Most important for her were those little matters, as Emma says, "on which the daily happiness of private life depends." Although Austen restricted to family matters, and she passed the historical events of the Napoleonic wars, her wit and observant narrative touch has been inexhaustible delight to readers. Of her six great novels, four were published anonymously during her lifetime. Austen also had troubles with her publisher, who wanted to make alterations to her love scenes in *Pride and Prejudice*. In 1811 he wrote to Thomas Egerton: "You say the book is indecent. You say I am immodest. But Sir in the depiction of love, modesty is the fullness of *truth*; and decency frankness; and so I must also be frank with you, and ask that you remove my name from the title page in all future printings; 'A lady' will do well enough." At her death on July 18, 1817 in Winchester, at the age of forty-one, Austen was writing the unfinished SANDITON. She managed to write twelve chapters before stopping in March 18, due to her poor health. The cause of her death is not known. It has been claimed that Austen was a victim of Addison's disease. According to Claire Tomalin, she may have died of lymphoma. Katherine White has suggested in the British Medical Journal's Medical Humanities magazine, that she died of tuberculosis caught from cattle.

Jane Austen was buried in Winchester Cathedral, near the centre of the north aisle. "It is a satisfaction to me to think that [she is] to lie in a Building she admired so much," Cassandra Austen wrote later. Cassandra destroyed many of her sister's letters; one hundred sixty survived but none written earlier than her tentieth birthday.

Jane Austen's brother Henry made her authorship public after her death. *Emma* had been reviewed favorably by Sir Walter Scott, who wrote in his journal of March 14, 1826: " had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I have ever met with. The Big Bow-Wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me." Charlotte Brontë and E. B. Browning found her limited, and Elizabeth Hardwick said: "I don't think her superb intelligence brought her happiness." It was not until the publication of J. E. Austen-Leigh's *Memoir* in 1870 that a Jane Austen cult began to develop. Austen's unfinished *Sanditon* was published in 1925.

The Theme: “Jane Austen's Art and her Literary Reputation"

The Aim of investigation: is to analyze Jane Austen's works, to develop of genre and style in her novels and reflect their role in author’s writings.

The objectives:

To give general notes on Jane Austen's works;

To define the author’s role as the most famous woman - writer in English literature;

To give an explanation Jane Austen's literary reputation in her writings;

*The object of investigation: is Jane Austen's* *novel “A Sense and Sensibility".*

The subject of investigation: The development of genre and artistic peculiarities of novel “A Sense and Sensibility".

The hypothesis of investigation: We suppose that investigation of Jane Austen's works, which is given stylistic devices, analysis of her works, and also her genre of writings reflect its own place in literature.

Methods of investigation:

Descriptive method.2.comparative method.

Materials of investigation: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1816), *Northanger Abbey*.

Theoretical value: in our course paper work we are going to investigate J. Austen’s life and her writings, literary genre in her writings. This material could be used by the students during their theoretical classes as the literature of Great Britain.

Practical Value of this course paper is to investigate J. Austen’s literary art and its role in English realism; also it is given some facts such as Jane Austen's Limitations, Jane Austen's literary reputation.

Structure of the course paper: Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Conclusion, Bibliography and Appendix.

Introduction includes topicality, theme, problem, aim, objectives, object, subject, hypothesis, theoretical and practical value, methods of investigation and structure.

## 1. Theoretical part gives general notes on Jane Austen’s works

Practical part represents J. Austen’s style and analyzes of her works.

In the conclusion we present the results of our investigation.

Bibliography suggests a list of sources of references.

Theoretical part I.

## 1.1 English novelist - Jane Austen

Jane Austen (16 December 1775 - 18 July 1817) was an English novelist whose works of romantic fiction set among the gentry have earned her a place as one of the most widely read and most beloved writers in English literature.  [1]  Amongst scholars and critics, Austen's realism and biting social commentary have cemented her historical importance as a writer.

Austen lived her entire life as part of a close-knit family located on the lower fringes of English gentry.  [2]  She was educated primarily by her father and older brothers as well as through her own reading. The steadfast support of her family was critical to Austen's development as a professional writer.  [3]  Austen's artistic apprenticeship lasted from her teenage years until she was about thirty-five years old. During this period, she experimented with various literary forms, including the epistolary novel which she tried and then abandoned, and wrote and extensively revised three major novels and began a fourth. From 1811 until 1816, with the release of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1816), she achieved success as a published writer. She wrote two additional novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, both published posthumously in 1818, and began a third, which was eventually titled *Sanditon*, but died before completing it.

Austen's works critique the novels of sensibility of the second half of the eighteenth century and are part of the transition to nineteenth-century realism. Austen's plots, though fundamentally comic, highlight the dependence of women on marriage to secure social standing and economic security. Like those of Samuel Johnson, one of the strongest influences on her writing, her works are concerned with moral issues. During Austen's lifetime her works brought her little personal fame and only a few positive reviews. Through the mid-nineteenth century, her novels were admired mainly by members of the literary elite. However, the publication of her nephew's *A Memoir of Jane Austen* in 1869 introduced her to a far wider public as an appealing personality and kindled popular interest in her works. By the 1940s, Austen had become widely accepted in academia as a "great English writer". The second half of the twentieth century saw a proliferation of Austen scholarship, which explored many aspects of her novels: artistic, ideological, and historical. In popular culture, a Janeite fan culture has developed, centred on Austen's life, her works, and the various.

Biographical information concerning Jane Austen is "famously scarce", according to one biographer. Only some personal and family letters remain (by one estimate only 160 out of Austen's 3,000 letters are extant), and her sister Cassandra (to whom most of the letters were originally addressed) burned "the greater part" of the ones she kept and censored those she did not destroy. Other letters were destroyed by the heirs of Admiral Francis Austen, Jane's brother. Most of the biographical material produced for fifty years after Austen's death was written by her relatives and reflects the family's biases in favour of "good quiet Aunt Jane". Scholars have unearthed little information since.

Austen's parents, George Austen (1731-1805), and his wife, Cassandra (1739-1827), were members of substantial gentry families. George was descended from a family of woollen manufacturers which had risen through the professions to the lower ranks of the landed gentry. Cassandra was a member of the prominent Leigh family; they married on 26 April 1764 at Walcot Church in Bath. From 1765 until 1801, that is, for much of Jane's life, George Austen served as the rector of the Anglican parishes at Steventon, Hampshire and a nearby village. From 1773 until 1796, he supplemented this income by farming and by teaching three or four boys at a time who boarded at his home.

Austen's immediate family was large: six brothers-James (1765-1819), George (1766-1838), Edward (1767-1852), Henry Thomas (1771-1850), Francis William (Frank) (1774-1865), Charles John (1779-1852) - and one sister, Cassandra Elizabeth (1773-1845), who, like Jane, died unmarried. Cassandra Elizabeth was Austen's closest friend and confidante throughout her life. Of her brothers, Austen felt closest to Henry, who became a banker and, after his bank failed, an Anglican clergyman. Henry was also his sister's literary agent. His large circle of friends and acquaintances in London included bankers, merchants, publishers, painters, and actors: he provided Austen with a view of social worlds not normally visible from a small parish in rural Hampshire. George was sent to live with a local family at a young age because, as Austen biographer Le Faye describes it, he was "mentally abnormal and subject to fits". He may also have been deaf and mute. Charles and Frank served in the navy, both rising to the rank of admiral. Edward was adopted by his fourth cousin, Thomas Knight, inheriting Knight's estate and taking his name in 1812.

Austen was born on 16 December 1775 at Steventon rectory and publicly christened on 5 April 1776. After a few months at home, her mother placed Austen with Elizabeth Littlewood, a woman living nearby, who nursed and raised Austen for a year or eighteen months. In 1783, according to family tradition, Jane and Cassandra were sent to Oxford to be educated by Mrs. Ann Cawley and they moved with her to Southampton later in the year. Both girls caught typhus and Jane nearly died. Austen was subsequently educated at home, until leaving for boarding school with her sister Cassandra early in 1785. The school curriculum probably included some French, spelling, needlework, dancing and music and, perhaps, drama. By December 1786, Jane and Cassandra had returned home because the Austens could not afford to send both of their daughters to school.

Austen acquired the remainder of her education by reading books, guided by her father and her brothers James and Henry. George Austen apparently gave his daughters unfettered access to his large and varied library, was tolerant of Austen's sometimes risqué experiments in writing, and provided both sisters with expensive paper and other materials for their writing and drawing. According to Park Honan, a biographer of Austen, life in the Austen home was lived in "an open, amused, easy intellectual atmosphere" where the ideas of those with whom the Austens might disagree politically or socially were considered and discussed. After returning from school in 1786, Austen "never again lived anywhere beyond the bounds of her immediate family environment".

Private theatricals were also a part of Austen's education. From when she was seven until she was thirteen, the family and close friends staged a series of plays, including Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775) and David Garrick's *Bon Ton*. While the details are unknown, Austen would certainly have joined in these activities, as a spectator at first and as a participant when she was older. Most of the plays were comedies, which suggests one way in which Austen's comedic and satirical gifts were cultivated. Perhaps as early as 1787, Austen began to write poems, stories, and plays for her own and her family's amusement. Austen later compiled "fair copies" of 29 of these early works into three bound notebooks, now referred to as the *Juvenilia*, containing pieces originally written between 1787 and 1793. There is manuscript evidence that Austen continued to work on these pieces as late as the period 1809-11, and that her niece and nephew, Anna and James Edward Austen, made further additions as late as 1814. Among these works are a satirical novel in letters titled *Love and Freindship* [*sic*], in which she mocked popular novels of sensibility, [36]  and *The History of England*, a manuscript of 34 pages accompanied by 13 watercolour miniatures by her sister Cassandra.

Austen's *History* parodied popular historical writing, particularly Oliver Goldsmith's *History of England* (1764). Austen wrote, for example: "Henry the 4th ascended the throne of England much to his own satisfaction in the year 1399, after having prevailed on his cousin & predecessor Richard the 2nd, to resign it to him, & to retire for the rest of his Life to Pomfret Castle, where he happened to be murdered. "Austen's *Juvenilia* are often, according to scholar Richard Jenkyns, "boisterous" and "anarchic"; he compares them to the work of eighteenth-century novelist Laurence Sterne and the twentieth-century comedy group Monty Python.

As Austen grew into adulthood, she continued to live at her parents' home, carrying out those activities normal for women of her age and social standing: she practiced the pianoforte, assisted her sister and mother with supervising servants, and attended female relatives during childbirth and older relatives on their deathbeds. She sent short pieces of writing to her newborn nieces Fanny Catherine and Jane Anna Elizabeth. Austen was particularly proud of her accomplishments as a seamstress. She also attended church regularly, socialized frequently with friends and neighbours,and read novels-often of her own composition-aloud with her family in the evenings. Socializing with the neighbours often meant dancing, either impromptu in someone's home after supper or at the balls held regularly at the assembly rooms in the town hall. Her brother Henry later said that "Jane was fond of dancing, and excelled in it". In 1793, Austen began and then abandoned a short play, later entitled *Sir Charles Grandison or the happy Man, a comedy in 6 acts*, which she returned to and completed around 1800. This was a short parody of various school textbook abridgments of Austen's favourite contemporary novel, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), by Samuel Richardson. Honan speculates that at some point not long after writing *Love and Freindship* [sic] in 1789, Austen decided to "write for profit, to make stories her central effort", that is, to become a professional writer. Whenever she made that decision, beginning in about 1793, Austen began to write longer, more sophisticated works.

Between 1793 and 1795, Austen wrote *Lady Susan*, a short epistolary novel, usually described as her most ambitious and sophisticated early work.  [ It is unlike any of Austen's other works. Austen biographer Claire Tomalin describes the heroine of the novella as a sexual predator who uses her intelligence and charm to manipulate, betray, and abuse her victims, whether lovers, friends or family. Tomalin writes: "Told in letters, it is as neatly plotted as a play, and as cynical in tone as any of the most outrageous of the Restoration dramatists who may have provided some of her inspiration... It stands alone in Austen's work as a study of an adult woman whose intelligence and force of character are greater than those of anyone she encounters. "After finishing *Lady Susan*, Austen attempted her first full-length novel-*Elinor and Marianne*. Her sister Cassandra later remembered that it was read to the family "before 1796" and was told through a series of letters. Without surviving original manuscripts, there is no way to know how much of the original draft survived in the novel published in 1811 as *Sense and Sensibility*.

Thomas Langlois Lefroy, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, by W. H. Mote (1855); in old age, Lefroy admitted to a nephew that he had been in love with Jane Austen: "It was boyish love."

When Austen was twenty, Tom Lefroy, a nephew of neighbours, visited Steventon from December 1795 to January 1796. He had just finished a university degree and was moving to London to train as a barrister. Lefroy and Austen would have been introduced at a ball or other neighbourhood social gathering, and it is clear from Austen's letters to Cassandra that they spent considerable time together: "I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down together. "The Lefroy family intervened and sent him away at the end of January. Marriage was impractical, as both Lefroy and Austen must have known. Neither had any money, and he was dependent on a great-uncle in Ireland to finance his education and establish his legal career. If Tom Lefroy later visited Hampshire, he was carefully kept away from the Austens, and Jane Austen never saw him again.

Austen began work on a second novel, *First Impressions*, in 1796 and completed the initial draft in August 1797 when she was only 21 (it later became *Pride and Prejudice*); as with all of her novels, Austen read the work aloud to her family as she was working on it and it became an "established favourite". At this time, her father made the first attempt to publish one of her novels. In November 1797, George Austen wrote to Thomas Cadell, an established publisher in London, to ask if he would consider publishing "a Manuscript Novel, comprised in three Vols. about the length of Miss Burney's Evelina" (*First Impressions*) at the author's financial risk. Cadell quickly returned Mr. Austen's letter, marked "Declined by Return of Post". Austen may not have known of her father's efforts. Following the completion of *First Impressions*, Austen returned to *Elinor and Marianne* and from November 1797 until mid-1798, revised it heavily; she eliminated the epistolary format in favour of third-person narration and produced something close to *Sense and Sensibility*.

During the middle of 1798, after finishing revisions of *Elinor and Marianne*, Austen began writing a third novel with the working title *Susan*-later *Northanger Abbey*-a satire on the popular Gothic novel. Austen completed her work about a year later. In early 1803, Henry Austen offered *Susan* to Benjamin Crosby, a London publisher, who paid £10 for the copyright. Crosby promised early publication and went so far as to advertise the book publicly as being "in the press", but did nothing more. The manuscript remained in Crosby's hands, unpublished, until Austen repurchased the copyright from him in 1816.

In December 1800, Rev. Austen unexpectedly announced his decision to retire from the ministry, leave Steventon, and move the family to Bath. While retirement and travel were good for the elder Austens, Jane Austen was shocked to be told she was moving from the only home she had ever known. An indication of Austen's state of mind is her lack of productivity as a writer during the time she lived at Bath. She was able to make some revisions to *Susan*, and she began and then abandoned a new novel, *The Watsons*, but there was nothing like the productivity of the years 1795-99. Tomalin suggests this reflects a deep depression disabling her as a writer, but Honan disagrees, arguing Austen wrote or revised her manuscripts throughout her creative life, except for a few months after her father died.

In December 1802, Austen received her only proposal of marriage. She and her sister visited Alethea and Catherine Bigg, old friends who lived near Basingstoke. Their younger brother, Harris Bigg-Wither, had recently finished his education at Oxford and was also at home. Bigg-Wither proposed and Austen accepted. As described by Caroline Austen, Jane's niece, and Reginald Bigg-Wither, a descendant, Harris was not attractive-he was a large, plain-looking man who spoke little, stuttered when he did speak, was aggressive in conversation, and almost completely tactless. However, Austen had known him since both were young and the marriage offered many practical advantages to Austen and her family. He was the heir to extensive family estates located in the area where the sisters had grown up. With these resources, Austen could provide her parents a comfortable old age, give Cassandra a permanent home and, perhaps, assist her brothers in their careers. By the next morning, Austen realised she had made a mistake and withdrew her acceptance. No contemporary letters or diaries describe how Austen felt about this proposal. In 1814, Austen wrote a letter to her niece, Fanny Knight, who had asked for advice about a serious relationship, telling her that "having written so much on one side of the question, I shall now turn around & entreat you not to commit yourself farther, & not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection". In 1804, while living in Bath, Austen started but did not complete a new novel, *The Watsons*. The story centres on an invalid clergyman with little money and his four unmarried daughters. Sutherland describes the novel as "a study in the harsh economic realities of dependent women's lives". Honan suggests, and Tomalin agrees, that Austen chose to stop work on the novel after her father died on 21 January 1805 and her personal circumstances resembled those of her characters too closely for her comfort.

Rev. Austen's final illness had struck suddenly, leaving him, as Austen reported to her brother Francis, "quite insensible of his own state", and he died quickly. Jane, Cassandra, and their mother were left in a precarious financial situation. Edward, James, Henry, and Francis Austen pledged to make annual contributions to support their mother and sisters. For the next four years, the family's living arrangements reflected their financial insecurity. They lived part of the time in rented quarters in Bath and then, beginning in 1806, in Southampton, where they shared a house with Frank Austen and his new wife. A large part of this time they spent visiting various branches of the family.

On 5 April 1809, about three months before the family's move to Chawton, Austen wrote an angry letter to Richard Crosby, offering him a new manuscript of *Susan* if that was needed to secure immediate publication of the novel, and otherwise requesting the return of the original so she could find another publisher. Crosby replied he had not agreed to publish the book by any particular time, or at all, and that Austen could repurchase the manuscript for the £10 he had paid her and find another publisher. However, Austen did not have the resources to repurchase the book.

Around early 1809, Austen's brother Edward offered his mother and sisters a more settled life-the use of a large cottage in Chawton villagethat was part of Edward's nearby estate, Chawton House. Jane, Cassandra, and their mother moved into Chawton cottage on 7 July 1809. In Chawton, life was quieter than it had been since the family's move to Bath in 1800. The Austens did not socialise with the neighbouring gentry and entertained only when family visited. Austen's niece Anna described the Austen family's life in Chawton: "It was a very quiet life, according to our ideas, but they were great readers, and besides the housekeeping our aunts occupied themselves in working with the poor and in teaching some girl or boy to read or write. "Austen wrote almost daily, but privately, and seems to have been relieved of some household responsibilities to give her more opportunity to write. In this setting, she was able to be productive as a writer once more.

During her time at Chawton, Jane Austen successfully published four novels, which were generally well-received. Through her brother Henry, the publisher Thomas Egerton agreed to publish *Sense and Sensibility*,which appeared in October 1811. Reviews were favourable and the novel became fashionable among opinion-makers; the edition sold out by mid-1813. Austen's earnings from *Sense and Sensibility* provided her with some financial and psychological independence. Egerton then published *Pride and Prejudice*, a revision of *First Impressions*, in January 1813. He advertised the book widely and it was an immediate success, garnering three favourable reviews and selling well. By October 1813, Egerton was able to begin selling a second edition. *Mansfield Park* was published by Egerton in May 1814. While *Mansfield Park* was ignored by reviewers, it was a great success with the public. All copies were sold within six months, and Austen's earnings on this novel were larger than for any of her other novels.

Austen learned that the Prince Regent admired her novels and kept a set at each of his residences. In November 1815, the Prince Regent's librarian invited Austen to visit the Prince's London residence and hinted Austen should dedicate the forthcoming *Emma* to the Prince. Though Austen disliked the Prince, she could scarcely refuse the request. She later wrote *Plan of a Novel, according to hints from various quarters*, a satiric outline of the "perfect novel" based on the librarian's many suggestions for a future Austen novel.

In mid-1815, Austen moved her work from Egerton to John Murray, a better known London publisher,who published *Emma* in December 1815 and a second edition of *Mansfield Park* in February 1816. *Emma* sold well but the new edition of *Mansfield Park* did not, and this failure offset most of the profits Austen earned on *Emma*. These were the last of Austen's novels to be published during her lifetime.

While Murray prepared *Emma* for publication, Austen began to write a new novel she titled *The Elliots*, later published as *Persuasion*. She completed her first draft in July 1816. In addition, shortly after the publication of *Emma*, Henry Austen repurchased the copyright for *Susan* from Crosby. Austen was forced to postpone publishing either of these completed novels by family financial troubles. Henry Austen's bank failed in March 1816, depriving him of all of his assets, leaving him deeply in debt and losing Edward, James, and Frank Austen large sums. Henry and Frank could no longer afford the contributions they had made to support their mother and sisters.

Early in 1816, Jane Austen began to feel unwell. She ignored her illness at first and continued to work and to participate in the usual round of family activities. By the middle of that year, her decline was unmistakable to Austen and to her family, and Austen's physical condition began a long, slow, and irregular deterioration culminating in her death the following year. The majority of Austen biographers rely on Dr. Vincent Cope's tentative 1964 retrospective diagnosis and list her cause of death as Addison's disease. However, her final illness has also been described as Hodgkin's lymphoma. Recent work by Katherine White of Britain's Addison’s Disease Self Help Group suggests that Austen likely died of bovine tuberculosis,a disease (now) commonly associated with drinking unpasteurized milk.

Austen continued to work in spite of her illness. She became dissatisfied with the ending of *The Elliots* and rewrote the final two chapters, finishing them on 6 August 1816. In January 1817, Austen began work on a new novel she called *The Brothers*, later titled *Sanditon* upon its first publication in 1925, and completed twelve chapters before stopping work in mid-March 1817, probably because her illness prevented her from continuing. Austen made light of her condition to others, describing it as "Bile" and rheumatism, but as her disease progressed she experienced increasing difficulty walking or finding the energy for other activities. By mid-April, Austen was confined to her bed. In May, their brother Henry escorted Jane and Cassandra to Winchester for medical treatment. Austen died in Winchester on 18 July 1817, at the age of 41. Through his clerical connections, Henry arranged for his sister to be buried in the north aisle of the nave of Winchester Cathedral. The epitaph composed by her brother James praises Austen's personal qualities, expresses hope for her salvation, mentions the "extraordinary endowments of her mind", but does not explicitly mention her achievements as a writer.

After Austen's death, Cassandra and Henry Austen arranged with Murray for the publication of *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* as a set in December 1817. Henr y Austen contributed a *Biographical Note* which for the first time identified his sister as the author of the novels. Tomalin describes it as "a loving and polished eulogy". Sales were good for a year-only 321 copies remained unsold at the end of 1818-and then declined. Murray disposed of the remaining copies in 1820, and Austen's novels remained out of print for twelve years. In 1832, publisher Richard Bentley purchased the remaining copyrights to all of Austen's novels and, beginning in either December 1832 or January 1833, published them in five illustrated volumes as part of his *Standard Novels* series. In October 1833, Bentley published the first collected edition of Austen's works. Since then, Austen's novels have been continuously in print.

In 1816, the editors of *The New Monthly Magazine* noted *Emma's* publication but chose not to review it.

## 1.2 Artistic and genre peculiarities of J. Austen's works

It brought her little personal renown because they were published anonymously. Although her novels quickly became fashionable among opinion-makers, such as Princess Charlotte Augusta, daughter of the Prince Regent, they received only a few published reviews. Most of the reviews were short and on balance favourable, although superficial and cautious. They most often focused on the moral lessons of the novels. Sir Walter Scott, a leading novelist of the day, contributed one of them, anonymously. Using the review as a platform from which to defend the then disreputable genre of the novel, he praised Austen's realism. The other important early review of Austen's works was published by Richard Whately in 1821. He drew favourable comparisons between Austen and such acknowledged greats as Homer and Shakespeare, praising the dramatic qualities of her narrative. Whately and Scott set the tone for almost all subsequent nineteenth-century Austen criticism.

Because Austen's novels failed to conform to Romantic and Victorian expectations that "powerful emotion [be] authenticated by an egregious display of sound and colour in the writing", nineteenth-century critics and audiences generally preferred the works of Charles Dickens and George Eliot. Though Austen's novels were republished in Britain beginning in the 1830s and remained steady sellers, they were not bestsellers.

One of the first two published illustrations of *Pride and Prejudice*, from the Richard Bentley edition. Caption reads: "She then told him [Mr Bennett] what Mr Darcy had voluntarily done for Lydia. He heard her with astonishment."

Austen had many admiring readers in the nineteenth century who considered themselves part of a literary elite: they viewed their appreciation of Austen's works as a mark of their cultural taste. Philosopher and literary critic George Henry Lewes expressed this viewpoint in a series of enthusiastic articles published in the 1840s and 1850s. This theme continued later in the century with novelist Henry James, who referred to Austen several times with approval and on one occasion ranked her with Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Henry Fielding as among "the fine painters of life".

The publication of James Edward Austen-Leigh's *A Memoir of Jane Austen* in 1869 introduced Austen to a wider public as "dear aunt Jane", the respectable maiden aunt. Publication of the *Memoir* spurred the reissue of Austen's novels-the first popular editions were released in 1883 and fancy illustrated editions and collectors' sets quickly followed. Author and critic Leslie Stephen described the popular mania that started to develop for Austen in the 1880s as Austenolatry". Around the turn of the century, members of the literary elite reacted against the popularization of Austen. They referred to themselves as *Janeites* in order to distinguish themselves from the masses who did not properly understand her works. For example, James responded negatively to what he described as "a beguiled infatuation" with Austen, a rising tide of public interest that exceeded Austen's "intrinsic merit and interest".

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the first books of criticism on Austen were published. In fact, after the publication of the *Memoir*, more criticism was published on Austen in two years than had appeared in the previous fifty.

Several important works paved the way for Austen's novels to become a focus of academic study. The first important milestone was a 1911 essay by Oxford Shakespearean scholar A. C. Bradley, which is "generally regarded as the starting-point for the serious academic approach to Jane Austen". In it, he established the groupings of Austen's "early" and "late" novels, which are still used by scholars today. The second was R. W. Chapman's 1923 edition of Austen's collected works. Not only was it the first scholarly edition of Austen's works, it was also the first scholarly edition of any English novelist. The Chapman text has remained the basis for all subsequent published editions of Austen's works. With the publication in 1939 of Mary Lascelles's *Jane Austen and Her Art*, the academic study of Austen took hold. Lascelles's innovative work included an analysis of the books Jane Austen read and the effect of her reading on her work, an extended analysis of Austen's style, and her "narrative art". At the time, concern arose over the fact that academics were taking over Austen criticism and it was becoming increasingly esoteric-a debate that has continued to the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In a spurt of revisionist views in the 1940s, scholars approached Austen more sceptically and argued that she was a subversive writer. These revisionist views, together with F. R. Leavis's and Ian Watt's pronouncement that Austen was one of the great writers of English fiction, did much to cement Austen's reputation amongst academics. They agreed that she "combined [Henry Fielding's and Samuel Richardson's] qualities of interiority and irony, realism and satire to form an author superior to both". The period since World War II has seen more scholarship on Austen using a diversity of critical approaches, including feminist theory, and perhaps most controversially, postcolonial theory. However, the continuing disconnection between the popular appreciation of Austen, particularly by modern Janeites, and the academic appreciation of Austen has widened considerably.

Sequels, prequels, and adaptations of almost every sort have been based on the novels of Jane Austen, from soft-core pornography to fantasy. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, Austen family members published conclusions to her incomplete novels, and by 2000 there were over 100 printed adaptations. The first film adaptation was the 1940 MGM production of *Pride and Prejudice* starring Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson. BBC television dramatisations, which were first produced in the 1970s, attempted to adhere meticulously to Austen's plots, characterisations, and settings. Starting with Emma Thompson's film of *Sense and Sensibility* and the BBC's immensely popular TV mini-series *Pride and Prejudice*, a great wave of Austen adaptations began to appear around 1995.

Books and scripts that use the general storyline of Austen's novels but change or otherwise modernise the story also became popular at the end of the twentieth century. For example, *Clueless* (1995), Amy Heckerling's updated version of *Emma*, which takes place in Beverly Hills, became a cultural phenomenon and spawned its own television series.

## 2. Practical part II. J. Austen’s literary art and its role in English realism

## 2.1 The "Defense of the Novel"

In Jane Austen's era, novels were often depreciated as trash; Coleridge's opinion was that "where the reading of novels prevails as a habit, it occasions in time the entire destruction of the powers of the mind". But Jane Austen once wrote in a letter that she and her family were , and in her novel Northanger Abbey she gives her "Defense of the Novel" (even though she is also making fun of the of many novels of the era throughout Northanger Abbey).

It has been pointed out that most novel-writers and the majority of novel readers were women (thus in Jane Austen calls a "sister author"), while the , would all have been men. So in Jane Austen's day, novels actually had something of the same reputation that mass-market romances do today.

``The progress of the friendship between Catherine [Morland] and Isabella was quick as its beginning had been warm... and if a rainy morning deprived them of other enjoyments, they were still resolute in meeting in defiance of wet and dirt, and shut themselves up, to read novels together. Yes, novels; - for I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom so common with novel-writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number of which they are themselves adding - joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust. Alas! If the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? I cannot approve of it. Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers. And while the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of England, or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, , and , with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from , are eulogized by a thousand pens, - there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them. "I am no novel-reader - I seldom look into novels - Do not imagine that I often read novels - It is really very well for a novel." - Such is the common cant. - "And what are you reading, Miss - -?" "Oh! it is only a novel!" replies the young lady, while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame. "It is only CeciliaCamillaBelinda"; or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language. Now, had the same young lady been engaged with a volume of the Spectator, instead of such a work, how proudly would she have produced the book, and told its name; though the chances must be against her being occupied by any part of that voluminous publication, of which either the matter or manner would not disgust a young person of taste: the substance of its papers so often consisting in the statement of improbable circumstances, unnatural characters, and topics of conversation which no longer concern anyone living; and their language, too, frequently so coarse as to give no very favourable idea of the age that could endure it.

"Pope":

Alexander Pope, 1688-1744, a poet. Not a favorite of Marianne Dashwood's in Sense and Sensibility.

"Prior":

Matthew Prior, 1664-1721, a poet and diplomat.

"Spectator":

A series of essays originally published 1711-1712. Jane Austen attacks this favorite of the literary elites as being open to much the same accusations which the elites make against popular novels.

## 2.2 Jane Austen's Limitations

"Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore every body, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort." - Mansfield Park

"I have read [Byron's] The Corsair, mended my petticoat, and have nothing else to do." - Jane Austen,

Jane Austen limited her subject-matter in a number of ways in her (though her early and her letters often did not conform to these limitations; that she knew about a number of things she did not choose to treat in her novels can also be seen from her glancing allusions to such topics as ). Many of these limitations are due to her artistic integrity in not describing what she herself was not personally familiar with (or in avoiding clichéd plot devices common in the literature of her day).

She never handles the (conventionally masculine) topic of politics.

She never uses servants, small tradesmen, cottagers, etc. as more than purely incidental characters. Conversely, she does not describe the high nobility (the highest ranking "on-stage" characters are ), and (unlike present-day writers of modern "Regency" novels, or some of her contemporaries) she does not describe London high society.

She confines herself to the general territory that she herself has visited and is familiar with (more or less the southern half of ). (See her )

In her novels there is no violence (the closest approaches are the duel between Colonel Brandon and Willoughby in Sense and Sensibility, in which neither is hurt, and the indefinite menacements of the Gypsies towards Harriet Smith and Miss Bickerton in Emma), and no crime (except for the poultry-thief at the end of Emma).

She never uses certain hackneyed plot devices then common, such as mistaken identities, doubtful and/or aristocratic parentage, and hidden-then-rediscovered wills. In Emma, Harriet Smith's parentage is actually not very mysterious (as Mr. Knightley had suspected all along). Jane Austen had exuberantly parodied this type of plot in Henry and Eliza, one of her :

[Wife to husband:] "Four months after you were gone, I was delivered of this Girl, but dreading your just resentment at her not proving the Boy you wished, I took her to a Haycock and laid her down. A few weeks afterwards, you returned, and fortunately for me, made no enquiries. Satisfied within myself of the wellfare of my Child, I soon forgot that I had one, insomuch that when we shortly afterward found her in the very Haycock I had placed her, I had no more idea of her being my own than you had."

In Jane Austen's works there is hardly any male sexual predation or assaults on female virtue - a favorite device of novelists of the period (even in a novel such as Evelina, which has no rapes or abductions to remote farmhouses, this is a constant theme). The only possible case is the affair between Willoughby and the younger Eliza Williams in Sense and Sensibility (about which little information is divulged in the novel) - since of Pride and Prejudice and Maria Bertram of Mansfield Park more or less throw themselves at and Henry Crawford respectively. Also, the elder Eliza Williams in Sense and Sensibility is more likely tempted astray because she is a weak personality trapped in a wretchedly unhappy marriage (remember that almost the only grounds for was the wife's infidelity), rather than because of any extraordinary arts or persuasions used by her seducer. And finally, whatever the complex of motives involved in the Mrs. Clay-Mr. Elliot affair in Persuasion, it can hardly be regarded as the seduction of a female by a sexually predatory male. In Jane Austen's last incomplete fragment, Sanditon, it is true that likes to think of himself as a predatory male, but he is described as such an ineffectual fool that it is difficult to believe that he would have accomplished any of his designs against the beauteous Clara Brereton, if Jane Austen had finished the work.

Note that all these affairs take place entirely "off-stage" (except for a few encounters of flirtation between Maria Bertram and Henry Crawford, long before she runs away with him), and are not described in any detail.

No one dies "on stage" in one of her novels, and almost no one dies at all during the main period of the events of each novel (except for Lord Ravenshaw's grandmother in Mansfield Park and Mrs. Churchill in Emma).

The illnesses that occur ( in Pride and Prejudice and Louisa Musgrove's in Persuasion) are not milked for much pathos (Marianne's in Sense and Sensibility is a partial exception, but Marianne is condemned for bringing her illness on herself). And Mrs. Smith in Persuasion (who takes a decidedly non-pathetic view of her own illness) pours cold water on Anne Elliot's ideas of the "ardent, disinterested, self-denying attachment, [...] , fortitude, patience, resignation" to be found in a sick-room. And in Sanditon, written while she was suffering from , Jane Austen made fun of several hypochondriac characters.

"Mrs. F. A. has had one fainting fit lately; it came on as usual after eating a hearty dinner, but did not last long." - Jane Austen,

The only person who actually faints in one of Jane Austen's novels is the silly Harriet Smith of Emma (since one rather suspects the genuineness of the "fainting fit" that Lucy Steele is reported to have been driven into by the furious Mrs. John Dashwood, after the discovery of Lucy's engagement to Edward Ferrars in Sense and Sensibility). On three occasions, Fanny Price of Mansfield Park imagines to herself that she is on the point of fainting, and once Elinor Dashwood thinks that her sister Marianne is about to faint, but neither Fanny or Marianne ever does. And Elinor Dashwood, at one critical moment in Sense and Sensibility, feels herself to be "in no danger of an hysterical fit or a swoon".

Jane Austen's parsimony in faintings in her novels does not apply to her , where she mocks the propensity to faint of the conventional novel-heroine of the day. So Elfrida in Frederic & Elfrida "fainted & was in such a hurry to have a succession of fainting fits, that she had scarcely patience enough to recover from one before she fell into another".

Notoriously, Jane Austen hardly ever quotes from a conversation between men with no women present (or overhearing). However, despite some assertions that she never includes such dialogue, there is at least in Mansfield Park. (A less clear possibility is Sir Thomas Bertram's chiding of his son Tom when he has to sell the Mansfield clerical "living", in Chapter 3 of Mansfield Park)

She is also sparing of describing the internal thoughts and emotions of male characters (thus in Pride and Prejudice, much of admiration for is expressed by means of convenient conversations with ).

She is very sparing with (except to some degree in her last novel, Persuasion).

She tends to glide over the more passionately romantic moments of her characters, not describing closely lovers' embraces and endearments. So in the marriage proposal scene in Pride and Prejudice the quoted dialogue breaks off just before the critical point, giving way to the following report: . Similarly in Emma: "She spoke then, on being so entreated [with a proposal]. What did she say? Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does." In fact Jane Austen had something of an aversion to sappy language; thus in Pride and Prejudice she has Mrs. Gardiner (in fact, the very same expression "violently in love" that Austen saw fit to fob us off with later in the novel in the proposal scene!). Even in her more "romantic" last novel Persuasion, she still ruthlessly cut out Wentworth's line "Anne, my own dear Anne!" from her , and replaced it with less pointed narration in the final version of the text; and she almost makes fun of her heroine Anne Elliot:

"Prettier musings of high-wrought love and eternal constancy could never have passed along the streets of Bath, than Anne was sporting with from Camden Place to Westgate Buildings. It was almost enough to spread purification and perfume all the way."

And in a letter of November 8th 1796, Jane Austen wrote "I have had a... letter from Buller; I was afraid he would oppress me with his felicity & his love for his wife, but this is not the case; he calls her simply Anna without any angelic embellishments".

And Jane Austen never even mentions lovers kissing (an important moment in Emma is when Mr. Knightley fails to kiss Emma's hand), though Willoughby does kiss a lock of Marianne's hair in Sense and Sensibility. And Mr. Knightly touches Emma, causing a "flutter of pleasure" in Emma (though they are not yet acknowledged lovers at this point).

See a (non-academic) Pride and Prejudice.

See an

Her heroines also famously .

One minor but interesting point is that, though Jane Austen never used a Jewish character, or discussed Judaism in any way in her writings, she manages to strike a blow against anti-Semitism anyway - her sole mention of Jews is the phrase "as rich as a Jew", used repetitively in Northanger Abbey by John Thorpe (one of the most obnoxious and ridiculous characters in all her novels); significantly, the heroine Catherine Morland does not at first understand what he means.

## 2.3 Jane Austen's literary reputation

Though she always had her admirers, Jane Austen was not the most popular or most highly-praised novelist of her era (none of her novels were reprinted in English between 1818 and 1831), and she was not generally considered a great novelist until the late nineteenth century (). During her lifetime, boosted Jane Austen through his review of Emma, but nowadays it is Jane Austen who is used to boost Sir Walter Scott - Jane Austen's comments () on Scott's Waverley have been used as a back cover blurb for recent reprintings of Scott's novel.

One thing that many contemporary readers felt to be lacking in Jane Austen's novels was their failure to be `instructive' (i. e. to teach a moral), or `inspirational' (that is "to elevate mankind by their depiction of ideal persons, even in defiance of the known realities of ordinary life" - , p.14). Jane Austen makes fun of such didactic tendencies in her ending to Northanger Abbey: "I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny or reward filial disobedience." In her last work (Sanditon), she has a very foolish character () criticize novels like those she herself writes as "vapid tissues of Ordinary occurrences from which no useful Deductions can be drawn". Jane Austen also once said (in ) that "pictures of perfection make me sick and wicked", and she satirized the frequent lack of realism in the literature of the day in her Plan of a Novel: "there will be no mixture... the Good will be unexceptionable in every respect - and there will be no foibles or weaknesses but with the Wicked, who will be completely depraved and infamous, hardly a resemblance of Humanity left in them". What many other contemporary readers did admire in Jane Austen's novels was their plausibility and depiction of real life - as opposed to the sensationalism, unlikely meetings between long-lost relatives, villainous aristocratic would-be ravishers, etc. that were the stock in trade of much of the literature of the period.

Thus one Anne Romilly wrote in 1814 that

"Mansfield park... has been pretty generally admired here, and I think all novels must be that are true to life which this is... It has not however that elevation of virtue, something beyond nature, that gives the greatest charm to a novel."

In the Opinions of Mansfield Park, Jane Austen recorded the comments of one Lady Gordon:

"In most novels you are amused for the time with a set of Ideal People whom you never think of afterwards or whom you the least expect to meet in common life, whereas in Miss A----'s works, & especially in M [ansfield] P [ark] you actually live with them, you fancy yourself one of the family; & the scenes are so exactly descriptive, so perfectly natural, that there is scarcely an Incident, or conversation, or a person, that you are not inclined to imagine you have at one time or other in your Life been a witness to, borne a part in, & been acquainted with."

In a letter of May 1813, soon after the publication of Pride and Prejudice, Annabella Milbanke (later Lady Byron) wrote in a letter that

"I have finished the Novel called Pride and Prejudice, which I think a very superior work. It depends not on any of the common resources of novel writers, no drownings, no conflagrations, nor runaway horses, nor lap-dogs and parrots, nor chambermaids and milliners, nor rencontres [duels] and disguises. I really think it is the most probable I have ever read. It is not a crying book, but the interest is very strong, especially for . The characters which are not amiable are diverting, and all of them are consistently supported."

In 1815 one William Gifford wrote

"I have for the first time looked into P. and P. ; and it is really a very pretty thing. No dark passages; no secret chambers; no wind-howlings in long galleries; no drops of blood upon a rusty dagger - things that should now be left to ladies' maids and sentimental washerwomen."

## Conclusion

Austen wrote her books at the dawn of the nineteenth century, when vast social changes were already encroaching on the way of life she so loved and rendered with such exquisite artistry. We read her books today on the cusp of a new century, with an unfathomable world creeping up on us, too--one globally interconnected, technologically complex, economically uncertain. Perhaps we find on Austen's rural estates and in her charming, insular society the same peace and pleasure she found there; and an analogue for the simpler, more circumscribed world of our own childhoods, itself passing quickly away into history. The time in which Jane Austen wrote her novels was a period of great stability just about to give way to a time of unimagined changes. At that time most of England's population (some thirteen million) were involved in rural and agricultural work: yet within another twenty years, the majority of Englishmen became urban dwellers involved with industry, and the great railway age had begun. Throughout the early years of the century the cities were growing at a great rate; the network of canals was completed, the main roads were being remade. Regency London, in particular, boomed and became, among other things, a great centre of fashion. On the other hand, England in the first decade of the nineteenth century was still predominantly a land of country towns and villages, a land of rural routines which were scarcely touched by the seven campaigns of the Peninsular War against Napoleon. But if Austen's age was still predominantly one of rural quiet, it was also the age of the French Revolution, the War of American Independence, the start of the Industrial Revolution, and the first generation of the Romantic poets; and Jane Austen was certainly not unaware of what was going on in the world around her. She had two brothers in the Royal Navy and a cousin whose husband was guillotined in the Terror. And although her favourite prose writer was Dr. Samuel Johnson, she clearly knew the works of writers like Goethe, Worsdworth, Scott, Byron, Southey, Godwin and other, very definitely nineteenth-century, authors.

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