THE WORLD'S CLASSICS

JANE AUSTEN

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Edited by

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AND

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PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

JANE AUSTEN was born at Steventon, Hampshire, in 1775, the daughter of a clergyman. At the age of nine she was sent to school at Reading with her elder sister Cassandra, who was her lifelong friend and confidante, but she was largely taught by her father. She began to write for recreation while still in her teens. In 1801 the family moved to Bath, the scene of so many episodes in her books and, after the death of her father in 1805, to Southampton and then to the village of Chawton, near Alton in Hampshire. Here she lived uneventfully until May 1817, when the family moved to Winchester seeking skilled medical attention for her ill-health, but she died two months later. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Her best-known novels are *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, both published posthumously in 1818.

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INTRODUCTION

MOST novel-readers agree that *Pride and Prejudice* is a masterpiece, rivalling *Emma* in general popularity, yet there is still uncertainty about how it came to be written. A memorandum by Jane Austen's sister, Cassandra, states that *First Impressions* (the initial title of the novel) was written between October 1796 and August 1797; that is, when Jane Austen was exactly the same age as her heroine. To this extent, the original novel may have had something of the intimacy of autobiography, though the title suggests that it may have had burlesque elements, similar to the skit called 'Love and Friendship', which Jane Austen had completed in June 1790, at the age of fourteen. It was probably also written in the form of a novel-in-letters, as was *Elinor and Marianne*, the first version of *Sense and Sensibility*, which was written before *First Impressions*. The fact that Jane Austen's father compared *First Impressions* with Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, when he offered his daughter's first completed attempt at novel-writing to the publisher Cadell in 1797, tends to confirm the view that it, also, was written in letter form.

In a letter to Cassandra, dated 8 January 1799, Jane Austen writes, 'I do not wonder at your wanting to read *First Impressions* again, so seldom as you have gone through it, and that so long ago.' Later, in the same year, she writes to Cassandra, playfully suggesting that a friend, Martha Lloyd, intended to publish *First Impressions* from memory, and that one more perusal would enable her to do it. This suggests that the original form of the novel may have had something in common with the numerous juvenile pieces of Jane Austen that were dedicated to various members of the family, and served as a source of general amusement like the amateur theatricals.

charades, and conundrums which the family also enjoyed. In 1800 a novel in four volumes by Mrs. Holford, entitled *First Impressions*, was published. If Jane Austen were to attempt to publish her story, the title would have to be changed.

There is no further mention of the novel in Jane Austen's letters until November 1812, when she informs the same Martha Lloyd who had been such an enthusiastic reader over thirteen years ago, that *Pride and Prejudice* has been sold to Egerton for £110. Jane Austen would, by now, be almost thirty-seven years of age. In January 1813, she writes to Cassandra describing how the book was read aloud immediately to a certain Miss Benn, who did not know, of course, who had written it, and then she describes the book in a way that seems to indicate that Cassandra was not familiar with the final form that the novel took: 'The second volume is shorter than I could wish, but the difference is not so much in reality as in look, there being a larger proportion of narrative in that part, I have lop't and crop't so successfully, however, that I imagine it must be rather shorter than S. & S. altogether.' (In fact, the first two novels that Jane Austen published were approximately of the same length.)

What happened to the *First Impressions* of 1796–7 to transform it into the *Pride and Prejudice* that was sold to Egerton in 1812? What revisions were made by Jane Austen to her favourite novel between the ages of twenty and thirty-seven? Presumably, there must have been radical alterations if the original was in the form of letters. It is also difficult to believe that any publisher would reject a novel bearing the faintest resemblance to the final form of *Pride and Prejudice*, though, of course, there is the possibility that the manuscript may have been returned unread.

Dr. R. W. Chapman first put forward the view, in his edition of *Pride and Prejudice* (1923), that substantial revisions to the novel were made during 1811 and 1812, and that there is a precise chronological order of events in the novel, based on the calendars of those years. Unfortunately, there are no

letters from Jane to Cassandra between 6 June 1811 and 24 January 1813 to supply supporting evidence. The absence of any reference to revision in the five letters to Cassandra written in April, May, and June of 1811 implies that Jane Austen was busy then putting the final touches to *Sense and Sensibility* ('I can no more forget it, than a mother can forget her sucking child', she wrote to Cassandra on 25 April 1811). Presumably, however, the new title that Jane Austen gave to the novel-in-letters *Elinor and Marianne* followed a change in the title of *First Impressions*. For 'pride and prejudice', apart from its source in Fanny Burney's *Cecilia*, was a phrase used by many writers. If so, it is likely that Jane Austen began important revision of *Pride and Prejudice* before 1809, when she probably began the final rewriting of *Sense and Sensibility*. Cassandra, in her memorandum, states that *Sense and Sensibility* was begun in November 1797, and Jane Austen's nephew J. E. Austen-Leigh confirms this in his *Memoir*, but there is no evidence that the novel was known by that title then.

Dr. R. W. Chapman's theory about the use of the 1811 and 1812 calendars in the finally revised version of *Pride and Prejudice* has been generally accepted, with the corollary that the revision was a very thorough one, and that the work as we know it is primarily the work of a lady aged about thirty-six rather than of a girl of twenty or twenty-one. But the theory has recently been challenged. In an article, 'The Time Scheme for *Pride and Prejudice*',[1] Ralph Nash maintains that the available evidence will support equally well, and probably better, a hypothesis of revisions by the calendars of 1799 and 1802, the events of the first autumn in the novel reflecting the calendar of 1799, and the events of the spring and the summer reflecting the calendar of 1802. Chapman himself had noted, in connection with the mention of the Peace of Amiens in the final chapter of the novel, the possibility of a revision between March 1802 and the resumption of hostilities.[2] But Mr. Nash believes that the major revision was before *Pride*

[1] In *English Language Notes*, v. 3, March 1967.

[2] *Pride and Prejudice*, Appendix, 'Chronology of *Pride and Prejudice*', p. 407.

and Prejudice was prepared for the press in 1812, and that the novel as we have it represents essentially early work'. This view is confirmed independently in a recent contribution to *Notes and Queries* by P. B. S. Andrews,[1] who contends that there is 'possible evidence for some re-working in 1799' and 'positive evidence for probably substantial rewriting in 1802'. It was in Bath, in 1802, he maintains, that Jane Austen 'undertook the main conversion of *First Impressions* into the *Pride and Prejudice* we know'. A further point made is that 'it seems to me incredible that the gay and young-in-heart *Pride and Prejudice*, and the mature and bitter *Mansfield Park*, can really be simultaneous productions of the same stage in the author's development. Yet, according to Austen-Leigh's *Memoir of Jane Austen* (1870; ch. 6), *Mansfield Park* was begun in February 1811 and nearly finished by February 1813, though not published till 1814.'

There can be no doubt about the connection between certain characters and situations in *Pride and Prejudice* and parallels in the juvenile writings of Jane Austen written *c.* 1787–93, when she was between the ages of eleven and eighteen.[2] In 'Volume the First' of the juvenilia, there is a novel called 'The Three Sisters', where a Miss Mary Stanhope writes triumphing over her sisters Sophy, Georgiana, and 'the Duttons', in much the same way that Lydia Bennet triumphs over her sisters, when she finally succeeds in marrying Wickham. Her mother is as determined that Mr. Watts will marry one of her daughters as Mrs. Bennet is that hers will marry somebody.[3] The materialistic attitude of Miss Mary Stanhope towards marriage is an exaggerated, burlesque version of Charlotte Lucas's, and the same underlying materialism is mocked even in the romantic lovers and friends of *Love and Friendship* in 'Volume the Second'. Both 'Love and Friendship' and 'Lesley Castle' ridicule the romantic idea

[1] *Notes and Queries*, N.S., XV, September 1968.

[2] Published in *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. by B. C. Southam (1969).

[3] This and many other parallels, are pointed out by Q. D. Leavis in her article in *Scrutiny*, X. 1.

of 'first impressions' by caricaturing it: 'from the first moment I beheld him, I was certain that on him depended the future happiness of my Life', Miss Margaret Lesley writes to Miss Charlotte Lutterell, whose prosaic concern about food belies her romantic Christian name,[1] as Charlotte Lucas's does. One could hardly imagine Jane Bennet saying that. The mildness of her character controls and restrains her 'first impressions', just as the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy comically reverses the conventions of romantic love. Burlesque and caricature have been replaced by more delicate criticism of romanticism which allows a certain degree of it to remain, untouched by irony.

Jane Austen's mock 'History of England' is written by 'a partial, prejudiced, & ignorant Historian', who pretends to support Mary against Elizabeth, and who is no more prejudiced than Elizabeth Bennet, when she supports Wickham against Darcy. 'Letter the second', from 'A Collection of Letters' in 'Volume the Second', is 'From a Young lady crossed in Love to her friend': 'next to being married, a girl likes to be crossed in love a little now and then', remarks Mr. Bennet, a victim of romanticism, with no illusions. In romantic love and friendship, thought, feelings, and actions coincide. 'Letter the fifth' celebrates love at first sight with satirical exaggeration: the minds of lovers are 'actuated by the invisible power of sympathy', 'true love is ever desponding', and the lover expresses himself theatrically. Compared with this, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, the Collinses, Lydia and Wickham, even Elizabeth and Darcy, and Jane and Bingley, represent actuality. The criticism of romanticism for its unreality is replaced by an implied criticism of life for its betrayal of its romantic potentialities, except in the case of Lydia and Wickham, who retain something of the hypocritical pseudo-romanticism, which is essentially materialistic, characteristic of the lovers in the early burlesques.

'Letter the Third' in 'A Collection of Letters' contains the original sketch for Lady Catherine de Bourgh in Lady

[1] Ibid.

Greville, who keeps Maria Williams standing out in the cold by her coach, as Charlotte Lucas is kept by Mrs. Jenkinson and Miss de Bourgh. One of the 'Scraps' in 'Volume the Second', called 'The Female philosopher', mocks the wit and humour which consist solely in 'Sallies, Bonmots & repartees', and contains a sketch of Mary Bennet in 'the sensible and amiable Julia' who 'uttered Sentiments of Morality worthy of a heart like her own'. 'Volume the Third' includes 'Catherine, or the Bower', in which there is a character called Mr. Dudley, 'who was the Younger Son of a very noble Family, of a Family more famed for their Pride than their opulence, tenacious of his Dignity, and jealous of his rights, was forever quarrelling . . . concerning tythes, and with the principal Neighbours themselves concerning the respect & parade, he exacted'. Mr. Dudley is a composite character, combining the roles of Darcy and Mr. Collins. In *Pride and Prejudice*, there is a suggestion, at times, as in Mr. Collins's proposal and Darcy's first one, of a common kind of pompous embarrassment in speech, which may be partly due to their common origin in this character.

One cannot 'explain' the achieved mastery of *Pride and Prejudice* by relating it to the earlier writings, which merely help one to guess what the original *First Impressions* may have been like. There is a difficulty presented by the relationship between the final version and 'The Watsons', a fragment of inferior quality written about 1804–5. Lord Osborne, in 'The Watsons', is another sketch for Darcy: he 'was a very fine young man; but there was an air of Coldness, of Carelessness, even of Awkwardness about him, which seemed to speak him out of his Element in a Ball room . . . he was not fond of Women's company, & he never danced'. He is contrasted with Mr. Howard, who 'was an agreeable-looking Man'. Mr. B. C. Southam considers that 'the basic situation of *The Watsons* is far closer to *Pride and Prejudice* than to *Emma*'.[1] It is hardly conceivable that Jane Austen would have repeated herself in an inferior manner, which is what one would have to assume

[1] B. C. Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts*, p. 147.

if the main revision of *First Impressions* had been carried out by 1802. On the other hand, there is evidence that Jane Austen tinkered with her juvenile works until she was well over thirty, for 'Catherine' in 'Volume the Third' has a reference to Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, published in 1809, inserted. 'As an ironical study of an insufferable egoist much could have been done with Coelebs', Dr. M. G. Jones comments.[1] Perhaps Coelebs helped to heighten Jane Austen's sense of the comedy of Mr. Collins's search, though Coelebs 'was a single man in possession of a good fortune'. The novel is mentioned twice in Jane Austen's letters, together with *Practical Piety* (1811), one of Hannah More's didactic tracts. Jane Austen's attitude towards the Evangelicals varied from 'I do not like the Evangelicals' (1809) to 'I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be Evangelicals' (1814).[2] The influence of their ideas may possibly be seen in the reformed character of Darcy and in the new seriousness and social consciousness of *Mansfield Park*.

Numerous parallels have been noted between *Pride and Prejudice* and the novels of Jane Austen's predecessors, Richardson and Fanny Burney in particular. Elizabeth Bennet's situation of social inferiority compared with Darcy, resembles Pamela's, Evelina's, and Cecilia's. Mr. Collins and Darcy propose to her in language that recalls Mr. B——'s in *Pamela*.[3] There is a connection between Mr. Elias Brand in *Clarissa* and Mr. Collins.[4] The theme of 'persuasion' in *Pride and Prejudice* appears to be related to the crude attempts at persuasion made by Clarissa's family in the first volume of that novel. The ancestry of Darcy as a 'patrician hero' has been traced to Sir Charles Grandison and to Fanny Burney's imitations of him.[5] The most important relationship, however, is that between Jane Austen's novel and Fanny Burney's

[1] M. G. Jones, *Hannah More*, 1952, p. 194. [2] *Letters*, pp. 256 and 410.

[3] See E. E. Duncan-Jones in *Notes and Queries*, N.S., iv, no. 2, and Henrietta Ten Harmsel, *Jane Austen: A Study in Fictional Conventions*, The Hague, 1964, p. 81.

[4] Pointed out by B. C. Southam, *Notes and Queries*, N.S., x, no. 5.

[5] By Kenneth L. Moler, in *Jane Austen's Art of Allusion*, University of Nebraska Press (1968).

Cecilia. Here, in the words of Q. D. Leavis, 'What we have . . . is not simply a subject taken over for ridicule, or a realistic instead of a conventional treatment of a plot, nor is it the simple "borrowing" for a slightly different purpose. . . . It is the central idea of *Cecilia* given an elaborate orchestration as it were, sometimes guyed . . . more often used as an opportunity for self-exploration on the author's part.'[1] There are also important connections with Fanny Burney's *Evelina* and with *Camilla*.

However, consideration of the sources of *Pride and Prejudice* does not explain its brilliance. Jane Austen herself referred ironically to its epigrammatic style: 'the work is rather too light and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had'.[2] The famous opening sentence exemplifies this epigrammatic quality. It expresses the obsession of Mrs. Bennet, which we are ironically said to share, in the language and style of Mr. Bennet. The sentence represents the perfect marriage between content and style, which is characteristic of Jane Austen. It introduces the ensuing dialogue between husband and wife with the clarity of a musical chord which contrasts with the muddle of their conversation. The first volume of the novel closes with a similar dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, and phrases from the opening sentence are echoed in the second chapter of the second volume (p. 125) and later in the novel (pp. 331 and 336).

The wit of the novel is sometimes identified with that of Mr. Bennet, though his is revealed at the climax of the story to be extremely misplaced. Nor can one associate Jane Austen's wit completely with that of her heroine, though here the resemblance is closer. Elizabeth has the same 'quick parts' as her father, contrasting with her sister Jane, as he does with his wife. All human characters are seen by the heroine as being inconsistent, though she does not realize, herself, until the end of the novel, just how inconsistent they are. She shares a fundamental scepticism with her father, but she is deceived

[1] *Scrutiny*, x. i, 75. [2] *Letters*, p. 299.

by Wickham, just as Mr. Bennet was by his wife (he also underestimates the folly of Lydia). Before the end of the second volume, Elizabeth feels that 'she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd . . . "I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away"'.[1] At the end of the novel, she realizes the limited insight into human nature provided by her own 'ease and liveliness', and appreciates the irresponsibility of her father's wit.

It is, partly, in the neatness of the patterns and antitheses formed by the various combinations, comparisons, and contrasts of characters and situations that the wit of Jane Austen is manifest. In this respect, one is reminded that some of her essential allegiances were with the age of Pope.[2] But she looks beyond that to the world of Shakespearian comedy, as well as forwards to the age of romanticism. Shakespeare, too, makes use of pattern, antithesis, and verbal echoes. Despite the fact that Jane Austen has been described, with some justice, as 'a Marxist before Marx',[3] the story of *Pride and Prejudice* is genuinely romantic, as well as realistic, with a powerful vein of poetry beneath the surface. When Darcy says, 'I have been used to consider poetry as the *food* of love', misquoting the opening of *Twelfth Night*, Elizabeth replies, 'Of a fine, stout, healthy love it may. Everything nourishes what is strong already.'[4] It is only the robustness of Elizabeth and Darcy which allows them to achieve fulfilment in the world in which they live. In the novel, the pervading stress on music and dance is a constant reminder of non-materialistic, romantic values. But it is not only the lovers who are seen dramatically and poetically. Mr. Collins is the ghost of Malvolio in his tone and accents, though the character of the steward has been transferred to Wickham's father, who is a good man. Jane Austen has shown in her novel how 'the course of true love never did run smooth'. The Bingleys, the Gardiners, and Mr. Bennet

[1] p. 185.
[2] See Reuben A. Brower's essay in *The Fields of Light* (1951).
[3] David Daiches, in *American Scholar*, xvii (1948).
[4] p. 39.

who, together with Elizabeth and Darcy, constitute 'the happy few' who make up the final idyllic paradise, represent the perfect balance of romance and the realistic appreciation of ordinary, everyday living, which seems to have been Jane Austen's ideal for the good life, in her maturity.

Jane Austen, of course, was not alone in this use of romance with Shakespearian undertones. Ann Radcliffe, whose Gothic novels she ridiculed in *Northanger Abbey*, was called 'mighty enchantress of Udolpho, Shakespeare of Romance-writers and first poetess of romantic fiction'.[1] Jane Austen's attitude towards the Gothic novel was ambivalent, as it was towards the novel of sensibility. She both satirized and adapted some of its conventions. The initial title of *Pride and Prejudice*, 'First Impressions', occurs near the beginning of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), where the father of the heroine 'instructed her to resist first impressions'.[2] Elizabeth is as opposed to the unreal refinement of Mrs. Radcliffe's Emily as she is to the docility of Fanny Burney's Cecilia. But Darcy in his villain-hero role in the early part of the novel is a partly Gothic figure, and he retains the romantic glamour associated with this type of fiction. Underlying the more realistic treatment of love in *Pride and Prejudice*, there are still Shakespearian reverberations, though more refined and delicate than those of Ann Radcliffe. The Gothic novel has been transformed and absorbed into the total texture of *Pride and Prejudice*, reconciled with ordinary, everyday life in England, while retaining some of its poetic characteristics.

F. W. B.

[1] See J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800*, p. 248.

[2] *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Oxford English Novels, p. 5, reissued in The World's Classics, 1979.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Pride and Prejudice was written (as *First Impressions*) between October 1796 and August 1797, and offered by Jane Austen's father to the publisher Cadell on 1 November 1797 as 'a manuscript novel, comprising 3 vols., about the length of Miss Burney's Evelina. . . . I shall be much obliged . . . if you will inform me whether you choose to be concerned in it, what will be the expense of publishing it at the author's risk, and what you will venture to advance for the property of it, if on perusal it is approved of.' Cadell was not interested; and the book, 'lop't and crop't' and otherwise revised, eventually went to Thomas Egerton of the Military Library in Whitehall for £110 (Jane Austen had asked £150). The first printing of *c.* 1,500 copies (18*s.* in boards) in January 1813 sold out, and a second edition—without apparent revision by the author—appeared in November. The third edition was published by John Murray in 1817, and also has no authority (although it became the basis of many nineteenth-century reprints).

The present text is substantially that of R. W. Chapman's edition (Oxford, 1923; revised by Mary Lascelles, 1965), based on the first edition collated with the second and third. Chapman's textual apparatus has been revised and his emendations reconsidered.

J. K.

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Pride and Prejudice was sold to Thomas Egerton in November 1812 for £110, and published by him in January 1813 (*c.* 1,500 copies). This printing quickly sold out, and a second edition was published in November. A third edition appeared in 1817. Two bad French versions were published in Paris in 1822: *Orgueil et Préjugé* and *Orgueil et Prévention*. The first American edition was published by Carey and Lea of Philadelphia in August 1832 as *Elizabeth Bennet: or, Pride and Prejudice* (750 copies), and sales encouraged the publication of the other novels within the year in larger editions. All six were included in Bentley's cheap Standard Novels series (6*s.* a volume) in 1833 (reprinted 1866, 1869, 1878–9, 1882). The Everyman edition (1892) has an introduction by R. Brimley Johnson, 1906; revised edition by Mary Lascelles, 1963. R. W. Chapman introduced the previous World's Classics text in 1929.

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