



## The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen

*Edward Copeland (Editor) , Juliet McMaster (Editor)*

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Leading scholars present a comprehensive and up-to-date guide to Jane Austen's works in the contexts of her contemporary world, and of present-day critical discourse. Beside discussions of Austen's novels and letters there are essays on religion, politics, class-consciousness, publishing practices, domestic economy, style in the novels and the significance of her juvenile works. A chronology provides biographical information, and assessments of the history of Austen criticism highlight the most interesting recent studies in a vast field of critical diversity.

## **The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen for online ebook**

### **Sophia-Elizabeth says**

Very good about Jane Austen as a professional woman writer, and about her books, it was a great book to read and use quotes from to my big exam paper! A very good piece of work for reading and writing about Jane Austen.

It was a delight and very informative about Jane Austen as a professional writer, and about her books.

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### **Jane Greensmith says**

One of the best set of essays on Austen's work around with contributions from all my favorite Austen scholars. I've read most of the essays at least 2-3 times, and I always reread the novel discussions after I reread one of the fabulous six.

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### **Laura says**

I read several of the essays in this book. I especially liked those that explained all the financial intricacies of the novels. . . . Why oh why must literature scholars write such hard-to-read prose though? I have a suspicion they build up their own egos by writing the most convoluted sentences they can.

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### **Jules says**

The *Companion* is a very informative mix of essays on subjects as wide-ranging as discussions of Jane Austen's novels themselves, her particular style, class and money in her writings, and Jane Austen cults and cultures which have developed over the years.

Some essays are really very interesting, well written and easily accessible, yet sadly some others not quite - I especially find Claudia L. Johnson's part on the aforementioned cults and cultures to be extremely confusing. Be that as it may, this book - and the overview it provides - is a valuable contribution to anyone studying Jane Austen, for their own pleasure or for more academic means.

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### **Rose says**

This is an excellent resource for Jane Austen's life, writing style, novels, short fiction, letters, and career as a female writer, as well as the time period she lived in including essays on class, money, religion, and politics. I highly recommend this book as the first place to start reading if you're interested in Jane Austen or her work.

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### **Elliot A says**

A good enough collection of articles that discuss all of Austen's works and affords the reader with enough material to engage in further research and discussions about the novels and the author.

ElliotScribbles

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### **David says**

Wealth? Land? Love?.

"Author's Rule" (Birth Right/Nobility- Law of Land/Emancipation of Serfs/Emancipation Proclamation). Customer can lose land bid.

Freedom isn't a reward, it's a right. Suffocating freedom ends country. If tyrants don't want to reward with rights. Society ends, and new one must begin, or lawless Society begins\*.

The 21st Century decision.

Reward or lose Product.

\*Charity enables re-freedom/escape from prison. Find non-tyrant customers. Non-paying tyrants, and bad contracts/don't pay.

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### **Grace Tjan says**

This is a collection of essays by Austen scholars, a few of which are very academic (including an analysis of Austen's style using a mathematical computer program), but is generally accessible to the general reader. There are analysis of Austen's whole oeuvre, including her short fictions, unfinished novels and letters, discussions about the historical and social backgrounds of her novels, and even speculations about the earlier versions of some of her most famous novels. I find the latter, an essay by Margaret Ann Doody, one of the most interesting in this book. We know that there were earlier prototypes of Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, and Northanger Abbey that did not survive. Doody speculated, based on the short fictions that Austen wrote in her twenties, that these prototypes might have been substantially different from the finished novels that are familiar to us. When she first wrote those novels, Austen was a writer in the edgier, more satirical mold of Fielding and Dr. Johnson. The changing social mores at the beginning of the Regency compelled her to tone down her style so that her novels might be considered suitable reading matter for the increasingly conventional public. I have no idea whether this is a valid speculation, but it is tantalizing nevertheless to imagine what these earlier prototypes might be like. Another fascinating fact that I learned is that, although most modern day 'Janeites' are female, there were bands of them that were exclusively male during the First World War. They were soldiers who were fighting in the trenches in Europe and were recommended Austen's books as a soothing balm for their jangled nerves. I wonder what Miss Austen would have thought about that.

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### **Koeeoaddi says**

Excellent book, if you like this sort of thing. I'd just rather read the source material again and again and again. Which probably explains why I am a fan-girl and not a scholar.

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### **Laura says**

Of the several essays I read in this book I enjoyed them and thought they did a good job of pointing out key features in the novels. There were a couple of essays that I was a little shocked with the mannerisms of the authors - they didn't seem dignified enough, or they were using some slang that I would never get away with putting in my paper. But I learned something from every essay I read and I thought it was a good way to get knowledge about a certain subject/element in the novel that I might not have known about. I'd recommend for an Austen enthusiast.

\*Taken from my book reviews blog: <http://reviewsatmse.blogspot.com/2010...>

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### **Patrick says**

While not altogether even, generally a very good set of essays.

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### **Maggie says**

Brownstein, Rachel M. Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice P. 50 "It's first brilliant sentence takes the tone of a Johnsonian essayist pronouncing on the nature of universals and truths . . . Takes the tone, of course, so as to mock it." "expresses the gossip's fantasy that women exchange or traffic in men, and not vice versa. The novel takes off, in other words, from Mrs. Bennet's notion (or is it only what Mrs. Bennet pretends to believe?): that rich men exist for people to marry. Its irony further suggests that the universal acceptance of this idea may make it operatively true - that what authorities say, and most people acknowledge, matters."

Austen would repeat her character's spoken words in the narrative in order to guide the reader toward identifying with the character.

John Wiltshire Mansfield Park, Emma, Persuasion P. 72: "Emma finds Mr. Knightley such a stimulus to her ingenuity . . ." "the underlying and unconscious motive is clearly pleasure in crossing swords with Mr. Knightley."

McMaster, Juliet. Class. "On this issue, however, Darcy realistically argues that the Bennet sisters' connection with trade 'must very materially lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world' . . . Darcy is to go through an evolution in his attitude . . . Indeed, he comes to value the Gardiners, despite their connection with trade, more highly than his father-in-law the country gentlemen. The quality of

humanity is to be judged by moral and humane standards, Austen suggests, not by social status; but like her own temporary snobs, Darcy and Emma, she pays full attention to their social status first."

Kelly, Gary. Religion and politics P. 160-1 "Austen . . . opted for third-person narration with restricted free indirect discourse, or narrator's representation of the protagonist's inward speech and thought. The effect is to retain narrative authority but allow the reader considerable knowledge of and thus sympathy for the protagonist. Austen's use of this narrative method can be read as a formal homology for a hierarchical yet open social structure, stabilized by inherited authority based on wealth and power but open to individual merit and responsive to individual rights based on it, while avoiding extremes of authoritarianism and individualism."

Copeland, Edward. MONEY

"...Pemberley exists as a consumer token in Austen's novels..." (131)

"...the single most significant economic problem for women is the lack of a fortune...an examination of the economy as measure of social morality" (132)

"...its power to acquire the material goods that can support the all-important signs of her rank's claims to genteel station..." (132)

"...severely handicapped by law and custom from possessing significant power over money" (133)

"The heartbeat of romance lies in a good income." (133)

"Consumer markets of income and rank regularly pace the romances of Jane Austen's novels." (133)

"...the 'proud and conceited' Miss Bingley in Pride and Prejudice who has a fortune of 'twenty thousands pounds' (pp 15), or Miss King, Elizabeth Bennet's richer rival for Wickham's attentions, with her 'ten thousand pounds' (149). But these heiresses' fortunes are understood immediately by contemporaries as yearly incomes through multiplying them by 5 per cent, a procedure that reveals their yearly income from investment in the 5 per cent government funds. Miss Bingley's year income from her 20,000 fortune is, thus, 1,000 a year; . . . Elizabeth Bennet's pitifully small fortune of 1,000 is a minor exception, invested at a lower rate of 4 per cent (40 a year), a fact Mr. Collins notes with some minuteness when he proposes to Elizabeth (106). With this formula for turning inherited money into yearly incomes (as investment at 5 per cent), heiress fortunes quickly come into focus as yearly income - the significant bottom line for romance." (134)

"...the larger social picture tends to place Austen . . . in an advance guard of middle-class encroachers on the political and economic turf of the landed interest. Mr. Darcy's and Mr. Knightley's great estates in Pride and Prejudice and in Emma are under the safe guidance of heroes who share the author's economic principles...Representatives of this monied class show a regular pattern of catastrophe as they stumble without the aid of the economic principles of Austen's own more humble rank;..." (137)

"And as for the extraordinary good luck of Elizabeth Bennet in meeting up with 10,000 a year, 'A house in town! Every thing that i scrambling! (PP 378), it is a telling triumph of Austen's economic ideology to turn so fabulous a landed-gentry income into the earnest, cash-conscious programme of her own rank." (138)

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**Meri says**

Read a couple of chapters for my final essay...

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### **Lynne-marie says**

I read this exceedingly scholarly volume in pieces, simply because it was too much for me to swallow all at once, proving, I guess that I am not Cambridge material. (!) I learned a great deal about JA; was spurred to read other things by other authors of her time by the section that spoke of her influences and about publication at the time and how it influenced her; and, also followed up on reading her letters and the fragments that never became novels, all thanks to this volume. Since I read it on my Kindle, I can't make copies of parts I might have wanted to share with friends, except to recommend the book to them. They know who they are.

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### **Damaskcat says**

This is an ideal book for the general reader and for anyone studying Jane Austen. There are fifteen essays on various aspects of the six novels as well as Austen's letters and the Juvenilia. There is an essay on class as well as one on the professional woman writer which goes into detail about how and when the six novels were published and how much money Austen earned from them in her lifetime.

I was particularly interested in the essays on money - which shows how people with particular incomes could be expected to live and in Jane Austen on screen. This last is covered in much more depth in Paula Byrne's book *The Genius of Jane Austen*. The Cambridge Companion is particularly useful for its comprehensive section on further reading which is excellent if you want to start reading more widely about Jane Austen.

Jane Austen's novels can be read on so many levels that any book which sheds light on minor aspects of her writing can add more depth to the reading of the books themselves. Even the Juvenilia take on new life when you read about them here as do the letters. Recommended reading if you are at all interested in Jane Austen and her writing.

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