

Picturing the Reader in Jane Austen's Novels

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The figure of the reading woman, Jacqueline Pearson eloquently argues in *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835*, is fraught with ideological complexity. Figuring both 'solitary and selfish pleasure and rationality and self-suppression', female reading generated wide-ranging debates, not just in the period under discussion in Pearson's work, but well into the Victorian age and even beyond.¹ Catherine J. Golden and Kate Flint both emphasise the similarly complex and conflicted nature of depictions of female readers throughout the nineteenth century,² and Belinda Jack observes 'the pervasive anxiety [...] about the access newly literate groups had to varied reading material' in the same period. She goes on to note that 'the growing number of titles written by women was often treated with singular suspicion'.³ By the time Jane Austen wrote her first works of fiction in the 1790s, women readers were habitually depicted in newspapers, periodicals, conduct books, novels, poems and other written and pictorial forms as voracious, indiscriminating, uncritical and overly-emotional readers of bad fiction. And by the time Austen's own novels were being read by successive generations of late Georgian and Victorian readers, this stereotyped vision of the female reading public had become a truism.

Jane Austen's novels are keenly aware of the debates surrounding the increasing female reading public of her period, and of the sometimes hysterical anti-novel rhetoric involved in such debates. They are saturated with representations of readers: good and earnest readers like *Mansfield Park's* Fanny Price and *Persuasion's* Anne Elliot, deluded readers like *Northanger Abbey's* Catherine Morland, frivolous readers like the eponymous Emma Woodhouse, self-serving readers like Caroline Bingley, ostentatious readers like Mary Bennet, both of *Pride and Prejudice*, and foolish or plain bad readers like *Northanger Abbey's* John Thorpe and *Sanditon's* Sir Edward Denham. In Austen's work, characters' responses to the books they read often function as a shorthand to alert the reader to the kind of character who is at hand. Characters' reading choices are important, but the use they make of their reading is even more so. Catherine Morland is probably the most obvious example of someone who puts her reading to the wrong uses, but Catherine is not the only one of Austen's characters to indulge in quixotic daydreams sparked by her reading, or to see the world through the lens of literature. Characters of this sort appear in all of Austen's novels, to a greater or lesser extent, and their interactions with books provide a kind of intertextual commentary on the plot.⁴

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Austen's novels were reissued with illustrations by a number of different artists. This chapter considers Austen's own textual representations of reading alongside the illustrations of books and readers in two illustrated editions of her novels, shedding light not only on the ways Austen herself represented and conceptualised readers, but also on how nineteenth century illustrators interpreted Austen. This analysis shows up a considerable disjunction between the importance critics now attribute both to Austen's own reading and to her depictions of reading in the novels, and the minimal space given to portrayals of reading in nineteenth-century illustrations. Jocelyn Harris suggests, for example, that 'Jane Austen lived as vividly in books as in life', while Gary Kelly notes that 'it is remarkable how much discussion of books and reading there is in Jane Austen's novels', and goes on to argue that reading 'is used by Austen as a paradigm for the process of perception and judgement'.⁵ Given the pervasive presence of books and reading in Austen's work, then, it is surprising how rarely her nineteenth-century illustrators chose to present her characters reading, instead, as Devoney Looser has recently argued, feminizing the text through their focus on traditionally feminine accoutrements and accessories.⁶ Here, I will suggest that Austen's illustrators' choices had long-lasting and wide-ranging effects on how successive ages perceived Austen's work, and how Victorian readers could interpret her books.

Readers and Reading in Austen's Novels

Characters' attitudes to books and to reading are key indicators of their moral worth across the whole of Austen's *oeuvre*. In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Mr Darcy takes care of his library and this tiny fact shows him to understand the responsibilities of a landed gentleman to build for the next generation:

'I am astonished,' said Miss Bingley, 'that my father should have left so small a collection of books. What a delightful library you have at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy!'

'It ought to be good,' he replied; 'it has been the work of many generations.'

'And then you have added so much to it yourself, you are always buying books.'

'I cannot comprehend the neglect of a family library in such days as these.'⁷

Country-house libraries functioned as repositories of books for the family that owned them, and vectors for the dissemination of knowledge far more widely.⁸ For many, particularly women, Jane Austen included, the kind of auto-didacticism allowed by free access to a gentleman's library was a vital aspect of their education, moral development and entry into the world of polite knowledge.⁹ As Mark Girouard suggests, as early as the 1730s, country house libraries 'were no longer the personal equipment of the owner of the house; they had become

the common property of the family and his guests'.¹⁰ The maintenance and indeed expansion of such a library was hence an important part of a gentleman's duties to his family, tenants and guests, and Darcy shows himself well aware of this moral responsibility here. Love of libraries is not, however, an uncomplicated marker of approval. In the same novel, Mr Bennet takes refuge from his responsibilities in his library, refusing to acknowledge that he owes his daughters a duty of proper care. We are told that he is very 'discomposed' by Mr Collins's intrusions into his sanctum: 'In his library he had been always sure of leisure and tranquillity; and though prepared, as he told Elizabeth, to meet with folly and conceit in every other room in the house, he was used to be free from them there'. He therefore selfishly sends Mr Collins off with his daughters: 'his civility, therefore, was most prompt in inviting Mr. Collins to join his daughters in their walk'.¹¹ His negligence, framed through the trope of immersion in books, leads directly to Lydia's elopement, as he recognises at the end of the novel.

Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen emphasises that mere attention to books does not necessarily denote moral superiority. Elizabeth Bennet enjoys reading but denies any claim to excessive superiority in it, saying to Miss Bingley 'I am *not* a great reader, and I have pleasure in many things', her sister Mary, a far less sympathetic character, on the other hand, ostentatiously copies extracts of morality from approved books, and takes every opportunity to show off her knowledge.¹² Caroline Bingley, a similarly ostentatious reader, responds to Darcy's statement that a truly accomplished woman must attend to 'the improvement of her mind by extensive reading' by pretending to read the second volume of Darcy's own book, in a transparent attempt to court his favour, although she swiftly yawns and throws it down.¹³

In a similar vein, in *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne assumes Willoughby's romantic compatibility because of their shared taste in reading, although the narrator sounds a typically wry note of caution:

They speedily discovered [...] a general conformity of judgment in all that related to either [music or dancing]. Encouraged by this to a further examination of his opinions, she proceeded to question him on the subject of books; her favourite authors were brought forward and dwelt upon with so rapturous a delight, that any young man of five-and-twenty must have been insensible indeed, not to become an immediate convert to the excellence of such works, however disregarded before. Their taste was strikingly alike. The same books, the same passages were idolized by each – or, if any difference appeared, any objection arose, it lasted no longer than till the force of her arguments and the brightness of her eyes could be displayed. He acquiesced in all her decisions,

caught all her enthusiasm, and long before his visit concluded, they conversed with the familiarity of a long-established acquaintance.¹⁴

In this heavily ironised passage, insincere Willoughby seems to share Marianne's literary tastes – along with all her other tastes. Here, through the use of exaggeration and excess, repetition and irony, Austen shows the alert reader the difference between a genuine and sincere shared taste in literature, and a simulacrum of the same, by a practised deceiver. The speed with which Willoughby acquiesces with Marianne's statements sounds a warning bell, as does the excess in the language ('strikingly alike', 'so rapturous a delight', 'idolized'). As Norman Page argues, when we encounter terms bearing the connotations of what the eighteenth century would have called 'enthusiasm', or religious fervour (here 'rapture' and 'idol') in Austen's language, we should always pay attention. Such terms almost always denote behaviour or characters of whom we should be wary.¹⁵ In this passage, then, Austen highlights the dangers of judging too quickly, through a reworking of the common stereotypical novelistic device of falling in love over books – a plot device she would herself later use unironically in *Persuasion* (1818).

Further examples of Austen's use of books to denote character abound. The difference between gentle, serious, intelligent Fanny Price and her elegant but morally unsound cousins Maria and Julia Bertram is sketched in a very few words when the narrator of *Mansfield Park* tells us of the pleasures Fanny finds in improving her mind through reading, while the Bertram girls mock Fanny through a demonstration of their superficial knowledge: 'I am sure I should have been ashamed of myself, if I had not known better long before I was so old as she is. I cannot remember the time that I did not know a great deal that she has not the least notion of yet. How long ago it is, aunt, since we used to repeat the chronological order of the kings of England, with the dates of their accession, and most of the principal events of their reigns!'¹⁶ The point here is, of course, that the ability to repeat what has been learned by rote is no marker of intelligence; Maria and Julia have missed the whole point of learning history. As Jane West put it in her *Letters to a Young Lady* of 1811, women should "rise from the perusal [of history] with a virtuous determination not to accelerate the ruin of our country."¹⁷ Maria and Julia have entirely missed the moral dimensions of the historical facts they so assiduously learn.

Both the good and bad in Emma Woodhouse's character is neatly epitomised when Mr Knightley tells us of the reading lists that Emma made as a child:

Emma has been meaning to read more ever since she was twelve years old. I have seen a great many lists of her drawing up at various times of books that she meant to read regularly through – and very good lists they were – very well chosen, and very neatly arranged – sometimes alphabetically, and sometimes by some other rule. The list she drew up when only fourteen – remember thinking it did her judgment so much credit, that I preserved it some time; and I dare say she may have made out a very good list now. But I have done with expecting any course of steady reading from Emma. She will never submit to any thing requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding.¹⁸

Knightsley's words will prove prophetic, for the plot of *Emma* is, of course, driven by Emma's various failures to 'subject the fancy to the understanding', as she repeatedly rejects sober facts for the illusions she has herself imagined. Her failure to pursue 'a course of steady reading' therefore functions as a neat metaphor for her other failures of persistence and understanding.

Anne Elliot's character is also illustrated through her recommendations of reading to others. Her kindness is unobtrusively shown when she recommends a particular course of reading to Captain Benwick to lift him out of his grief and melancholy:

His looks shewing him not pained, but pleased with this allusion to his situation, she was emboldened to go on; and feeling in herself the right of seniority of mind, she ventured to recommend a larger allowance of prose in his daily study; and on being requested to particularize, mentioned such works of our best moralists, such collections of the finest letters, such memoirs of characters of worth and suffering, as occurred to her at the moment as calculated to rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts, and the strongest examples of moral and religious endurances.¹⁹

Anne's suggestions bear witness to the comfort she has herself found in reading, thus deepening our understanding of her own character. They also bear tribute to the narrator's belief in the power of books to alleviate suffering.

In all these cases, readers' interactions with books economically reveal aspects of their character which later turn out to be important to other aspects of the plot. Mr Darcy's care for his library, for example, is reflected in the care he takes of his orphaned sister and the servants on his estate, as Elizabeth finds when she visits Pemberley and is surprised to discover the love and esteem in which he is held there. Similarly, Anne Elliot's kindness to Captain Benwick

pays its dividend in cheering him to such an extent that he forgets his former love Fanny Harville, and proposes to Louisa Musgrove, leaving the field clear for Captain Wentworth (who had previously unwillingly thought himself promised to Louisa) to propose to Anne herself. In the case of Emma Woodhouse, Knightley's prediction proves to be exactly true, since Emma's imaginative 'fancies' and misunderstandings drive the whole plot of *Emma*. The results of the Bertram sisters' education, which had emphasised superficial knowledge and 'elegance and accomplishments' over 'active principle' are explicitly spelled out in the final chapters of *Mansfield Park*, when the narrator tells us that 'the anguish arising from the conviction of [Sir Thomas's] own errors in the education of his daughters was never to be entirely done away'.²⁰ The results of these failings are, of course, Maria's adultery and eventual banishment, and Julia's elopement with Mr Yates. Finally, in the extract from *Sense and Sensibility* quoted above, Willoughby's ability to fit his reading tastes to his company foreshadows his ability to change his taste in women when necessity demands it.

Character development is, however, only one aspect of Austen's use of scenes of reading in her novels. Allusions and references to other books are also used for the purposes of foreshadowing - as when Maria Bertram meaningfully quotes the starling in Sterne's 1768 novella *A Sentimental Journey* ("I cannot get out," as the starling said') to signal to Henry Crawford her willingness to break her engagement with Mr Rushworth in favour of Henry's suit.²¹ Maria's quotation of a text which, by 1813, had become synonymous with the pursuit of sexual adventure, neatly signals her eventual adulterous end. Allusions can also add depth and subtlety, as when the narrator of *Emma* quotes Cowper's 'myself creating what I saw'.²² The quotation here sums up the novel's thematic preoccupation with perception, misinterpretation and misunderstanding, and helps to prefigure the reader's final realisation that Emma's view of the world is a false version of reality. Allusions can also work less seriously for comic effect - the parodic references to the adventures of Gothic heroines in *Northanger Abbey* provide some of that novel's comedy at the same time as functioning to show how Catherine learns to negotiate the difference between life and literature. And in the same novel, a scene of reading - when Catherine and Isabella Thorpe 'shut themselves up, to read novels together' - is the catalyst for the narrator's famous 'defence of the novel' passage, in which Austen takes the opportunity to write a manifesto for the value of the female-authored novel.²³

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. [...] “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 Cecilia, or Camilla, or Belinda”; 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.²⁴

In this famous passage, Austen gives voice to a number of the frustrations felt by the professional woman writer of her period. She also voices the anger of many of fiction’s readers. Despite the success of women writers in all aspects of the literary marketplace (including poetry, fiction, essays, drama, travels, history, translations, self-help and conduct books, and cookery books) by the time of *Northanger Abbey*’s publication in 1818, women writers were still regularly pigeonholed as the writers of novels, and more specifically, as the writers of trashy, sentimental, melodramatic and Gothic novels.²⁵ And, as Jacqueline Pearson and Kate Flint, among others, have argued, female readers of the period were regularly characterised as the easily-swayed consumers of mass-market fiction. This stance is nicely illustrated by an article of 1859, in which the critic W.R. Greg suggested that ‘novels constitute a principal part of the reading of women, who are always impressionable, in whom at all times the emotional element is more awake and more powerful than the critical, whose feelings are more easily aroused and whose estimates are more easily influenced than ours’.²⁶ By the 1790s, Pearson suggests, ‘there was hardly any crime, sin or personal catastrophe that injudicious reading was not held to cause directly or indirectly – from murder, suicide, rape, and violent revolution, through prostitution, adultery and divorce, to pride, vanity, and slapdash housewifery’.²⁷ Austen’s fictional ‘young lady’, then, feels the pressure of society’s censure when she disclaims reading a novel, even though, as Austen points out, such works can be in fact more morally improving as well as more enjoyable, than the socially-sanctioned genres of the periodical essay or the history. In her defence of the novel, it is no coincidence that the works mentioned are those by the best-known and most successful female writers of Austen’s period (Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth). Austen could have cited novels by well-

respected male authors (Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith), but instead she shows a keen sense of ‘the reviewers’ tendencies to conflate gender and genre in their ‘threadbare’ anti-novel arguments. She invites her own readers to be different, to reject the reviewers’ sweeping and inaccurate derogations of the novel as a form, and instead to form their own judgements as critical and self-confident readers who can recognise its value, rather as the narrative voice has itself done in reading and valorising *Camilla*, *Cecilia* and *Belinda*.

In the case of *Northanger Abbey*, then, a scene of reading is a catalyst that allows Austen to talk both directly and implicitly about the value of the kind of writing she herself was doing, in a novel that (superficially at least) seems to demonstrate the dangers of reading imaginative fiction. It is clear that engaging with questions about the nature and purposes of reading fiction underpinned Austen’s artistic practice, and, in the ‘defence of the novel’ passage, she offers a kind of training in the reading of a new kind of fiction: the domestic, or, as it would come to be known, ‘realist’ novel.

Given the ubiquity and importance of scenes of reading and allusions to books in Austen’s novels, it is therefore surprising how very few of the illustrations in nineteenth-century editions of Austen’s works depict the act of reading, or even feature books as props or background. Austen’s nineteenth-century illustrators seem to have missed both the radical novelty and the intensely allusive quality of Austen’s prose style, recurring to an older mode of female-authored fiction for their frame of reference. Successive illustrators, from the 1830s onwards, chose to concentrate on fans, dresses, hats and other traditionally feminine accessories. Characters in the nineteenth-century illustrated editions of Austen’s novels are far more often found in a ballroom or parlour, rather than in a study or library, despite the fact that many key scenes take place in these traditionally masculine domains. These choices both reflect and perpetuate their illustrators’ views of what Austen’s novels were all about. Austen’s illustrators were working with the very perceptions of women’s novels that Austen rejected in the famous ‘defence of the novel’ passage in *Northanger Abbey*, and their choices have had long-lasting and wide-ranging effects on how successive ages have perceived Austen’s work.²⁸

Illustrations of Reading in Bentley’s 1833 Standard Novels Edition of Austen’s Works

For the remainder of this essay, I will focus on two nineteenth-century editions of Austen’s novels, the first from the 1830s and the second from the 1890s. Although illustrations had appeared in early French and German translations of Austen’s works, the first full edition of Austen’s works containing illustrations was Richard Bentley’s edition, published in 5 volumes (*Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* appeared in a single volume) in his series of Standard

Novels in 1833. Described by Richard Wallins as ‘a landmark in British publishing’, the Standard Novels series created inexpensive reprints of a large number (126) of novels, thus making them available to a far wider segment of the British population.²⁹ Where the three-decker novel had previously cost around a guinea to a guinea and a half (31s 6d), Bentley’s one-volume Standard Novels cost only 6 shillings. While this still made them unaffordable to the labouring classes, they were now much more widely accessible to the ‘middling sort’ than hitherto.³⁰ Bentley’s Standard Novels were all illustrated with a frontispiece and title page illustration, and Bentley regularly employed the same illustrators for different novelists in the series. The house illustrators’ style seems to have been to emphasize moments of heightened emotion, melodrama and excitement, irrespective of the actual style of the novel. The result was a certain (perhaps deliberate) uniformity of visual impression – these were standardised as well as Standard novels.

Bentley’s edition of Austen’s works also contained a revised and expanded *Memoir* of Jane Austen, written by her brother Henry, which emphasised Austen’s modesty, kindness, and Christianity, and played down both her professional commitment to her writing and the complexity of the writing process. He wrote, for example, that Austen ‘became an authoress entirely from taste and inclination. Neither the hope of fame nor profit mixed with her early motives. It was with extreme difficulty that her friends [...] could persuade her to publish her first work’.³¹ He thus directly contravened the importance she herself placed on readership in the ‘defence of the novel’ passage in *Northanger Abbey*, and its significant role in conferring esteem on an author or a genre. Describing her mode of composition, Henry claimed that ‘[e]verything came finished from her pen, for on all subjects she had ideas as clear as her expressions were well chosen’.³² And he repeated Austen’s own complex and ironic account of her work as ‘a little bit of ivory, two inches wide’ as if it was a straightforward description: ‘She herself compares her productions to a little bit of ivory, two inches wide, worked upon with a brush so fine, that little effect is produced after much labour. It is so: her portraits are perfect likenesses, admirably finished, many of them gems, but it is all miniature painting; and, satisfied with being inimitable in one line, she never essayed canvass and oils; never tried her hand at a majestic daub’.³³ He also de-emphasised the breadth, eclecticism and occasional radicalism of her reading habits. As I’ve argued elsewhere, Henry’s description of his sister and her writing would have long-standing effects, leading readers to perceive her as far less serious and expert a writer than she really was.³⁴ The illustrations in Bentley’s edition continued this work.

Previously labelled as ‘probably George Pickering’ by David Gilson,³⁵ Devoney Looser has recently identified the illustrator of this edition, and many of Bentley’s other Standard Novels,

as Ferdinand Pickering (1831-1882), and as she argues in her excellent *The Making of Jane Austen* (2017), Pickering's illustrations 'promoted a sense that her novels were best understood as familial, female focused, and sensational.'³⁶ Pickering's drawings depicted Austen's characters wearing anachronistic, early Victorian fashions, and focussed heavily on dramatic moments in the novels. As Looser points out, the images 'indicate a preference for representing Austen's heroines with other women, rarely in direct contact with heroes, emphasizing moments of pain, illness, shame, or emotional distress'.³⁷ Bentley's list tended towards the sensational. In adopting the visual mode already used to illustrate such works as Fenimore Cooper's thrilling adventure tales of American life such as *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826; published in the Standard Novels edition 1831), *The Pilot* (1824, Standard Novels edition 1831) and *The Spy* (1821; Standard novels edition 1831), exciting historical romances such as Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803; Standard Novels edition 1831) and *The Scottish Chiefs* 91810; Standard Novels edition 1831) and William Godwin's *St Leon* (1799; Standard Novels edition 1831), and dark Gothic novels such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818; Standard Novels edition 1831) and Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794; Standard Novels edition 1831), Pickering subliminally aligned Austen's sane, realistic domestic novels with their much more melodramatic competitors.

As noted above, Pickering's illustrations appear on the frontispiece and title page of each volume in the series, and Austen's novels depict the following scenes as described in the table below.

Table 1: Scenes Depicted in Pickering's Illustrations of Bentley's Edition (1833)

Novel	Frontispiece	Title Page
<i>Sense and Sensibility</i> (1811)	Image: Lucy Steele shows her miniature of Edward Ferrars to Elinor. Caption: Then taking a miniature from her pocket, she added, "To prevent the possibility of a mistake, be so good as to look at this face".	Image: Elinor nurses Marianne. Caption: Marianne, suddenly awakened by some accidental noise in the house, started hastily up and with feverish wildness, cried out, "Is mamma coming?"
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (1813)	Image: Elizabeth acquaints her father with what Mr Darcy has done	Elizabeth and Lady Catherine de Bourgh walk in the wilderness.

	<p>for Lydia.</p> <p>Caption: She then told him what Mr. Darcy had voluntarily done for Lydia. He heard her with astonishment.</p>	<p>Caption: "This is not to be borne, Miss Bennet. I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew made you an offer of marriage?"</p>
Mansfield Park (1814)	<p>Image: Mary Crawford persuades Fanny to accept a necklace.</p> <p>Caption: Miss Crawford smiled her approbation and hastened to complete her gift by putting the necklace round her and making her see how well it looked.</p>	<p>Sir Thomas finds Mr Yates 'ranting'.</p> <p>Caption: The moment Yates perceived Sir Thomas he gave perhaps the very best start he had ever given during the whole course of his rehearsals.</p>
Emma (1815)	<p>Image: Emma paints Harriet Smith.</p> <p>Caption: There was no being displeased with such an encourager, for his admiration made him discern a likeness before it was possible.</p>	<p>Image: Mr Knightley proposes to Emma in in the shrubbery at Hartfield.</p> <p>Caption: "Tell me! Then have I no chance of succeeding?"</p>
Northanger Abbey and Persuasion (1818)	<p>Image: Anne hears herself described to Captain Wentworth by Louisa Musgrove.</p> <p>Caption: Her own emotions kept her fixed; she had much to recover from before she could move.</p>	<p>Image: Henry Tilney finds Catherine indulging in Gothic fantasies.</p> <p>Caption: "How came I up that staircase!" he replied, greatly surprised. "Because it is the nearest way from the stable yard to my own chamber."</p>

Taken together, as Looser remarks, it is notable that the majority of Pickering's illustrations feature women (four of two women together, four of a man and a woman and one of a woman

alone, with a man and woman conversing in the background), with only one (*Mansfield Park*) depicting two men alone. While this certainly reflects the balance of scenes in the novels in which we see men alone, it also has the effect of suggesting to the casual browser who picks up the book in a bookshop or circulating library that these are books in which the main concerns are those of women. In addition, Pickering's illustrations heavily emphasise dress, dwelling lovingly on veils, shawls, bonnets, necklaces and parasols. The women's clothing is elaborate (and anachronistic) while the men's tends to be neat and unobtrusive. Given the already-existing conflation of female-authored novels with melodramatic, sensational and shallow writing, Pickering's emphasis on female fashions therefore underscores the impression that Austen's novels are frivolous and trivial, rather than intelligent and profound.

Only one of Pickering's illustrations contains books (see Fig 1), and these form the background to the scene in which Elizabeth tells her father about Darcy's interventions to make Wickham marry Lydia. It is captioned 'She then told him what Mr. Darcy had voluntarily done for Lydia. He heard her with astonishment'.³⁸ In Austen's novel, as discussed above, Mr Bennet's retreat into the library functions metaphorically as a symbol of his failure to engage with the major 'business' of his wife and daughters: matrimony.³⁹ The shelves in the illustration are messy, with gaps suggesting that books have been taken out from them, denoting that this is a library for use, rather than display. The books are large, well-bound quartos and folios, rather than the more common (and cheaper) octavo and duodecimo. Ironically, then, Pickering does not depict any of the very books he himself was illustrating, as novels were much more commonly published in the smaller formats. The implication must be that Mr Bennet's library does not contain many, if any, modern novels. This is in direct contrast with Jane Austen's own experience of a gentleman's library; research by Peter Sabor and others on the extant collections of Godmersham Park suggests that Edward Austen's library in fact contained a fairly large number of novels, many of them in octavo.⁴⁰

Books here carry a negative connotation as the enablers of Mr Bennet's retreat from domesticity and responsibility, and their presence in the illustration is hence important. It is no coincidence that Mr Bennet feels 'astonishment' at Darcy's responsible and caring actions; the presence of the expensive books on the shelf behind remind us that he has always cared more for his own peace than he does for his daughters' happiness, telling Elizabeth on another occasion that 'Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public place or other, and we can never expect her to do it with so little expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances'.⁴¹ Pickering's choice is, therefore, a particularly interesting one, suggesting an understanding of the metaphorical resonances of Mr Bennet's library not seen elsewhere in his illustrative choices. Nonetheless, the books he chooses to

depict are themselves cultural signifiers of a form of knowledge acquisition that Austen herself deplored, writing sarcastically to her sister Cassandra that ‘Ladies who read those enormous great stupid thick Quarto Volumes, which one always sees in the Breakfast parlour there [at Manydown, the home of a friend], must be acquainted with everything in the World. – I detest a Quarto.’⁴² Elsewhere, too, Austen makes her feelings about those who ignore novels in favour of what Catherine Morland naively calls ‘better books’ clear: ‘The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid’.⁴³

[INSERT FIG.1]

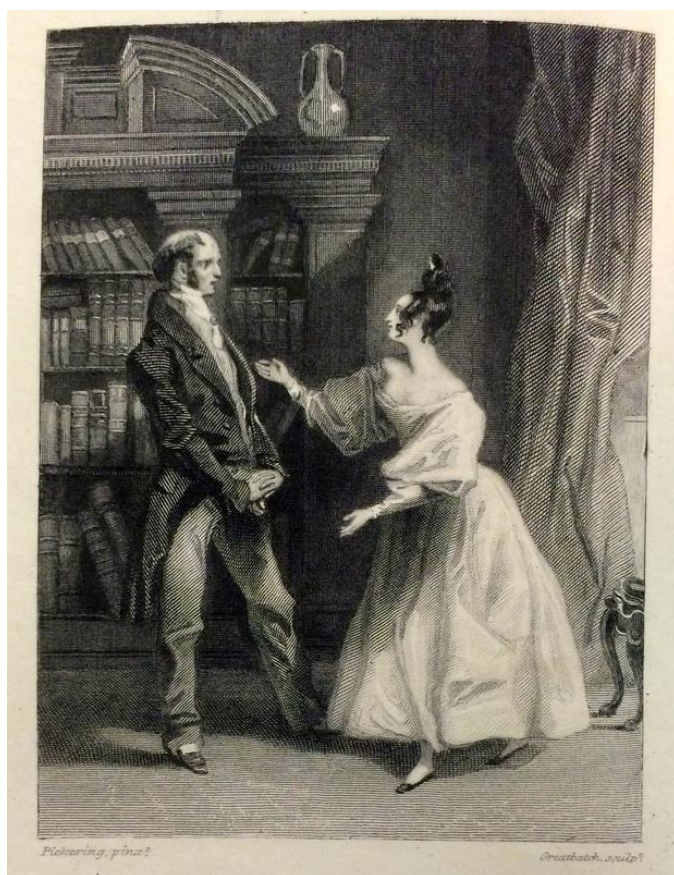


Figure 1. Frontispiece to Bentley’s 1833 Standard Novels *Pride and Prejudice*. By kind permission of Chawton House Library. Photograph by Georgina Evans.

Illustrations of Austen’s Novels by Hugh Thomson in the 1890s

Until the 1890s illustrators followed Pickering’s lead in representing the characters in anachronistic nineteenth-century dress, and in focussing heavily on traditionally feminine accessories and settings. J.M. Dent’s 10-volume 1892 edition, illustrated by William Cubitt Cooke, marked a departure. It contained 30 illustrations, and, for the first time, these depicted

Austen's characters in Regency clothing, signalling a significant shift in visual iconography. However, Cooke used books in only one of his illustrations to the novels (*Mansfield Park*).⁴⁴

Cooke's edition heralded a number of further illustrated editions in the 1890s, most famous among these, the so-called 'Peacock' edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, published by George Allan in 1894, and illustrated by Hugh Thomson. Called the 'Peacock' edition because of its front cover, which depicted a peacock in embossed gold, this was the most lavishly and heavily illustrated edition to date, taking its place in the 1890s wider vogue for beautiful, luxury, illustrated books in the gilded age. Described by Looser as 'visually groundbreaking',⁴⁵ this was a luxury edition, in which Thomson's illustrations depicted Austen's characters and scenes with gentle humour, focussing heavily on social scenes, and displaying what Looser calls 'a smirking sense of fun' and whimsy.⁴⁶ Their delicate comedy is what differentiates them from both Pickering's much darker, Gothic-influenced illustrations, and Cubitt Cooke's more serious efforts. This edition contained 101 illustrations (though this total increases to 160 if we include headpieces, tailpieces, ornamental initials and other decorations), of which two depict scenes of reading. The first is the frontispiece, which shows Elizabeth reading a letter, with the caption 'Reading Jane's Letters Chap. 34'. Immediately, the illustrator foregrounds the relationship between the heroine and her sister, and places the novel within the world of feminine epistolary correspondence, and harking back to Austen's eighteenth-century predecessors, such as Frances Burney, who favoured the epistolary form. The second (Fig. 2) illustrates the middle of Chapter fourteen, and portrays Mr Collins, book in hand, with the caption 'Protested that he never read novels'.

[INSERT FIG. 2]

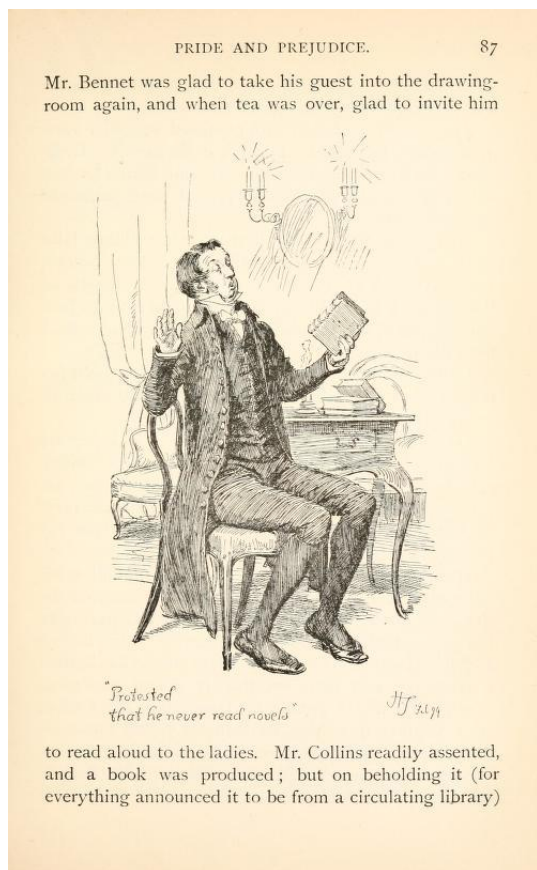


Figure 2. Illustration by Hugh Thomson in George Allan's 1894 'Peacock' *Pride and Prejudice*. By kind permission of Chawton House Library. Photograph by the author.

The latter illustration is particularly interesting, in that it makes reference to one of the more complex, intertextual, and deeply embedded jokes about reading in Austen's novels. The scene proceeds thus:

Mr. Bennet was glad to take his guest into the drawing-room again, and, when tea was over, glad to invite him to read aloud to the ladies. Mr. Collins readily assented, and a book was produced; but on beholding it, (for every thing announced it to be from a circulating library,) he started back, and begging pardon, protested that he never read novels. – Kitty stared at him, and Lydia exclaimed. – Other books were produced, and after some deliberation he chose Fordyce's Sermons. Lydia gaped as he opened the volume, and before he had, with very monotonous solemnity, read three pages, she interrupted him with,

'Do you know, mama, that my uncle Philips talks of turning away Richard, and if he does, Colonel Forster will hire him. My aunt told me so herself on Saturday. I shall walk

to Meryton to-morrow to hear more about it, and to ask when Mr. Denny comes back from town.'

Lydia was bid by her two eldest sisters to hold her tongue; but Mr. Collins, much offended, laid aside his book, and said,

'I have often observed how little young ladies are interested by books of a serious stamp, though written solely for their benefit. It amazes me, I confess; – for, certainly, there can be nothing so advantageous to them as instruction. But I will no longer importune my young cousin.'⁴⁷

It is perhaps not surprising that Thomson chose this scene to illustrate – it is, after all, a very funny one. As I've discussed elsewhere, on one level, we need only understand that Mr Collins has chosen a dull and pompous text which represents his own priggishness and pomposity, while Lydia and Kitty are frivolous readers, unused to 'books of a serious stamp'. This would simply be yet another example of Austen's use of reading to denote character. However, Austen's joke is deeply embedded in contemporary prejudices and preconceptions about books, reading and circulating libraries. Mr Collins' choice of Fordyce's *Sermons* suggests he is familiar with conservative and conduct-book directives about what a young woman should and should not read, while his reaction to the sight of a circulating library book – presumably he only assumes this from its cover – is perfectly judged to make him appear as a convention-bound fool, who literally judges a book by its cover.⁴⁸ In Austen's time, as Jacqueline Pearson demonstrates, circulating libraries were stereotyped as places that marketed "illiterate authors for illiterate readers": they were imaged as an "ever-green tree of diabolical knowledge", "filthy streams of spiritual and moral pollution", the "gin-shop of [female] minds", a "great evil" simultaneously conveying "food and poison to the young reader."⁴⁹ Nonetheless, Austen herself patronized circulating libraries in Bath and Southampton, and rejected the stereotype on a number of occasions. By the time of Thomson's illustration, however, the reputation of the circulating library had changed, adding yet another comic layer to Austen's joke. By 1890, Mudie's Circulating Library had become known for rigorously excluding any works that were the slightest bit risqué. Mr Collins is therefore doubly absurd and out-of-date – his shocked and disdainful posture entirely out of keeping with the idea of what a circulating-library novel had now become. But the effect of the caption 'Protested that he never read novels' is that, unless one is already familiar with the book, and the joke, one might get the impression that this is an anti-novel novel, one where novels are undervalued and disliked.

Hugh Thomson also illustrated the remainder of Austen's novels, but for Macmillan, rather than George Allen, switching allegiance for financial reasons. *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and*

Prejudice, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* each contained 40 illustrations, while *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* each contained 20. The majority in all cases depict neither books, nor scenes of reading. Those that do are only sometimes worthy of note. A number of those that do include books use them simply as scene dressing. *Emma* (1896), for example, has two illustrations portraying books: one is of prayer books in church (p.240), and one of books in the background of the Bates's house with one in Jane Fairfax's hand, with the caption 'I am very sorry to hear, Miss Fairfax, of you being out this morning in the rain' (p.264). In neither case do the books seem particularly relevant to the scene illustrated. Similarly, in *Mansfield Park* (1897), the illustration on p.205 shows Henry and Mary Crawford. Mary has a book in her hand, but the scene is captioned 'And how do you think I mean to amuse myself, Mary, on the days that I do not hunt?' (p.205). The book here is again clearly simply window dressing, and not relevant to the conversation depicted, since it is not intended to suggest Henry will amuse himself by reading; the point of the scene is that his plan for non-hunting days is to use the time to make Fanny Price fall in love with him. Another example is the Frontispiece to *Northanger Abbey* (1897), which has a book casually in Mr Morland's hand with the caption 'Catherine grows quite a good looking girl'. The book here again seems irrelevant, except perhaps in establishing Mr Morland's character as educated. Of the twenty illustrations in *Persuasion* (1897), three contain books, two as background décor. The first is on p.345, and is captioned 'He began to compliment her on her improved looks'. It shows Anne at her writing desk with a bookcase in the background. The second, on p. 429, once again shows books in the background, on top of the desk. The caption 'Placed it before Anne' tells us that this scene is really about the letter in which Captain Wentworth confesses his enduring love to Anne, and not about the books.

Several of the illustrations do however, make use of books as signifiers. In *Mansfield Park*, two of the illustrations depict the controversial family theatricals. The first, on p.129, captioned 'a most welcome interruption', shows the young Bertrams around a table trying to decide on the play that the company will act. The second, captioned 'a ranting young man', on p. 160, depicts Mr Yates declaiming, with a book (presumably the play text) cast aside on the floor. It is interesting that both of these focus on *Lovers' Vows*, since the presence of this radical, Jacobin play in a novel that so many critical commentators have considered Austen's most conservative has made the play into a site of critical contestation.⁵⁰ The illustrator's emphasis on *Lover's Vows* is hence in line with a belief in its importance, whatever that importance might be – critics have seen the purpose of the play as political, moral, structural or thematic; they have considered it variously as evidence of Austen's conservatism, radicalism and feminism, her Platonic, Evangelical and Anglican beliefs, her views on the theatre, and even as a manifestation of hidden homoerotic interests.

Two illustrations show books being used to imply courtship. With the caption ‘They always looked another way’, the illustration on p.214 of *Northanger Abbey* shows Mr Morland with a book in his hand, which he is ostentatiously reading rather than looking at Catherine. Here, the illustrator depicts the kindness of the Morland parents in ignoring the clandestine correspondence between Catherine and Henry Tilney, and highlights a potentially subversive use of books: in this case, to allow parents to reject rigid codes of behaviour in favour of more flexible, pragmatic and kindly actions. And in *Persuasion*, on p. 412, we see another actual scene of reading, captioned ‘Sits at her elbow, reading verses’. This shows Benwick, book in hand, reading to Louisa Musgrove, and strongly implies that the two fell in love over books. In the text itself, the phrase ‘sits at her elbow, reading verses’ in fact comes from a report by Charles Musgrove about the two lovers; they are never actually seen. For this reason, it is an interesting choice for an illustration, taking all of *Persuasion*’s various hints and speculations about the role of books in the courtship of Louisa Musgrove and Captain Benwick, and making that role visible and manifest.⁵¹

In two illustrations, reading is depicted with negative connotations. The final of *Mansfield Park*’s illustrations has Mr Price handing the newspaper to Fanny, with the caption ‘There (holding out the paper to her) – much good may such fine relations do you’ (p.397). There are also books in the background of this illustration, on the top of Mr Price’s desk. This illustration tropes reading doubly negatively, in that not only does it foreground the bad news (of Maria’s adultery) that Fanny receives through the act of reading, but also associates books with the vicious and unpleasant character of Lieutenant Price. This is, of course, in direct opposition to the actual text of *Mansfield Park*, in which reading with and to her sister Susan provides almost the only relief to Fanny during her miserable and painful stay in Portsmouth. Fanny’s love of books is most clearly manifested during this time, when we learn that ‘Fanny found it impossible not to try for books again. There were none in her father’s house; but wealth is luxurious and daring – and some of hers found its way to a circulating library [...] Fanny longed to give [Susan] a share in her own first pleasures, and inspire a taste for the biography and poetry which she delighted in herself.’⁵² A similar mis-attribution of negativity to reading appears in the illustration on p.206 of *Northanger Abbey*, which shows Mrs Morland looking in a full bookcase for ‘a very clever Essay’ in *The Mirror* upon the subject of ‘young girls that have been spoilt for home by great acquaintance’.⁵³ This is captioned ‘It was some time before she could find what she was looking for’.⁵⁴ This scene is important in the novel because in it Austen deliberately foregrounds the limitations of this kind of didactic essay through Mrs Morland’s comic misunderstanding of what is actually wrong with Catherine (a broken heart), and hence the inappropriateness of the cure she thinks will help. In Austen’s text, then, this

particular book symbolises precisely the kind of work that the ‘defence of the novel’ passage quoted earlier rejects in favour of fictional representations. The illustrator’s choice to depict such volumes thus works against the narrator’s rejection of authority to reinstate it at the end of *Northanger Abbey*. Once again, as with Pickering, Thomson’s choice actually works against the narrator’s stated views in this novel.

Table 2: Illustrations Depicting Books, Reading Matter and Acts of Reading

Illustrator	Novel	Number of illustrations	Depicting books	Depicting other reading matter	Depicting the act of reading
Thomson	<i>P&P</i>	160	1	1	0
Thomson	<i>S&S</i>	40	0	0	0
Thomson	<i>MP</i>	40	4	1	1
Thomson	<i>E</i>	40	1	1	0
Thomson	<i>P</i>	20	2	0	1
Thomson	<i>NA</i>	20	3	0	1
Pickering	<i>P&P</i>	2	1	0	0
Pickering	<i>S&S</i>	2	0	0	0
Pickering	<i>MP</i>	2	0	0	0
Pickering	<i>E</i>	2	0	0	0
Pickering	<i>P & NA</i>	2	0	0	0
Cooke	All novels	30	1	0	0

Key:

<i>P&P</i>	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>
<i>S&S</i>	<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>
<i>E</i>	<i>Emma</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Mansfield Park</i>
<i>P</i>	<i>Persuasion</i>
<i>NA</i>	<i>Northanger Abbey</i>

In a survey of 360 nineteenth-century illustrations, then, only sixteen depict books or other reading matter, and of these, the majority show them simply in the background, not actually being read (see **Table 2** above). Only three of these (just under 1%) actually represent a reader in the act of reading. We must ask ourselves what it means that fewer than 1% of the

illustrations in these nineteenth-century editions of Austen's novels depict reading. It is important to note that this figure suggests that the novels do not depict serious or educated people, and hence, by extension, that they are not *for* serious or educated people. Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century authors knew the value of quoting or alluding to literary authorities. Kate Rumbold argues, for example, that the novel as a form accrued cultural capital through its frequent deployment of quotations from Shakespeare.⁵⁵ Illustrations of books and scenes of reading function in similar ways, alluding to a literary lineage, and establishing the credentials of the writer and her text. This was particularly the case for women writers who were, in the publishing climate of the time, often taken less seriously simply by dint of their gender. As Olivia Murphy suggests, 'sexist condescension' was 'a convention of masculine literary language in the eighteenth century', and this convention carried forwards into the reviews of Austen's own period, and the ways in which the texts were illustrated.⁵⁶ In addition, as Jan Fergus reminds us, there were 'many social obstacles to women's writing', and women writers had to work doubly hard to be considered as serious authors.⁵⁷ Austen's illustrated novels therefore lack the weight of authority that illustrations of books subliminally give (it was for exactly this reason that Ann Radcliffe started every chapter of her Gothic novels with quotations, often from Shakespeare). When illustrators refuse to 'picture the reader' in Austen's novels, they are, in fact, doing exactly what Austen objects to in *Northanger Abbey*: 'Alas! If the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard?'.⁵⁸ In effect, her illustrators are telling Austen's readers that these are frivolous novels about courtship, relationships and feminine fashions. These nineteenth-century illustrations give no hint of the allusive complexity of Austen's work, nor do they suggest that the novels might have important things to say about serious subjects. In their resolute eschewal of books, these illustrations subliminally tell us these are not books for intelligent people.

Of course, the illustrations of her novels are only part of a much larger story about Austen's reputation and its effects on her readers.⁵⁹ It is also important to note that the authenticated portraits of Austen do not picture her with her hand on a book, as with so many of her female writing contemporaries. Instead, what we see in the Victorian period is the 'prettification' of Cassandra Austen's portrait of her sister in preparation for James Edward Austen-Leigh's *Memoir* of his aunt of 1870, where Jane's rather acerbic glare is softened into a demure smile, her eyes made larger and her lashes more pronounced, her nose smaller, and lace and a ribbon are added to her mobcap. And the accounts of Austen's reading produced by her family biographers (first her brother Henry, and then her nephew James Edward) similarly do their best to dim the brilliance of Austen's intellect and conceal the 'unladylike' extent of her reading as well as her profoundly satirical responses to what she read. Their picture of this particular

reader is affectionate, but it is also inaccurate. As recent scholarship has conclusively shown, Austen's reading was broad, eclectic and uncensored.⁶⁰ In contrast to the ideal female reader presented by Henry and James Edward, who demurely stuck to the 'old guides' in History,⁶¹ and found Fielding too 'gross'⁶² for her taste, we find a deeply politically engaged reader, writing rude comments in the margins of Goldsmith's *History of England* (and parodying it in her own *History of England* 'by a Partial, Prejudiced and Ignorant Historian'). We find, too, a reader who is entirely sure of her own judgement, not afraid to criticise authority figures, and unswervingly critical of what she perceived as excessive, ridiculous or unrealistic in the work of her predecessors and contemporaries. Perhaps a picture of such a reader would not have sold books in the Victorian market, and James Edward, with an eye both to his aunt's reputation, and to future sales, neatly gave his own readers what they wanted in the image of 'dear aunt Jane' that he created.⁶³ Victorian readers were primed for this version of Austen by Pickering's, Cooke's and Thomson's illustrations, and Austen-Leigh's book was extremely successful both in its own right and in boosting the sales of the back catalogue of Austen's work.

The choices of Austen's Victorian biographers, illustrators and publishers had fairly long-reaching consequences. It was not until the 1940s that scholars seriously considered the possibility that Austen might be an important and serious satirist, and a profoundly satirical writer (although there were hints of what would become the 'subversive tradition' as early as the 1870s if not before).⁶⁴ Nor was it until the feminist revival of the 1970s that Austen was considered as feminist, or proto-feminist writer.⁶⁵ The 1970s and 80s also saw interpretations of Austen as a politically engaged writer.⁶⁶ And it was not until the 1990s that scholars began to think about Austen as participating in a professional sphere, and about her place within a wider publishing context and literary marketplace.⁶⁷ These various movements separately helped to change the scholarly perception of Austen's writing, opening up new interpretations and helping readers of all kinds to see Austen as a serious and professional writer, whose work speaks across class, gender, nationality and generations.

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⁴ Discussions of representations of reading in Austen's novels often tend to focus on Catherine Morland (see, for example, Joe Bray, *The Female Reader in the English Novel: From Burney to Austen* (London: Routledge, 2008); Avrom Fleishman, 'The Socialization of Catherine Morland', *ELH*, 41:4 (Winter, 1974), 649-67; John K. Mathison, 'Northanger Abbey and Jane Austen's Conception of the Value of Fiction', *ELH*, 24:2 (Jun., 1957), 138-52). On the reading of Emma Woodhouse, see Joseph Litvak, 'Reading Characters: Self, Society and Text in *Emma*', *PMLA*, 100:5 (Oct., 1985) 763-73; Olivia Murphy, 'Re-thinking Influence by Reading with Austen', *Women's Writing*, 20:1 (2013), 100-14; and Edward M. White, 'Emma and the Parodic Point of View', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 18:1 (June, 1963), 55-63). On Fanny Price's reading, see Gary Kelly, 'Reading Aloud in *Mansfield Park*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 37: 1 (Jun., 1982), 29-49; Peter Knox-Shaw, 'Fanny Price Refuses to Kowtow', *Review of English Studies*, 47:186 (May, 1996), 212-27; and Katie Halsey, 'Spectral Texts in *Mansfield Park*, in *British Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship, Politics and History*, ed. Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 48-61). Anne Elliot's reading is covered in John Pikoulis, 'Reading and Writing in *Persuasion*', *MLR*, 100:1 (Jan, 2005), 20-36). Reading in *Sanditon* is examined in Katie Halsey, 'The Books Sir Edward Denham Doesn't Read: Jane Austen's Literary Jokes', *Textus: English Studies in Italy*, 30:3 (2017), 53-70. More generally, useful discussions of Austen's uses of books and reading are found in Jocelyn Harris, *Jane Austen's Art of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Kenneth L. Moler, *Jane Austen's Art of Allusion* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1968); Olivia Murphy,

Jane Austen the Reader: The Artist as Critic (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Mary Waldron, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel: The Determined Author* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Peter Knox-Shaw, *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Isobel Grundy, 'Jane Austen and literary traditions', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 189-210; Jane Stabler, 'Literary Influences', in *Jane Austen in Context*, ed. Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.41-50; Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain*, pp. 122-52; and Katie Halsey, *Jane Austen and her Readers, 1786-1945* (London: Anthem, 2012), in particular pp. 17-85.

⁵ Harris, *Jane Austen's Art of Memory*, p. 221; Kelly, 'Reading Aloud in *Mansfield Park*,' p. 29.

⁶ Devoney Looser, *The Making of Jane Austen* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), pp. 13-73.

⁷ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 41.

⁸ For a wonderful case study of the ways in which country-house libraries were vital to the self-education of women, see Mark Towsey, "'An Infant Son to Truth Engage": Virtue, Responsibility and Self-Improvement in the Reading of Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock, 1747-1815,' *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 2 (2007), 69-93. For a forceful account of the many ways in which country-house libraries benefitted the local community, see Towsey, 'The Talent Hid in a Napkin': Castle Libraries in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in *The History of Reading: Evidence from the British Isles, c. 1750-1950*, ed. Katie Halsey and W.R. Owens (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 15-31. For more on this topic see also Giles Mandelbrote, 'Personal owners of books', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland Volume II 1640-1850*, ed. Giles Mandelbrote and Keith A. Manley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 173-89; David Allan, 'A Nation of Readers': *The Lending Library in Georgian England, c. 1720-1830* (London: British Library, 2008), pp. 211-4, and James J. Caudle, 'Affleck Generations: The Libraries of the Boswells of Auchinleck, 1695-1825', in *Before the Public Library: Reading, Community, and Identity in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*, ed. Mark Towsey and Kyle Roberts (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 98-122

⁹ Jane Austen valued her brother Edward Austen Knight's collection at Godmersham Park enormously, writing on more than one occasion back to her sister Cassandra of the joy she felt in using it. For more on Austen at Godmersham Park, see Gillian Dow, 'Reading at Godmersham: Edward's Library and Marianne's Books', *Persuasions*, 37 (2015), 152-62. The reconstruction of Godmersham Library, with valuable contextual information, is available at www.readingwithausten.com [last accessed 03/06/2019]

¹⁰ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 180.

¹¹ *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 80.

¹² *ibid*, p. 41

¹³ *ibid*, pp. 43 & 60.

¹⁴ Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. Edward Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 56.

¹⁵ See Norman Page, *The Language of Jane Austen* (London: Routledge, 2011; first published 1972), esp. pp. 79-80.

¹⁶ Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, ed. John Wiltshire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 21.

¹⁷ Jane West, *Letters to a Young Lady*, 3 vols (London: [n.p.], 1811), vol. 2, p. 428.

¹⁸ Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. Richard Cronin and Dorothy Macmillan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 37.

¹⁹ Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, ed. Janet Todd and Antje Blank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 108-9.

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- ²⁰ *Mansfield Park*, pp. 536 and 535.
- ²¹ *ibid*, p. 116.
- ²² *Emma*, p. 373, quoting Book IV of William Cowper's *The Task* (1785).
- ²³ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, ed. Barbara M. Benedict and Deirdre Le Faye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 30.
- ²⁴ *Northanger Abbey*, pp. 30-31.
- ²⁵ See Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, pp. 3-40, for a full account of the literary marketplace within which Austen was operating.
- ²⁶ [W.R. Greg] 'False Morality of Lady Novelists', *National Review*, 8 (1859), 144. Qtd in Flint, *The Woman Reader*, p. 4.
- ²⁷ Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain*, p. 8.
- ²⁸ For discussion of the reception of Austen's work in successive ages see Halsey, *Jane Austen and Her Readers*, pp. 89-213; Juliette Wells, *Reading Austen in America* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), Looser, *The Making of Jane Austen*, Claudia Johnson, *Jane Austen's Cults and Cultures* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), Claire Harman, *Jane's Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2009), Gillian Dow and Clare Hanson, eds, *Uses of Austen: Jane's Afterlives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), Juliette Wells, *Everybody's Jane: Austen in the Popular Imagination* (London: Continuum, 2011), Deidre Lynch, ed, *Janeites: Austen's Disciples and Devotees* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), Annika Bautz, *The Reception of Jane Austen and Walter Scott: A Comparative Longitudinal Study* (London: Continuum, 2007), and Brian Southam, *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 2001; first published 1979), esp. Vol 1, pp. 1-33 & Vol. 2, pp. 1-158.
- ²⁹ Roger P. Wallins, 'Richard Bentley, Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, Henry Colburn, Henry Colburn and Company, Richard Bentley and Son, in *British Literary Publishing Houses, 1820-1880*, eds Patricia Anderson and Jonathan Rose. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1991), pp. 39-52 (43).
- ³⁰ See William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 186-209, for an excellent account of price and access to books in the period 1790-1830.
- ³¹ Henry Austen, 'Memoir of Miss Austen' (1833), in *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 149.
- ³² *ibid*, p. 150.
- ³³ *ibid*, p. 150.
- ³⁴ See Halsey, *Jane Austen and her Readers*, pp. 135-7.
- ³⁵ David Gilson, 'Later Publishing History, with Illustrations,' in *Jane Austen in Context*, ed. Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 121-59 (127).
- ³⁶ Looser, *The Making of Jane Austen*, p. 20.
- ³⁷ *ibid*, p. 23.
- ³⁸ *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 418.
- ³⁹ *ibid*, p. 5.
- ⁴⁰ See www.readingwithausten.com for a digital recreation of Edward Austen Knight's collection at Godmersham Park.
- ⁴¹ *Pride and Prejudice*, pp. 418 & 256.
- ⁴² Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 9 February 1813, in *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 206.
- ⁴³ *Northanger Abbey*, p. 107.
- ⁴⁴ See Gilson, pp.138-9.
- ⁴⁵ Looser, p. 53.
- ⁴⁶ *ibid*, p. 54.
- ⁴⁷ *Pride and Prejudice*, pp. 76-7.
- ⁴⁸ Katie Halsey, *Jane Austen and her Readers*, p. 41.

⁴⁹ Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain*, pp. 163-4.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Lionel Trilling, 'Mansfield Park', in *The Opposing Self: Nine Essays in Criticism* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1955), pp. 206-30; Avrom Fleishman, *A Reading of Mansfield Park: An Essay of Critical Synthesis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967); Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) and Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) for differing interpretations of the role of *Lover's Vows* in the symbolism and intertextuality of *Mansfield Park*.

⁵¹ For example, on hearing of their engagement, Anne speculates thus: 'She saw no reason against their being happy. Louisa had fine naval fervour to being with, and they would soon grow more alike. He would gain cheerfulness; and she would learn to be an enthusiast for Scott and Lord Byron; nay, that was probably learnt already; of course they had fallen in love over poetry. The idea of Louisa Musgrove turned into a person of literary taste, and sentimental reflection, was amusing, but she had no doubt of its being so.' (*Persuasion*, pp. 181-2).

⁵² *Mansfield Park*, p. 461.

⁵³ *Northanger Abbey*, p. 250.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, p. 250.

⁵⁵ See Kate Rumbold, *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Cultures of Quotation from Samuel Richardson to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), in particular pp. 16-48 and 133-181.

⁵⁶ Olivia Murphy, *Jane Austen the Reader*, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Jan Fergus, 'The Professional Woman Writer', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 12-31 (13).

⁵⁸ *Northanger Abbey*, p. 30.

⁵⁹ For fuller accounts of the ways in which Austen's reputation affected her nineteenth-century readers, see Johnson, *Jane Austen's Cults and Cultures*; Kathryn Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Looser, *The Making of Jane Austen*, and Halsey, *Jane Austen and her Readers*.

⁶⁰ See, Grundy, 'Jane Austen and literary traditions', pp. 189-210; Harris, *Jane Austen's Art of Memory*; Murphy, *Jane Austen the Reader*; Waldron, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time*; Knox-Shaw, *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment*, and Gillian Dow & Katie Halsey, 'Jane Austen's Reading: The Chawton Years', *Persuasions Online* 30:2 (Spring 2010).

⁶¹ James Edward Austen-Leigh, 'A Memoir of Jane Austen' (1871), in *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-134 (71).

⁶² Henry Austen, 'Biographical Notice of the Author' (1818), in *ibid*, pp. 135-43 (141).

⁶³ Austen-Leigh, 'Memoir', p. 9.

⁶⁴ See Serena Baiesi, Carlotta Farese and Katie Halsey, 'Subversive Austen: Introduction to the Special Issue' and Beatrice Battaglia, 'Preface: Subversive Criticism in Austen Studies', both in *Textus: English Studies in Italy*, 30:3 (September-December), 7-18 and 19-29, for a good summary of the 'Subversive Austen' critical tradition.

⁶⁵ See 'Introduction' in Devoney Looser (ed.), *Jane Austen and Discourses of Feminism* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 1-16, for an account of the history of feminist criticism in Austen studies.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Marilyn Butler's landmark *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*; Alistair M. Duckworth's *The Improvement of the Estate: A study of Jane Austen's novels* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Johnson's *Jane Austen, Women, Politics and the Novel* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988), and Mary Poovey's *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Work of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁶⁷ See, for example, Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen: A Literary Life* (London: St Martin's Press, 1991); Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel: The Determined Author* and most recently, E.J. Clery, *Jane Austen: The Banker's Sister* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2017).