

379
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No. 2385

JANE AUSTEN AND HER CRITICS,

1940-1954

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the

North Texas State College in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

by

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Denton, Texas

August, 1955

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY: 1940-1954

Nearly a century and a half has passed since Jane Austen lived and wrote, and the amount of biographical and critical material devoted to her during that time is of imposing, even intimidating proportions. The present state of Jane Austen study shows the effects of its long history in several ways. Because scholarship and criticism tend to assimilate earlier discoveries and opinions, recent publication is difficult to assess accurately; and because biography and criticism tend to overlap, much of that recently published is difficult to categorize clearly. These factors and the immense volume of the material can present several problems to one who must select material for a specific purpose, and the nature of its contents makes a bibliographical guide almost necessary.

The purpose of this thesis is to survey Jane Austen biography and criticism published since 1940 in order to show the present state of Jane Austen study while providing a bibliographical guide to recent material.¹ By surveying

¹The titles included in this survey are collected from the following bibliographies: Modern Humanities Research Association, Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature, Vols. XXI-XXIII (1950-1952, for the years 1940-1942); International Index to Periodicals, Vols. IX-XII

recent publication it will be possible to reveal the current critical estimate of Jane Austen and to point out what methods scholars are employing in making it. Areas disclosed vaguely by critical excursion, but not yet thoroughly explored may also be shown. Moreover, in recent publication it is clear that Jane Austen study in general is characterized by two attitudes, or impulses, which tend to divide it sharply. For convenience these attitudes are described as Janeite and non-Janeite, and they will be used as guides in the survey of recent criticism. The survey of biography, however, will be made without this division and will include critical studies which rely heavily on biographical materials.

The facts of Jane Austen's life, uneventful as it was, are on the whole quite few, and concrete suggestions as to the source of her remarkable talent are very meager—conditions bemoaned by scholars and critics who desire to find in her biography an explanation of her remarkable talent. Because a major portion of the primary materials, in the form of published letters, family memoirs, and public records, has been available since before 1900, and almost all by 1932,²

(April, 1940-March, 1952), (April, 1952-June, 1955); Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Vols. XII-XIX (July, 1939-February, 1955); and the annual bibliographies in Publications of the Modern Language Association, LV-LXX (1940-1955), and Philological Quarterly, XX-XXXIV (1941-1955).

²F. W. Bateson, editor, The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. (New York, 1941), III, 382.

the large amount of biographical study published since 1940 is surprising, but its being highly specialized is to be expected. Literary biography and critical studies relying heavily on biography have formed a large part of recent publication, and much recent scholarship has concentrated on the extant correspondence. Other recent publications have dealt with rather minute details of Jane Austen's life or have been chiefly concerned with reassessing earlier material, correcting fallacious assumptions, and, when not overemphasizing them, restoring certain events of her life to a proper perspective.

The most important publication of this latter type to appear recently is R. W. Chapman's Jane Austen: Facts and Problems, published in 1948. Chapman's work on Jane Austen must be recognized as the most scholarly and authoritative, no matter what its primary concern. His editions of the novels and letters are generally regarded as the most excellent to be had, and his careful attention to sources and documentation must be appreciated by scholars, critics, and less serious admirers of Jane Austen. In this book, Chapman tells exactly what is known about Jane Austen and how it came to be known; what information is supposition and what is most likely to be true. There are sections dealing with the Austen family, the years of Jane Austen's life at Steventon, Bath, Southampton, and Chawton, her reading and writing, and the romantic episodes in her life. Especially

helpful is the chapter on Jane Austen authorities, which includes a description of all her extant writings, the history of their publication, and some comments on biography and criticism. Chapman includes a complete chronology of her life and a few random critical estimates of his own.

The need felt for Chapman's study was shown by the gratitude with which it was received by reviewers. Of six reviews investigated³ all are favorable, although some differences among them are to be expected. The reviewer for the London Times Literary Supplement called it a book for Janeites, "who will be delighted to find so many of their questions lucidly answered, so many problems authoritatively solved by careful marshalling of facts gleaned from obscure corners or gathered by erudite detective work," and could not resist adding that "Jane" would only have smiled if Chapman seems to take her more seriously than she would have taken herself.⁴ Annette B. Hopkins found fault with Chapman's calling Cassandra not an "evocative" correspondent, but saw the comments on the novels as "fresh and interesting essays in creative criticism."⁵ J. M. S. Tomkins observed "no startling

³Two additional reviews, one in Dublin Magazine (October-December, 1949), 42-43; and one in Dalhousie Review, XXIX (1949), 355-358, were not available for examination.

⁴"L'Aimable Jane," London Times Literary Supplement (February 26, 1949), 136.

⁵Annette B. Hopkins, "R. W. Chapman's Jane Austen," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IV (September, 1949), 165-166.

novelty" in Chapman's opinions, but did not find them stale.⁶ Donald Barr and George F. Whicher both viewed the book as of primary benefit to specialists and Janeites, and appreciated Chapman's scholarship and conciseness.⁷ The reviewer for New Statesman and Nation noted one of the greatest values of the book by saying that it contains what may be regarded as footnotes to Chapman's editions of the novels and letters.⁸ The book is certainly authoritative and is a useful reference. Its importance to the Janeites should be illustrated by the discussion of them in a later chapter of this study.⁹

Other publications significant of a sustained and increasing interest in Jane Austen biography have appeared since 1940. Many of these have been related to or inspired by the founding of a Jane Austen Society, whose interest is primarily residences and other places of significance in Jane Austen's life. In a letter to the Saturday Review of Literature in 1947 the Society revealed its history and purposes. Founded in May, 1940, the group desired to get possession of the house in Hampshire known as Chawton Cottage, where Jane Austen spent the last eight years of her life.

⁶J. M. S. Tomkins, Review of English Studies, New Series I. (October, 1950), 368-370.

⁷Donald Barr, "For Good Janeites," New York Times Book Review (May 1, 1949), 5, 19. George F. Whicher, "Facts on Jane Austen," New York Herald Tribune Book Review, XXVI (May 8, 1949), 19.

⁸New Statesman and Nation, XXXVII (April 16, 1949), 387.

⁹See below, pp. 27-55.

The letter explained that the house was badly in need of repairs and that it could be purchased for £3000. The Society desired to restore the house, provide a caretaker, and make certain rooms of interest available to the public as a repository of relics and a place of pilgrimage. Subscriptions were requested by the members, among them R. A. Austen-Leigh, Elizabeth Bowen, R. W. Chapman, G. L. Keynes, Mary Lascelles, C. S. Lewis, and others familiar to students of literature and criticism, especially those familiar with recent contributions to Jane Austen scholarship.¹⁰

A letter in the following year told Saturday Review of Literature readers that since the Society's appeal had been launched, a subscription of £1400 had permitted repairs to be made and an endowment fund to be established. The house itself had been purchased for the Society by T. Edward Carpenter in memory of his son, who had been killed in World War II, and the Society hoped to continue its work and establish a permanent foundation and national museum.¹¹ The goal was reached in 1949, and a leading article in the London Times Literary Supplement announced the opening of the house by the Duke of Wellington, then president of the Society.¹²

¹⁰R. A. Austen-Leigh and others, "Jane Austen's Cottage: Jane Austen Society and Its Aims," Saturday Review of Literature, XXX (September 20, 1947), 20.

¹¹D. Darnell, "Jane Austen's House to be Restored as National Monument and Museum," Saturday Review of Literature, XXI (July 10, 1948), 20.

¹²"Jane Austen and Chawton," London Times Literary Supplement (July 29, 1949), 489.

Even before the Society had succeeded in its purchase, interest in the cottage was indicated by an article in the Illustrated London News (1946), complete with illustrations,¹³ and in 1950 a similar article in the same publication indicated that interest was still alive.¹⁴

Chawton has not been the only place of interest to admirers of Jane Austen. An item in Notes and Queries in 1943 gave particulars and descriptions of Jane Austen's birthplace at Steventon, Hants; included a history of the buildings, especially the church; and quoted from tablets and memorial slabs which refer to Jane Austen and to members of her family.¹⁵ The note apparently added nothing to biographical or critical knowledge of Jane Austen, but was indicative of interest in such matters prevalent at that time.

In addition to such information as that given publicity by the founding of the Jane Austen Society, biographical studies by members of the Austen family have continued to appear during the last fifteen years. In 1941 Richard Austen-Leigh published a study of Lyme Regis as Jane Austen

¹³"Chawton Cottage—Where Jane Austen Lived and Wrote," Illustrated London News, CCIX (December 28, 1946), 733-735.

¹⁴"Scenes at Chawton," Illustrated London News, CCXVII (October 14, 1950), 620-621.

¹⁵L. H. Chambers, "Jane Austen's Birthplace," Notes and Queries, CLXXXV (November 20, 1943), 318-320.

had known it.¹⁶ Jane Austen and Southampton, by the same author, appeared in 1949. A reviewer for the London Times Literary Supplement reported that this study gives an accurate account of Southampton as it was when the Austen ladies made their home there from 1806-1809. The account, the reviewer continued, is agreeably written, embellished with contemporary prints, and is apparently authoritative on genealogical matters and identification of persons mentioned in letters of the period.¹⁷ The value of studies such as these lies in the picture they give of places as Jane Austen must have thought of them when she used them as settings for her novels.

One of the most recently published items which may be classified with family biographical studies is Caroline Mary Craven Austen's memoir of her aunt, My Aunt Jane Austen, a short pamphlet published by the Jane Austen Society in 1952. In the preface R. W. Chapman pointed out that most of the material in the memoir had been published before and had been available to biographers, so that it really adds little to the portrait of Jane Austen biographers give. A review in the London Times Literary Supplement commended the Jane Austen Society for its efforts and saw the publication as

¹⁶R. A. Austen-Leigh, Jane Austen and Lyme Regis (London, 1941). This publication was reviewed in Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset, XXIII (1941), 247-248. Neither of these was available for examination for this survey.

¹⁷"More about Jane," London Times Literary Supplement (June 10, 1949), 379.

"a timely and effective antidote to such ill-founded denigrations of Jane Austen's character as darken the pages of her latest American critic, Mr. Mudrick."¹⁸ The memoir gives a picture of Jane Austen through the eyes of a fond niece, and although the facts in it are well known, no amount of repeating or quoting can reproduce the freshness and feeling of the first hand description. The booklet contains some rather irrelevant pictures of scenes around Chawton cottage and of family relics, and the pointless recollections of one John White of Chawton. In general the publication may be accepted more as a sign of life on the part of the Society than anything else and an indication that interest in deification of Jane Austen is still alive.¹⁹

Jane Austen's extant letters have been one area of study in which biography and criticism tend particularly to overlap. A major portion of the letters has been available since 1870 in J. E. Austen-Leigh's Memoir of his aunt, and in 1932 R. W. Chapman edited all the letters known up to that time.²⁰ Thus by 1940 critical and biographical studies were able to make full use of them. Apparently no articles dealing exclusively with the letters appeared between 1940 and

¹⁸London Times Literary Supplement. (June 20, 1952), 406. Mudrick's book is discussed below, pp. 78-81.

¹⁹May Lamberton Becker's Presenting Miss Jane Austen (New York, 1952) was dedicated to the Jane Austen Society and may be seen as a further indication of the group's vitality.

²⁰Bateson, editor, Cambridge Bibliography, III, 382. For a detailed history of the publication of the letters see Chapman, Jane Austen: Facts and Problems, pp. 165-167.

1952 except several short notes by R. W. Chapman announcing additions to and corrections of, or further illuminations of, his notes to the 1932 edition. An example of Chapman's persistent scholarship is provided by an item in Notes and Queries in 1941 in which he told of discovering an oversight concerning the date of Michaelmas as mentioned in one of the letters. In the 1932 edition Chapman had said that the day, October 11, must not have been right. He had since discovered that October 11 was Old Michaelmas Day and in Jane Austen's part of the country still meant that day.²¹ Further glosses of minutiae have appeared with almost predictable regularity. In a letter to the London Times Literary Supplement in 1942 Chapman announced his identification of a reference to Dr. Johnson in one of the letters.²² In 1943 another letter to the Times verified a guess made in the 1932 edition as to the identity of Mr. Jefferson, the latest evidence showing him to have been author of "Entertaining Literary Curiosities," of which Jane Austen's brother Edward desired a copy.²³ In a short article in Nineteenth-Century Fiction in 1949 Chapman revealed that he had not yet identified a Mrs. Barrett who according to reliable sources was

²¹"Michaelmas Goose," Notes and Queries, CLXXX (April 12, 1940), 258.

²²"Jane Austen Quotes," London Times Literary Supplement (August 8, 1941), 391.

²³"Jane Austen's Mr. Jefferson," London Times Literary Supplement (February 20, 1942), 92.

a friend and correspondent of Jane Austen and whose comments on her would be very valuable if her positive identity could be established.²⁴

As noted previously, however, Chapman's Jane Austen: Facts and Problems, 1948, is of primary value as a comprehensive note to his 1932 edition of the letters may be accepted as having included any crucial information unearthed in the interim. Apparently some need was felt on Chapman's part for a reworking of the earlier material, for a second edition of the letters was published in 1952.²⁵ A reviewer for the London Times Literary Supplement remarked on the publication and noted that it does not differ greatly from the earlier edition except for being augmented by a few discoveries and corrected in one or two points. The reviewer commended Chapman's standards of accuracy, arrangement, and enlightened comment, and expressed his failure to understand why Chapman felt it necessary to say that Cassandra was not the correspondent who best evoked her sister's powers.²⁶ The 1952 edition is certainly a valuable addition to Jane Austen study, since it provides all the known letters as well as Chapman's authoritative notes. Indexes and a chronology

²⁴"Jane Austen's Friend Mrs. Barrett," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IV (December, 1943), 171-174.

²⁵Jane Austen, Jane Austen's Letters to Her Sister Cassandra and Others, collected and edited by R. W. Chapman (London, 1952).

²⁶"A Renowned Correspondence," London Times Literary Supplement (December 19, 1952), 838.

make the book easy to use. Pictures of contemporary scenes and of places mentioned in the letters add to the attractiveness of the book, although they are the same as those appearing in various memoirs and editions of the novels and so add no new conceptions of the Jane Austen scene.

The new edition of the letters inspired several articles which cannot be classified as reviews, but which probably would not have appeared except upon the writer's reperusal of them. Donald L. Fryxell interpreted the letter to Fanny Knight of November 18, 1814, as providing Jane Austen with a source for the incident of the court plaster which Harriet Smith cherished in Emma. Fryxell thought Jane Austen's method of using actual material transformed to suit her own purposes was shown by her use of the incident, as he did not believe she used Fanny Knight as the character at all. The reference in the letter is rather vague, and Fryxell's case does not seem necessary since such a practice must have been too common for Jane Austen to have found it only there.²⁷

Another writer, E. V. Clark, was inspired by re-reading the letters to make some observations on the children mentioned in the novels and the letters and the differences in their respective presentations. His remarks are interesting but have very little purpose. He seems to conclude, if anything, that Jane Austen ignored heredity from both scientific

²⁷Donald L. Fryxell, "A Note on Jane Austen's Method," Notes and Queries, CXCVIII (July, 1953), 299-300.

and philosophical standpoints and that she recognized the effect of the character and behavior of parents on children only by force of example.²⁸

David Paul chose to examine the letters for what insight they could give into Jane Austen's creative method. His study is perhaps too subjective to be entirely valid, and he tends to attribute feelings and emotions to Jane Austen for which he has very flimsy evidence. His examination shows some acute perception, however, in his noting that

in the letters one can just trace here and there hints of the beginnings of the process by which the common object or experience assumes its special meaning within a central unity; just as a vase or a fruit assumes its real meaning, comes into its own, as it were, inside a painting as with all work in which the result seems incalculably perfect, the process must have been one of continuous, intensive, and highly conscious calculation.²⁹

Attempts to relate incidents in the letters to incidents in the novels or to find other correspondences between them, however, appeared spasmodically during the years chosen for this survey even before Chapman re-edited the letters. Such articles usually appeared in the form of short notes or letters to editors and have varying degrees of pointlessness. One such item by M. H. Dodds dealt with hours of business during the period covered in the novels and letters. Dodds

²⁸E. V. Clark, "Some Aspects of Jane Austen," Contemporary Review, CLXXXIII (April, 1953), 236-240.

²⁹David Paul, "Syringa, Iv'ry Pure," Twentieth Century, CLIII (April, 1953), 302-308.

concluded from various comments in the letters, using further illustrations from the novels, that shops were open at nine but that the usual shopping hours were between eleven and four. Noting hours of meals aided the research.³⁰

A brief item by Margaret Usborne dealt primarily with her own relationship to both the Austens and the Lefroys and recalled the well-known flirtation between Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy. She saw in the comments on him in the letters a levity similar to that of Elizabeth Bennet when Jane Bennet entreated her to be serious about Darcy. The parallel is certainly not inconceivable, but Usborne did not pursue her analysis of Jane Austen's peculiar ironic touch.³¹

Other short items related to biography and personality but not of any specific significance are noticeable mainly as examples of the various types of research with which some admirers of Jane Austen occupy their time. In 1947 M. H. Dodds became interested in Jane Austen's brother George, whose birth is mentioned in official memoirs but of whom no subsequent history is given. Dodds' comments in Notes and Queries noted two references to him in the letters edited by the Austen-Leighs which indicated feeble-mindedness or invalidism.³² A note by R. A. Austen-Leigh informed Dodds

³⁰M. H. Dodds, "Hours of Business, 1780-1820," Notes and Queries, CXCV (October 1, 1949), 436-437.

³¹Margaret Usborne, "Jane Austen—The Lefroys," Spectator, CLXXXVIII (February 29, 1952), 257-258.

³²M. H. Dodds, "Jane Austen's Brother George," Notes and Queries, CXCVII (June 14, 1947), 348.

and readers that George grew up weak in intellect and survived until January 1848.³³ A final comment from Dodds added that R. W. Chapman had pointed out that Jane Austen knew the deaf and dumb alphabet and that she might have learned it for the benefit of George, although the reference he had found was to her using it for a Mr. Hook.³⁴ This item is interesting in view of the fact that Laura L. Hinkley had discovered George the year before and speculated at length on his effect on Jane Austen's life in her Ladies of Literature, a book devoted to biographical-critical analyses of six nineteenth-century women authors. Neither Hinkley nor Dodds reached any conclusions about George or his effect on Jane Austen, either as person or artist.

In 1948 R. F. Pechey presented a case for the village of Alton as the probable prototype for Highbury in Emma. The village is about a mile from Chawton and fits the description in the novel. Pechey thought also of Alton-altus-high, and pointed out that Elton, the name of one of the characters, could have come from Alton merely by the change of one letter.³⁵ A 1950 note by M. H. Dodds attempted to defend Jane Austen from the famous reference to her in a

³³R. A. Austen-Leigh, "Jane Austen's Brother George," Notes and Queries, CXCII (August 9, 1947), 348.

³⁴M. H. Dodds, "Jane Austen's Brother George," Notes and Queries, CXCII (December 13, 1947), 548.

³⁵R. F. Pechey, "Emma and Alton," London Times Literary Supplement, (September 11, 1948), 513.

letter of Mary Russell Mitford as a "husband hunting butterfly" by pointing out that Mitford was married when Jane Austen was ten years old and that Mitford's mother, who had made the comment, could scarcely have known Jane Austen as a flirt before her own marriage as she was said to have done.³⁶ In 1951 E. E. Duncan-Jones published together several unrelated observations on Jane Austen which suggest some explanations for references in her letters and some sources in novels of her day for expressions and characters in her novels.³⁷ In the same year David Rhydderch reported that it was the firm of Cadell to which Jane Austen's First Impressions, later Pride and Prejudice, was offered. Dated November 1, 1797, the letter from Jane Austen's father concerning the novel had been found among the effects of Mr. Cadell and had been purchased by a connection of the family.³⁸

Apparently these and other biographical speculations had not been affected by an article by Louis F. Doyle in 1944, in which he objected to scholarship which directs its emphasis to enlarge a personal view of a writer and succeeds in shedding a probably inaccurate and unrewarding light on his works. Doyle found such scholarship particularly in bad

³⁶M. H. Dodds, "Mary Russell Mitford and Jane Austen," Notes and Queries, CXCVI (April 29, 1950), 189.

³⁷E. E. Duncan-Jones, "Notes on Jane Austen," Notes and Queries, CXCVI (January 6, 1951), 14-16.

³⁸David Rhydderch, "Mr. Cadell and Jane Austen," Notes and Queries, CXCVI (May 4, 1951), 277.

taste with regard to Jane Austen's letters, since hers were obviously private and "only a cad reads private letters."³⁹ His point is not without foundation since one immediately thinks of Jane Austen as observing all the proprieties, but such an article as Doyle's cannot but seem slightly silly.

Most of the material discussed up to this point has been rather ambiguously biographical-critical; indeed, except in the case of the briefest articles it is difficult to classify as one or the other. Even those few which do provide valuable insights into Jane Austen's personality or creative method are prevented from being more valuable because they have not been thorough, sustained attempts to relate material systematically or to reach any definite conclusions. Longer studies using biographical materials, however, have been published since 1940, and these are of interest and value in several ways. One of the first which should be considered is Elizabeth Jenkins' Jane Austen, a biography which was first published in England in 1938, an American edition issued in 1949. Jenkins had had access to the major sources of biographical material and was able to use other records to fill in the contemporary scene. This is perhaps one of the most complete biographical studies of Jane Austen to be published, and its appearing first in 1938 illustrates how little new material was left to be explored

³⁹Louis F. Doyle, "Jane Austen, How Could You!" Catholic World, CLXC (November, 1944), 144-150.

in later years. It is a thorough, respectful analysis of Jane Austen's life and writings and, in view of the author's careful attention to facts and dates, is a valuable reference for more strictly critical studies. Reviewers received the book favorably, and their comments should serve to illustrate its excellent quality. Denham S. Sutcliffe appreciated Jenkins' refusal to try to discuss useless facts or to deal with unresolved biographical material and valued also her studying biographical material for what it might point up or reveal about Jane Austen's artistic development.⁴⁰

Douglas Bush viewed the book chiefly as an introduction to Jane Austen and her novels, but noted that Jenkins' critical viewpoint is thoroughly intelligent.⁴¹ Samuel C. Chew felt Jenkins inclined to overrate the letters, but found "a well-controlled, understanding sympathy which is appropriate to the subject."⁴² B. R. Redman pointed out Jenkins' excellent sense of critical proportion and appreciated her refusal to look for the originals of Jane Austen's fictional places and characters. He felt she was justified also in her refusal to find Jane Austen's life in her novels.⁴³ Jenkins' book

⁴⁰Denham S. Sutcliffe, Kenyon Review, XII (Spring, 1950), 360-365.

⁴¹Douglas Bush, New Republic, CXXI (November 28, 1949), 31.

⁴²Samuel C. Chew, "Miss Austen, In and Out of Her Books," New York Herald Tribune Book Review (December 18, 1949), 8.

⁴³Ben Ray Redmon, "For the Enchanted Circle," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXII (December 10, 1949), 9-10.

was undeniably an important contribution to Jane Austen study in 1938. By 1949, however, the material she had used and several of the critical estimates she had made had been absorbed into the body of Jane Austen material, so that the American edition was significant primarily as a sign of interest in Jane Austen and as evidence of good taste on the part of Janeites, who had helped foster that interest. Whatever its other values, Elizabeth Jenkins' Jane Austen must be recognized as an excellent example of literary biography.

Other works which belong more exclusively to biography than to criticism were designed for young readers or as introductions to Jane Austen and her novels. An article by K. E. Wilkie in Senior Scholastic in 1947 showed that Jane Austen was not being dealt with exclusively in adult publications and learned journals. Wilkie gave a brief biography and history of her writings, obviously designed to inspire young students to read Jane Austen.⁴⁴ Also published in 1947 was Jane, by Jean Gould, also designed for the young student, or more exactly, the adolescent girl. Although the material is not sentimentalized or overdrawn, the book is probably not the introduction most admirers of Jane Austen would recommend, because it tends to limit a conception of her talents to that of her being merely a comic satirist. Perhaps more should not be expected of a book for children,

⁴⁴K. E. Wilkie, "England's Jane," Senior Scholastic, I (February 10, 1947), 17-18.

but first impressions are important, and the clearest memory a reader would have of this biography would probably be of some very high-waisted illustrations. A more recent biography designed as an introduction to Jane Austen escapes this sort of failure. Presenting Miss Jane Austen, by May Lamberton Becker, published in 1952, manages to give Jane Austen's life and a glimpse of her novels without giving the impression of pleading a case or being on the defensive. A review in the London Times Literary Supplement pointed out one of the greatest values of the book by saying, "It is almost uncannily skilful in suggesting where delight is to be found while leaving its fullness to the discoverer."⁴⁵ The book is accurate factually, and the author's clear, careful style should make it capable of being appreciated by adults as well as young students. It is perhaps best described as being well-proportioned and in good taste.

One biography, or at least one interpretation, of Jane Austen's life tends to defy classification, but it deserves noting here by virtue of its using biographical materials. Parson Austen's Daughter, a "novel" by Helen Ashton, published in 1949, drew varied reactions from reviewers. They ranged from extravagant admiration such as that of George F. Whicher, who said, "If there were more books like this one fictionalized biography would need no apologies. It would be recognized as affording matchless opportunities for the

⁴⁵London Times Literary Supplement (July 4, 1952), 434.

combination of careful scholarship and interpretative imagination. Both these things Miss Ashton possesses to a high degree";⁴⁶ to the unfavorable opinion of Shirley Jackson, who felt "that Jane Austen should be beaten into mediocrity with her own novels is more than unkind." She believed that in trying to make Jane Austen like Elizabeth Bennet, Ashton succeeded in making her like no one so much as Jo March.⁴⁷ B. R. Redmon noted Ashton's reading passages from the novels back into the fictionalized account and, although he recognized the book as a work of love and admiration, believed it added nothing to the existing biographical portrait or to an understanding of Jane Austen's art.⁴⁸ Enid Starkie objected strenuously to Ashton's mixing descriptions from the novels to fit events or places in the life as not a legitimate use of source materials, saying it leads to misconceptions.⁴⁹ Ashton defended herself on the grounds of a novelist, saying she hoped to point up similarities which seemed significant and to use only quotations which would be recognizable.⁵⁰ Ashton's "novel" is of questionable value to

⁴⁶George F. Whicher, "Miss Austen in a Novel," New York Herald Tribune Books, XXVI (September 4, 1949), 5.

⁴⁷Shirley Jackson, "Two Novels for Janeites," New York Times Book Review. (September 11, 1949), 44.

⁴⁸Redmon, "For the Enchanted Circle," p. 10.

⁴⁹Enid Starkie, "Parson Austen's Daughter," London Times Literary Supplement. (August 26, 1949), 553.

⁵⁰Helen Ashton, London Times Literary Supplement (September 16, 1949), 601.

serious admirers of Jane Austen no matter how skillfully it is written. It is of greater interest to Janeites and as Janeite literature will be discussed in a later chapter.⁵¹

Other studies published since 1940 have included biographical sketches in connection with criticism. In Ladies of Literature (1946), Laura L. Hinkley used a vaguely psychoanalytical approach to criticism, and her study of Jane Austen is organized so that it deals with certain periods of Jane Austen's life and what Hinkley felt were related aspects of her art. The results are some vaguely psychological conclusions which were not reached systematically enough to suggest a specific theory of Jane Austen's artistic development. Hinkley's tendency was to see the novels in close relation to the biography. Her particular obsession was Jane Austen's brother George,⁵² who she was convinced made a deep psychological impression on Jane Austen, or at least should have.

In a more conservative study than Hinkley's, W. Somerset Maugham included a brief biographical survey as part of an introduction to Pride and Prejudice, which he edited as one of the ten greatest novels in the world. Maugham made some conjectures about Jane Austen's personality by interpreting some of her letters and the memoirs, but he was careful to

⁵¹See below, p. 42.

⁵²Supposedly defective in intellect. See above, pp. 14-15.

identify his own opinions.⁵³ The survey does not make any innovations in the accepted biographical portrait, but it shows that Maugham had an intelligent appreciation of the letters.

Margaret Kennedy's Jane Austen, published in 1950 in the English Novelist Series, is a concise gathering of biographical and critical material, clearly organized and well written. It includes chapters on life, letters, earlier and later novels, standard criticisms, and Jane Austen's place in English literature. Kennedy's conciseness and completeness in treating so wide a range of material in so brief a study is remarkable and admirable. The book is designed as a sort of introduction to Jane Austen and her novels, but succeeds in being a valuable compilation of critical study as well. Reviewers' comments were significant. A reviewer for Notes and Queries commended Kennedy's concentration on original material and her leaving aside wild surmises and unwarranted conjectures.⁵⁴ Phillip Tomlinson called the book "an account of the life and writings that can not be bettered in a work so restricted in space."⁵⁵ A reviewer for the

⁵³W. Somerset Maugham, "Jane Austen and Pride and Prejudice," Great Novelists and Their Novels (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 77-93. The essay was reprinted, expanded, from The Atlantic Monthly, CLXXI (May, 1948), 99-104.

⁵⁴Notes and Queries, CXCIV (November 11, 1950), 505.

⁵⁵Phillip Tomlinson, Spectator, CLXXV (December 22, 1950), 735.

London Times Literary Supplement appreciated Kennedy's clarity and consistent point of view. He felt that the criticism was expert and that it was not Kennedy's fault if it had all been said before.⁵⁶ His comments suggest that by 1950 biographical and critical studies could be varied only by rewording.

A study by Sylvia Townsend Warner, Jane Austen, 1775-1817, published in 1951 as a pamphlet in a series of biographical supplements to "British Book News," shows a competent understanding of Jane Austen's characters and many aspects of her technique. The biographical account is apparently correct factually, and much of the criticism is good if rather broad in scope and perhaps too ambitious. Warner had a strong desire to identify characters in the biography with those in the novels, and although she did not insist upon relating them as a critical theory, she used all the evidence she could to show correspondences. This short survey of life and works is rather remarkable for its conciseness, and a select bibliography included shows Warner to have made use of all the most substantial biographical materials. Although the study adds nothing that is new, it is well-written, in a manner designed to gain a reader's interest in Jane Austen, yet not to lead to entirely preconceived notions about her.

⁵⁶"More About Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement (October 27, 1950), 670.

From this survey of materials published since 1940 which are in various ways related to the biography of Jane Austen, several conclusions can be drawn. One significant fact is that no discoveries during this time have made any really important changes in the traditional portrait. It is clear, however, in view of the many biographical studies published recently, that Jane Austen's life continues to fascinate her admirers and that the extant source material continues to be searched for something which will explain or, as some writers approach the problem, justify her remarkable talent. The founding of the Jane Austen Society and the publication which it has sponsored show the presence of an interest in biography for its own sake aside from what it might contribute to criticism of the novels. The greatest portion of recent biography, however, has been published as a part of, or merely in connection with, various critical studies, and it seems apparent that many critics are still trying to establish correspondences between the events of her life and incidents or attitudes, as well as characters, in her novels. These conclusions show that since the biographical portrait does not change, critical studies relying heavily on biography are largely subjective and for that reason are never entirely satisfactory. Realization of these facts may have been responsible for a change in emphasis in much recent criticism, which tends to concentrate on the novels rather than on the writer.

Much of the biographical and biographical-critical speculation covered in this survey is characterized by the attitude, or impulse, which creates the Janeites, who concentrate on Jane Austen as a person and on the world she represents, as well as on the world she created. The Janeites seem to be interested in biography for the personal satisfaction it gives them to know as much about Jane Austen's life as possible. For this reason their research and their discoveries frequently seem pointless as well as needlessly minute or specialized. They have, however, made a sufficient number of contributions to demand consideration in any review of recent Jane Austen study. They and their work will be surveyed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

CRITICISM: 1940-1954

The major part of this survey of recent Jane Austen study will be concerned with criticism in order to show, not the current view of Jane Austen's place in English literature, but rather the present critical estimate of her as a novelist. A second purpose is to examine and in some measure evaluate the methods recent critics are employing in their approach to her and her works. In perspective Jane Austen criticism since 1940 must be understood as both a continuation and result of earlier criticism and research. Recent criticism, even more than biography, is a product of its ancestry, for it has assimilated the opinions and discoveries of the past century and has become highly specialized.

The Janeites

The publication to be surveyed in this section represents a part of Jane Austen criticism for which the descriptive terms continuation and specialization should perhaps be replaced by burrowing in and bogging down. These expressions aptly describe the work of the Janeites, a body of Jane Austen admirers who have been active enough in recent years to demand consideration as a force in the shaping of the present state of Jane Austen study. In order for one to understand

the particular nature of their contributions to both biographical and critical research, the modern Janeites must be viewed as influenced by their long history. The traditional Janeite was usually a rather literary type of person, probably an Englishman, who imagined himself one of the truly enlightened ones who had "discovered" Jane Austen and who could then view the rest of the world with condescending pity. In 1926 Rudyard Kipling, who has been credited with coining the term,¹ entitled a section of Debits and Credits "The Janeites" and included in it a sketch which was meant to show both the supercilious complacency of the Janeites and the appeal Jane Austen has even for those who are not in the least "literary." The tradition, however, is older even than Kipling's recognition of it. Ben Ray Redmon, in a discussion published in 1949 of the Janeites as a cult, mentioned an editor of "about sixty years" before who had commented on "the recent cult for Miss Austen" which had resulted in many new editions of her novels and memoirs, making the facts of her life familiar to most readers.²

It is not surprising, then, that such a long-sustained interest should produce a specific body of critics and writers, and it is understandable that their work should become ingrained, specialized, and even highly personalized.

¹K. E. Wilkie, "England's Jane," Senior Scholastic, L (February 10, 1947), 18.

²Ben Ray Redmon, "For the Enchanted Circle," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXII (December 10, 1949), 9.

These characteristics are present to a striking degree in the writings of the Janeites since 1940, and for that reason the term Janeite has acquired a connotation which, if not bordering on the derogatory, at least implies in its user an indulgent, superior sort of tolerance. This attitude is apparent in Ben Ray Redmon's comments upon the Janeites:

It is a cozy cult. The six major canonical books may be read through easily by the devoted at least once a year. The object of adoration is informally known by her Christian name—something that might surprise and even offend her—while the adorers, with equal familiarity call themselves Janeites. But cozy as the cult is, it is also demanding. Its qualifying standards are high, the catechism only for those profoundly learned in the scripture. Janeites are as much at home at Pemberley and Kellynch Hall and Uppercross, at Mansfield Park, and at Hartfield, in the Dashwoods' cottage at Barton, in the Upper and Lower Rooms of Bath, and in the kitchen gardens of Northanger Abbey, as they are in their own houses, apartments, and hall-bedrooms. They can tell you just where Louisa Musgrove fell on the Cobb at Lyme Regis, and how many curs were quarreling over a bone in Highbury's busiest street when Emma Woodhouse looked out from the door of Ford's shop.³

This description includes some of the outstanding characteristics of the Janeites, their feeling of personal contact with the author and their intense interest in the details of the novels. In essence, the Janeites seem to be interested in Jane Austen as a person and to be fascinated by the world she represents and the world she created in her novels. Intimate familiarity with the details of Jane Austen's life is a source of personal satisfaction to the

³Ibid.

Janeites, and it also enhances their speculations about correspondences between persons and events in her life and those in the novels. The characters in the novels, moreover, are treated by the cult almost as if they were actual beings. Speculation, however, is no more fascinating to the Janeites than fact; and much of their research is devoted to filling in backgrounds of the novels and adding information about eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century social customs, habits of dress, and speech mannerisms. Through these efforts the Janeites have been able to provide much valuable information, but they do not always suggest a use for it. In fact, the most striking characteristic of the Janeites is that they seem to be content merely to fill in, to point out, to underline, or simply to apostrophize various aspects of Jane Austen's life and works. They recognize that some remarkable appeal catches and holds their interest, but it is enough for the Janeites that through it they are afforded an endless source of personal pleasure and intellectual exercise.

Because they do concentrate on mainly superficial aspects of the novels and because they find Jane Austen's world so absorbing, it is possible to see an element of escape in the work of the Janeites, especially during the decade of World War II. To suggest that the war provided the Janeites with something from which to escape could perhaps place too great an emphasis on the degree of its

influence, but the influence was considerable on a book published in 1944 by two British women authors, a book which provides an excellent example of Janeite criticism and research. Talking of Jane Austen, published in America as Speaking of Jane Austen, by Sheila Kaye-Smith and G. B. Stern, is a collection of conversational essays on various aspects of Jane Austen and her writings. The authors explained that the book grew out of their long interest in Jane Austen and their repeated reading and discussion of the novels. Both of the authors had "discovered" Jane Austen during times of personal trouble and worry, G. B. Stern during World War I, and had found themselves in another, completely fascinating world. Sheila Kaye-Smith was especially concerned with the historical background of the novels and discussed costumes and food of the period, social positions of the various characters, and the few reflections in the novels of the political events of Jane Austen's lifetime. G. B. Stern was interested in the characters, whom she sometimes treated as actual people, classifying them on principles of her own and speculating about their lives beyond the novels. The authors included a Jane Austen quiz which explores the most minute details of the novels, asking for Christian names of characters, identification of servants, contexts of brief quotations, and other points which could be overlooked even in several readings of the books.

The comments of reviewers of the book were favorable on the whole, although they showed a recognition of its limitations. The London Times Literary Supplement expressed a favorable attitude toward it by saying, "We are content to listen."⁴ E. V. R. Wyatt, reviewing for Commonweal, observed that the book was "an intimate family discussion instead of a formal literary appraisal" and expressed his appreciation to the authors for having "opened wider the gate to a pleasure park where trouble is checked at the entrance."⁵ F. R. Rideout and Marjorie Nicholson both felt that reading and talking about Jane Austen is a good way to forget war, and Nicholson found the book valuable in yet another way: "As a teacher, I should prefer that students read this book rather than many others written about Jane Austen, in part because of its sincerity and infectious enthusiasm, in part because the two authors are peculiarly fitted for the task they have undertaken."⁶ Louis Kronenburger found good material and other matter that he judged slightly silly. He pointed out that although the book contains criticism, it has much more "the solemn gaiety

⁴"Jane Austen's World: Two Women Novelists Talk," London Times Literary Supplement (January 8, 1944), 21.

⁵E. V. R. Wyatt, Commonweal, XL (June 9, 1944), 188.

⁶F. R. Rideout, "Phoenix Nest," Saturday Review of Literature, XXVII (November 18, 1944), 30-31, and Marjorie Nicholson, "Jane Austen's Tranquil World," New York Times Book Review (May 28, 1944), 3.

of initiates, the detailed gossips of lady authors and, in its worst moments, the gush of infatuated schoolgirls."⁷ Edmund Wilson's comments on the book are valuable because of his excellent sense of proportion and because of his pointing out several of its limitations. He appreciated the notes of the two authors on Jane Austen's language and their underlining of some of her fine, inconspicuous strokes, and approved of the book for the enthusiasm and interest it stimulates in the reader. He felt, however, that neither of the authors really had gone into the subject as deeply as might have been done, and he suggested several matters which he felt should receive attention—such things as the successive gradations, literary and psychological, which lead from Pride and Prejudice to Persuasion; Jane Austen's concern with the novel, not as the vicarious satisfaction of emotion, but as a work of art; her technique as detached and impersonal observation; and the importance of a false sister-relationship as recurrent motif.⁸ These are not the types of problems that receive the attentions of the Janeites.

World War II may be seen as having only indirectly influenced the appearance of Talking of Jane Austen, but it had more direct influences on Janeite publication in other ways. Not only Janeite, but all publication was restricted

⁷Louis Kronenburger, "Janeites Differ," Nation, CLIX (August 12, 1949), 187-188.

⁸Edmund Wilson, "A Long Talk About Jane Austen," New Yorker, XX (June 24, 1944), 70.

during the early part of the decade 1940-1950, and a return to normality was probably responsible for an increase in publication by 1949. Janeite publication in periodicals, however, has been more or less continuous since 1940. More of the work has appeared as short notes or letters to editors than as essay-length pieces, and these brief items provide examples of the types of problems which occupy the Janeites. In 1940 M. H. Dodds published some speculations in Notes and Queries which dealt with a possible misprint of Miss for Mrs. Grant in the eighth chapter of certain editions of Mansfield Park, and with a Miss Iremonger, whose published letters reveal a remarkable hypochondriac and whom Dodds suggested as a prototype for Diana Parker in Sanditon.⁹ In the same year Ellinor W. Hughes published an article in the London Times Literary Supplement which was inspired by the dismantling of Harlestone House in Northampton, supposed to have been the model for the house in Mansfield Park. The author gave no hint of the purpose of her article.¹⁰

Notes and Queries has been a useful forum for Janeites. In 1941 a series of initialed queries and replies attempted to decide whether Jane Austen meant alder or elder in Emma

⁹M. H. Dodds, "Notes on Austen's Novels," Notes and Queries, CLXXVIII (June 14, 1940), 330-332.

¹⁰Ellinor W. Hughes, "The Last of 'Mansfield Park,'" London Times Literary Supplement. (November 9, 1940), 572.

when she referred to the plant as a sign of spring.¹¹ The matter was eventually settled by the suggestion that the reference was to the early leafing of the elder rather than to its flowering.¹² In the meantime one of these same writers had uncovered in Emma an inaccurate passage in which an orchard in bloom is made to coincide with ripe strawberries.¹³ A later series of notes in the same magazine dealt with the reference of Admiral Croft in Persuasion to his wife's having a blister as large as a three-shilling piece. The writer was curious about the coin.¹⁴ A reply gave a history of the coin, issued mainly for revenue purposes between 1800 and 1815, now to be found in curiosity shops and coin collections.¹⁵

Items of this sort reflected the influence of World War II only as the war was responsible for restricting their publication. Longer items showed a more direct influence, and the result was the pointing up of a definite

¹¹V. R., "Jane Austen: A Botanical Point," Notes and Queries, CLXXX (February 15, 1941), 117; V. R., "Jane Austen: Botanical Points," Notes and Queries, CLXXX (February 22, 1941), 138; and E. G. W., "Jane Austen: A Botanical Point," Notes and Queries, CLXXX (March 8, 1941), 177.

¹²William Harcourt-Bath, "Jane Austen: A Botanical Point," Notes and Queries, CLXXX (March 8, 1941), 177.

¹³V. R., "Jane Austen: Botanical Points," Notes and Queries, CLXXX (February 22, 1941), 138.

¹⁴"Curious: A Three-Shilling Piece," Notes and Queries, CLXXXI (July 25, 1941), 50.

¹⁵W. Gurney Bonham, E. W. Swanton, and C. Wanklyn, "Curious: A Three-Shilling Piece," Notes and Queries, CLXXXI (August 9, 1941), 80-81.

critical view of Jane Austen's works. In 1940 Mrs. Lonsdale Ragg published an article called "Jane Austen and the War of Her Time," in which she discussed why Jane Austen ignored the war in her novels and letters. Observing that it was quite unlikely that Jane Austen knew nothing about war, since her cousin Eliza had been touched by the French Revolution and since her brothers in the Navy saw action repeatedly, Ragg pointed out that Jane and Cassandra, to whom most of Jane Austen's letters were written, had the same sources of information about the war and that it was very improbable that they should use their letters for other than family news and the recounting of local events. The novels, Ragg continued, are set in the country, which did not feel the effect of blockade or danger of possible attack as did towns.¹⁶ This article seems to have been written in answer to the classic deprecation of Jane Austen for being oblivious to world affairs, and although the defense is well-taken, the author did not pursue her observations on Jane Austen's limited range of subject matter.

Henry Seidel Canby carried the point further in an editorial article published in 1942 in the Saturday Review of Literature. In a plea for novelists not to waste their talents in propaganda or to be obsessed with the distortions of familiar emotions which war is likely to cause, he used Jane Austen as an illustration of how war can best influence

¹⁶Mrs. Lonsdale Ragg, "Jane Austen and the War of Her Time," Contemporary Review, CLVIII (November, 1940), 544-549.

writers. Canby expressed the belief that "the greatest novels (in English at least) written in war time are unquestionably Jane Austen's." He did not believe her novels were at all her own attempt to escape the worries of war, but felt the political events of her time influenced her by the emphasis they caused in her creative imagination on bad temper, pomposity, servility, sentimentality, snobbishness, and greed—the opposites of human values heightened by war.¹⁷ These observations help to show something of Jane Austen's artistic method and as impersonal critical evaluation do not deserve to be classified with Janeite criticism.

A true Janeite, however, found other observations to make on Jane Austen and the war. H. Hobson in 1942 reported to readers of the Christian Science Monitor that Jane Austen's residence at Southampton had not in that year been touched by bombs falling in the area, nor had the familiar places in Bath been injured. The writer saw a kind of justice in that "Miss Austen neglected war; and, in return, war has passed her by." The article also gave some speculations as to what the heroines would have been doing had they lived during the current war, and the author thought "the sweetest smiles would be reserved for those American soldiers with a large private income."¹⁸

¹⁷Henry Seidel Canby, "The War and Jane Austen," Saturday Review of Literature, XXV (December 5, 1942), 26.

¹⁸H. Hobson, "War Hasn't Touched Jane Austen," Christian Science Monitor Weekly Magazine Section (December 19, 1942), p. 6.

With the relaxation of wartime restrictions after 1944, Janeite publication, especially of brief articles and notes, began to increase in volume. Among the earliest of these was a series of letters published in the London Times Literary Supplement which dealt with Sheila Kaye-Smith's suggestion in Talking of Jane Austen that the shadow over Mansfield Park is nothing less than the evangelical revival. J. R. M. Etherington wrote to cite some passages in the letters which might further substantiate the theory and to ask, in regard to Emma, if Frank Churchill were intended to have been sincere when he told Emma that he thought she had guessed he was attached to Jane Fairfax.¹⁹ Q. D. Leavis replied to the letter with evidence that Frank Churchill was intended to have been sincere in that case, and added her belief that evangelicalism had affected Persuasion as well as Mansfield Park.²⁰ A letter from Winifred Schofield included attempts to show evidences of the evangelical influence as early as Pride and Prejudice and to see the attitude which colors Mansfield Park as a natural rather than a sudden change.²¹ A final comment from Leavis maintained her original opinion. She held that Schofield's remarks were not well thought out

¹⁹J. R. M. Etherington, "Jane Austen's Religion," London Times Literary Supplement (January 29, 1944), 55.

²⁰Q. D. Leavis, "Jane Austen's Emma," London Times Literary Supplement (February 5, 1944), 67.

²¹Winifred Schofield, "Jane Austen's Religion," London Times Literary Supplement (February 12, 1944), 79.

and were misleading and that there is a definite change in Mansfield Park which anyone can recognize, a change brought about by a sensitiveness to an alteration in the moral ethos which was a result of the revival.²² These opinions are reviewed fully here because they illustrate that the Janeites such as Kaye-Smith sometimes suggest promising theories in the midst of their speculations but that the study of them is left to critics of another order. This aspect of Mansfield Park was given still fuller investigation ten years later in an article which will be discussed in the next section.²³

Another short item early in 1944 dealt with a completely different aspect of Austen study. R. W. Chapman reported in Notes and Queries his discovery of an unfamiliar version of Sir Walter Scott's widely known opinion of Jane Austen,²⁴ recorded at Abbotsford in 1824 by his friend Mary Anne Hughes, grandmother of the author of Tom Brown's Schooldays.²⁵ The opinion is substantially the same as Scott's more famous comments on her, and this discovery has no apparent value

²²Q. D. Leavis, "Jane Austen's Religion," London Times Literary Supplement (February 19, 1944), 91.

²³See below, pp. 71-72, 65-66.

²⁴This opinion is summarized best in Scott's statement that "The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but. . . [Jane Austen's] exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me." Cited from R. W. Chapman, Jane Austen: A Critical Bibliography (Oxford, 1953), p. 24.

²⁵R. W. Chapman, "Scott and Jane Austen," Notes and Queries, CLXXXVI (February 12, 1944), 91.

in adding to a view of any of the persons involved, unless it shows the most Janeite tendencies of Chapman's scholarship. C. F. Bell's annotations of passages in the novels, published later in 1944, show how Janeites like to study Jane Austen's world. Bell reported on an advertisement for a cosmetic used by Sir Walter Elliot and explained that the practice of "crossing letters" as described in Sense and Sensibility was abandoned, not because paper became cheap, but because the post office ceased to charge extra for more than single sheets of paper. Other bits of information were included avowedly only for those who like such minutiae.²⁶

Another example of the problems which occupy the more scholarly Janeites was a letter by H. W. Chapman to the London Times Literary Supplement in 1946, in which he discussed some names in an 1810 marriage notice, Steel and Ferrers, suggested by Elizabeth Jenkins as sources for names in Sense and Sensibility.²⁷ Chapman believed that unless the parallel is a mere coincidence, these names were first coined after that year and that the discovery could thus add to knowledge of the date of Jane Austen's revision of Elinor and Marianne.²⁸ Such lines of investigation seem directed

²⁶C. F. Bell, "Jane Austen's Backgrounds," London Times Literary Supplement (August 26, 1944), 420.

²⁷The suggestion was made in her biography of Jane Austen, first published in 1938. See above, pp. 17-19.

²⁸R. W. Chapman, "Sense and Sensibility," London Times Literary Supplement (July 6, 1946), 319.

toward explaining Jane Austen's method but stop short of conclusive evidence for any consistent practice. It may be significant that more of this type of investigation than that occupied with such matters as Sir Walter Elliot's cosmetics, for example, was published during the decade 1945-1955. The explanation may be that the backgrounds had been studied thoroughly enough by that time to make further investigations superfluous. The publication in 1948 of R. W. Chapman's Jane Austen: Facts and Problems, which was discussed in Chapter I with regard to the biographical information it provides,²⁹ is the most authoritative summation of facts and speculations about Jane Austen, her works, and her world to appear since 1940. Chapman has been called the "high priest of the Janeite cult,"³⁰ and there is perhaps some justification for the description. His work, however, is of more significance as factual reference for both Janeites and non-Janeites than as a critical contribution.

A culmination in Janeite publication, as has already been mentioned, was reached in 1949, when several books of essentially Janeite inspiration appeared. One of them was the American edition of Elizabeth Jenkins' Jane Austen, which has already been discussed as a biography.³¹ Because

²⁹See above, pp. 3-5.

³⁰"Concerning Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement. (November 6, 1953), 716.

³¹See above, pp. 17-19.

the English edition had been available since 1938, its publication in America eleven years later indicated that Janeite interest was not limited to England and that good taste was strong enough to make this worth-while book appreciated. R. W. Chapman called it an "accurate and understanding book" which modestly claimed to be the only strictly chronological life.³² As a scholarly delineation of Jane Austen's life and age, without unwarranted speculations about parallels in persons and incidents, Jenkins' book does not belong strictly to the Janeites. Another book of a biographical nature, Helen Ashton's Parson Austen's Daughter, also published in 1949, gives an example of what Janeites find to do with biography. Called "a novel," this book is a fictionalized account of Jane Austen's life, in which passages from the novels are used in the dialogue and narrative to indicate where Ashton believed Jane Austen may have found prototypes for her characters.³³ One reviewer commended the book for being well-written and thought the material skillfully handled,³⁴ but others found it unrewarding and annoying and felt that it added nothing to a biographical portrait of Jane Austen.³⁵

³²Chapman, A Critical Bibliography, p. 51.

³³See above, pp. 20-22.

³⁴George F. Whicher, "Miss Austen in a Novel," New York Herald Tribune Books, XXVI (September, 4, 1949), 5.

³⁵Notably Redmon, "For the Enchanted Circle," p. 10; Enid Starkie, "Parson Austen's Daughter," London Times Literary

A third Janeite book of 1949 also took the form of a novel. It was D. A. Bonavia-Hunt's Femberly Shades, a sequel to Pride and Prejudice. It has the virtue at least of being no worse than sequels usually are, but as Shirley Jackson pointed out in a review, "Just as it is manifestly impossible to write an eighteenth-century novel in the twentieth century, so is it impossible to write a Jane Austen novel if you are not Jane Austen." Yet Jackson was rather tolerant of it on the whole and commended Bonavia-Hunt's degree of success in the face of the odds against her. She found some deficiencies in characterization in the novel and identified several discrepancies between the characters and their models in Pride and Prejudice.³⁶ B. R. Redmon was inclined to view the book favorably and felt that its faults did not keep it from being "very good fun."³⁷ The novel would probably be of little interest to a reader not familiar with Pride and Prejudice, and it is of interest to those who are mainly as a curiosity. It adds nothing to a view of Jane Austen's art or to her methods except in suggesting that they are very difficult to imitate.

Supplement (August 26, 1949), 353; and Shirley Jackson, "Two Novels for Janeites," New York Times Book Review, (September 11, 1949), 9.

³⁶Shirley Jackson, "Two Novels for Janeites," New York Times Book Review, (September 10, 1949), 9.

³⁷"For the Enchanted Circle," p. 10.

Sheila Kaye-Smith and G. B. Stern evidently did not stop talking of Jane Austen in 1944, for in 1949 they published More Talk of Jane Austen, called in America More About Jane Austen, which is, as the title implies, more of the kind of discussion in their earlier book. Reviewers were still generally favorable in their comments, although there were indications that the novelty of the first book was one of its virtues. May Lamberton Becker heartily approved of the authors' methods and manner of approaching Jane Austen, and of the outcome of their talks. She seemed to feel that they knew as much about Jane Austen as Jane Austen herself.³⁸ Emma Gurney Salter commented that "the little pleasures and perplexities of life are the usual themes of Jane Austen's novels, and it is indeed a gratification to hear them wittily and enthusiastically discussed by two such skilled writers. . . ."³⁹ Ben Ray Redmon approved of their efforts and added that "even those readers who think they know their Jane Austen thoroughly will find instruction as well as entertainment in Miss Kaye-Smith's and Miss Stern's company."⁴⁰ This book is Janeite in almost as many ways as there are to be so. It deals with the authors' long familiarity with Jane Austen's novels and, as

³⁸May Lamberton Becker, "Two Janeites Sit Down for a Chat," New York Herald Tribune Books, XXVI (October 2, 1949), 15.

³⁹Emma Gurney Salter, "Conversation Piece," Contemporary Review, CLXXVIII (December, 1950), 382.

⁴⁰Redmon, "For the Enchanted Circle," pp. 9-11.

they felt, with their author; includes speculation on what may have happened to her married heroes and heroines; and examines the part that letters play in the novels. The authors were interested in placing Jane Austen in her social environment, seeing her in relation to her times, and studying fine points such as servants and good looks. They even made Jane Austen materialize for an interview to speak for herself. Their book is interesting, and the authors were obviously very fond of and also very learned in the subject, but one is inclined to agree with the reviewers who began to feel that there may be too much of a good thing. The reviewer for the London Times Literary Supplement seemed to think so and believed that the book included too few facts and too much idle, needless speculation.⁴¹ G. B. Stern replied to the comment that the authors laid no claim to conscientious scholarship and that the book was not devised for instructive purposes.⁴² Philip Tomlinson wondered in his review whether such unquestioning worship of a deity is useful in criticism and biography. He found some of the work silly and not in consonance with Jane Austen's world.⁴³ Phyllis McGinley

⁴¹"Concerning Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement, (September 22, 1950), 595.

⁴²G. B. Stern, "More Talk of Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement, (September 29, 1950), 613.

⁴³Philip Tomlinson, Spectator, CLXXXV (December 22, 1950), 735.

called the book "a literary ping-pong game," a stunt, and one which the author of Pride and Prejudice would be the first to deplore.⁴⁴

McGinley, in fact, was one of the first writers to recognize the limitations of the Janeites and to point out the differences between them and more serious critics. Her remarks are perhaps overemphatic, but they show that a clear distinction was beginning to be felt.

Devotees of Jane Austen tend to divide into two camps. One group is garrulous, noisy, filled with apostolic fervor. Its members proselyte; they proclaim from the housetops and the printing presses that "Our Jane" is not only the greatest of English novelists but likewise a friend and pal. They endlessly quote, they speculate on what her characters would have done in such and such modern situation. "Jane" becomes with them a sort of parlor game like Twenty Questions, and they whoop it up for converts with all the delicate reticence of an old-fashioned revival meeting.

The second group rather wishes that the first would let Miss Austen alone. They would prefer that she yielded her delights to fewer boon companions. They shrink from talking her over in public at the tops of their voices and they do not have the temerity to write sequels to her masterpieces. The coy, the schoolgirl ardors, they feel, do less than justice to the most reticent and fastidious of ladies.

McGinley placed Jenkins in the second group and Kaye-Smith and Stern in the first. Ashton and Bonavia-Hunt, she implied, also belong in the first group. Thus a distinction within the ranks of the Janeites is illustrated, and while McGinley

⁴⁴Phyllis McGinley, "About Jane and Janeites," New York Times Book Review, (October 23, 1949), 5, 35.

did not describe what might be called a non-Janeite critic, she did express a dissatisfaction with Janeite work.⁴⁵

Another writer, the British poet and critic Edwin Muir, not only recognized the limitations of the Janeites but suggested what he felt would be more valid study. In a leading article in the New York Times Book Review in connection with the publication of the books by Ashton and Bonavia-Hunt, Muir discussed the Janeites as a cult and observed that

the worshippers show mild surprise that Jane, in her own modest way, should have succeeded in carrying it off so coolly; that she should make such an impression on them with so little material, and compel them to take her seriously. No more wanton injustice could be done to a great writer. . . . The real Jane Austen is not known to us until we abandon the quaint approach, accept without superiority the narrow and conventional scene which she describes, observe how she treats it, with what an intent awareness of good and evil, what an incorruptible perception of the almost imperceptible way by which men and women may fall into error or successfully maintain their integrity.⁴⁶

There is no positive indication that Muir or any other writer was responsible for a decrease in Janeite publication after 1949, but it is not unlikely that writers and readers in general were becoming aware that the Janeite scholarship and writing had explored Jane Austen thoroughly and that there was little material left to cover. Only two books published since 1949 have Janeite qualities, and these

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Edwin Muir, "Jane Austen and the Sense of Evil," New York Times Book Review (August 28, 1949), 1, 25.

qualities are probably more noticeable in inspiration than in result. Margaret Kennedy's Jane Austen, published in 1950 for the English Novelist Series, has already been mentioned as including almost nothing that is new.⁴⁷ It includes a chapter on Jane Austen's backgrounds, which has interest for Janeites, and chapters devoted to criticism of the novels which, while dealing with matters of artistic method, do not attempt to give an over-all critical view. The book, however, was intended to be a survey rather than an entirely original study, and its limitations are understandable. May Lamberton Becker's Presenting Miss Jane Austen, published in 1952, also has the nature of a survey and was obviously inspired by the author's affection for her subject. Becker commented on the appeal of Jane Austen which had caused her admirers to read and re-read her works and to write and write again about her; and it was probably a Janeite attitude which made Becker see this as a further glorification of Jane Austen. The book may be seen as evidence of the Janeites' desire to attract new readers to Jane Austen and, further, of their habit of repeating with variations the platitude that Jane Austen was a remarkable novelist and an interesting person.⁴⁸

⁴⁷See above, p. 23, especially the review from the London Times Literary Supplement.

⁴⁸See also above, p. 20.

Short articles and notes published since 1949 have indicated that Janeites are still at work but that their work, on the whole, has a more serious turn and is more likely to be closely related to the novels and to Jane Austen's artistic methods. Two exceptions appeared in 1949. M. H. Dodds published in Notes and Queries some family anecdotes and a relation of the remote connections and common acquaintances of Jane Austen and Charlotte M. Yonge, who used to spend evenings with Miss Wordsworth quoting Jane Austen at a time when Jane Austen's popularity was lowest. Jane Austen was a slightly older contemporary of Miss Yonge's parents.⁴⁹ The second article was concerned with Anthony Trollope's opinion of Emma. Bradford A. Booth published the notes Trollope had written on the end papers of his copy of Emma, probably in 1864.⁵⁰ The comments are rather unfavorable, but they point out nothing most critics cannot justify. They reveal more about Trollope than they do about Jane Austen.

Two notes published in the next year were concerned with Northanger Abbey. R. W. Chapman wrote to the London Times Literary Supplement to explain the unusual epithet of "sullen sound" used when Catherine opened the door of

⁴⁹M. H. Dodds, "Jane Austen and Charlotte M. Yonge," Notes and Queries, CXCIV (October 30, 1949), 476-478.

⁵⁰Bradford A. Booth, "Trollope on Emma: An Unpublished Note," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IV (December, 1949), 245-247.

Mrs. Tilney's room. The same phrase occurs in a Gothic novel, Mrs. Radcliffe's Sicilian Romance, in which the reference is to the door of a prison. Chapman pointed out the use of the phrase merely as further evidence of Northanger Abbey's being intended to satirize the Gothic novel.⁵¹ In the second note, published in Notes and Queries, C. S. Emden argued that Susan, a light satire of manners and the original of Northanger Abbey, was written in 1794 and altered into its present form by the addition of the burlesque of the Gothic novel in 1798.⁵² His evidence is complicated, but not unbelievable. Re-dating the novel as Emden suggested would make the faults in the unity of structure understandable, and the later additions are acceptable to the usual conception of Jane Austen's progress as a writer.

One article published in 1950 is difficult to place in a relation to other scholarship. Alan Dent's observations on Jane Austen and the war of her time were published in the Saturday Review of Literature as one of a series of literary evaluations presented in conjunction with the National Broadcasting Company and universities participating in the "University of the Air." An editor's note said that Dent was "a noted British Janeite." Dent's observations began with

⁵¹R. W. Chapman, "Northanger Abbey," London Times Literary Supplement, (October 13, 1950), 645.

⁵²C. S. Emden, "Northanger Abbey Re-dated?" Notes and Queries, CXCV (September 16, 1950), 407-410.

"Ah Jane," but his analysis of Jane Austen's refusal to deal with political events was more nearly critical than the usual musing of the Janeites. Dent seemed, however, content to point out her limitations merely as a virtue rather than to discuss them as creative selection.⁵³ This article reflects the heightened critical perception sometimes evident in recent Janeite studies, but it also shows that affection for "Jane" still outweighs more serious critical considerations.

The next two brief items to appear dealt with Pride and Prejudice. J. A. Cochrane in 1951 reported in Notes and Queries his finding two uses of the titular phrase other than in Cecilia, generally regarded as the source of Jane Austen's title.⁵⁴ In 1952 Elizabeth Suddaby explained the expression "has anger" in "Poor Kitty has anger for having concealed their Attachment." She had found similar uses of it in contemporary novels and pointed out that the expression was idiomatic and meant "having incurred the anger of others," not "suffering from remorse."⁵⁵

A longer article published in 1952 was concerned with religion in the novels. A. E. Tucker wrote his various observations on religion and the habits of the clergy for the magazine Theology, and his study rather surveyed the

⁵³Alan Dent, "Jane and a Fig for Jena," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXIII (October 14, 1950), 21ff.

⁵⁴J. A. Cochrane, "Pride and Prejudice," Notes and Queries, CXCVI (June 23, 1951), 283.

⁵⁵Elizabeth Suddaby, "A Sentence in Pride and Prejudice," London Times Literary Supplement, (April 11, 1952), 251.

religious background of Jane Austen's time than interpreted her religious attitudes. Tucker did, however, touch on Jane Austen's methods by pointing out that her indictment of the clergy of her day was found not in what is said of them but in what is omitted.⁵⁶

Three items published in 1954, show that Janeites still published on a wide range of subjects. A note by E. E. Duncan-Jones in Review of English Studies presented a verse from The Parish Register, Part II, by Crabbe—one of Jane Austen's favorite poets—as a source for the name of Fanny Price of Mansfield Park.⁵⁷ In a second item, M. H. Robson presented a case for a Charles Bellaire as the prototype for a Jane Austen clergyman.⁵⁸ In an article in the Wilson Library Bulletin, E. Tisdale used Jane Austen as an illustration of what qualities characterize a good librarian.⁵⁹ This article is of so little value that it does not deserve even the classification of Janeite. These articles could belie the opinion that Janeite writing is decreasing and becoming more serious if a comparison of them with other

⁵⁶A. E. H. Tucker, "Religion in Jane Austen's Novels," Theology, LV (July, 1952), 260-265.

⁵⁷E. E. Duncan-Jones, "Jane Austen and Crabbe," Review of English Studies, New Series V (April, 1954), 174.

⁵⁸M. H. Robson, "A Jane Austen Clergyman in Real Life," The Listener, LI (November 25, 1954), 51, 72.

⁵⁹E. Tisdale, "Would Jane Austen Have Made a Good Librarian?" Wilson Library Bulletin, XX (September, 1954), 51, 72.

articles published in 1954 did not clearly show them to be in the minority.

This part of the survey has dealt with books and articles published since 1940 which are concerned in various ways with Jane Austen and her novels and which because of their peculiar nature are called Janeite. It has shown that writers who belong to the Janeite classification are preoccupied with minute and frequently rather superficial details of Jane Austen's world, both in and out of her novels. The Janeites have been considered as a product of their long history in that their work, especially after 1940, has been ingrained, specialized, and even personalized. The Janeites, in fact, are not so much concerned with Jane Austen as a novelist as with the personal pleasure which intimate familiarity with Jane Austen's works and her world gives them. This preoccupation with their own personal viewpoints and with the details of historical background is responsible for their limitations as critics and scholars; much of their research is comprehensible only to an expert or to other Janeites, and much more of it adds nothing to an essentially critical concept of Jane Austen. The volume of their publication, however, is such that they cannot be overlooked in any survey of recent Jane Austen study.

Janeite publication after 1940 reflects the influence of World War II in that the war restricted all publication early in the decade 1940-1950, an increase being apparent

after 1948 with the return of normal conditions. Some articles which appeared during the war were defenses of Jane Austen's ignoring the wars of her time, and at least two articles dealt with this aspect of Jane Austen's limited range of subject matter as a definite critical viewpoint. There is no conclusive evidence, however, that the war affected Janeite publication other than superficially, unless it could have further convinced the Janeites that Jane Austen's world was frequently more pleasant than their own, and thus pointed up the element of escape in their work.

The publication in 1949 of four essentially Janeite books brought to some reviewers a realization that the Janeites have definite limitations as critics and that studying Jane Austen's work could yield more rewarding knowledge than that the practice of "crossing letters" was abandoned because the post office ceased to charge extra for more than single sheets of paper. Although there is no positive indication that any writer or any group of publications was responsible for the decrease in Janeite publication after 1949, it is not unlikely that writers and readers in general were becoming aware of the Janeites' limitations as critics. It is perhaps equally possible that the Janeites' long activity had resulted in their exploring Jane Austen's world to the extent that little material had been left to cover. After 1950, brief articles and notes, in which the Janeites

have been accustomed to announce their discoveries, show that research is becoming more greatly concerned with the novels and with Jane Austen's artistic method.

Although articles with traditionally Janeite content continue to be published, a comparison of them with their chronological counterparts in non-Janeite publication shows them to be in the minority. To determine the extent to which non-Janeite critics since 1940 have been influenced by reaction from Janeite study would require a more extensive comparison and analysis than can be given in this thesis. This influence of the Janeites' contribution to recent Jane Austen study, however, should justify some toleration of their absurdities.

The Non-Janeites

Because this survey is limited chronologically to studies published during the past fifteen years, it obviously cannot illustrate all of the ways in which some recent criticism has departed from traditional views of Jane Austen. Several of the studies here included represent even what might be termed "departures from departures," and other studies are independent critical excursions. Since most of the criticism to be surveyed has been published in scholarly journals and literary magazines it generally presupposes an audience already familiar with the critical problems in Jane Austen. Much of it is written by critics' critics and is

experimental for the sake of criticism rather than for Jane Austen. Along with these critical studies, other publications, such as bibliographical compilations and primary materials, will be included in this section because they are not Janeite and because they may have some effect on criticism.

Several articles on Jane Austen which appeared in 1940 and 1941 were reviews or discussions of a book published in 1939—Mary Lascelles' Jane Austen and Her Art. Although appearing a year before the chronological limit for this survey, the book deserves to be noted because of the type of study it is. Lascelles devoted the first chapter to Jane Austen's life and another to her reading and her response to it. The remainder of the book is concerned with the particular problems of the narrator in selecting and arranging his material and in conveying his meaning to the reader, and reveals the ways in which Jane Austen solved these problems. Reviewers commented favorably and showed an appreciation for Lascelles' scholarship and thoroughness. Winifred Husbands found the study sometimes excessively subtle,⁶⁰ and Mary Ellen Chase was inclined to find its weight and precision not a little wearying.⁶¹ Both of these critics, however,

⁶⁰Winifred Husbands, Modern Language Review, XXXV (July, 1940), 399-400.

⁶¹Mary Ellen Chase, "Studies of Two Novelists," Yale Review, XXX (March, 1941), 611-612.

agreed with J. M. S. Tomkins, who believed the study to be a notable contribution to the criticism of Jane Austen.⁶² By dealing with style and narrative method as well as considering Jane Austen's life and reading as part of her creative background, Lascelles' book becomes something of a preview of a type of serious criticism to follow, although later criticism will be seen to concentrate on these aspects of Jane Austen's art individually rather than to attempt to assess them as a whole. For this reason Lascelles' book is significant, although the degree of its direct influence on later criticism cannot be definitely determined.

Another article appearing in 1940 pursued a line of independent research and has had, if no direct influence, at least clear echoes in later study. It is J. M. S. Tomkins' study of Sense and Sensibility, which attempts to see the novel in relation to a definite source and thus provide some knowledge of Jane Austen's method. In the article Tomkins set out to show that Jane West's A Gossip's Story (1796) was not strictly a source but more exactly a point of departure for Sense and Sensibility through its original, Elinor and Marianne, now lost. Since the exact date of the composition of Elinor and Marianne is not known, and since it cannot be proved that Jane Austen knew A Gossip's Story, although she is known to have read other novels by Jane West, Tomkins'

⁶²J. M. S. Tomkins, Review of English Studies, XXXVI (January, 1940), 101-104.

theory is somewhat difficult to justify. Although a comparison of the two works yields few strong resemblances, A Gossip's Story, like Sense and Sensibility, illustrates the evils of an ill-regulated sensibility; and while such a theme was by no means unusual among women novelists of the time, the device of showing it in two sisters, obvious as it is, said Tomkins, is not to be found outside those two works. Tomkins believed her thesis would illustrate that in Jane Austen's early works, the novelist's creative impulse was in part critical and reactionary. Her use of A Gossip's Story is interpreted as, not a parody, but a rescue expedition: a reconstruction of workmanship, conception of character, and technique. Finally, Tomkins believed her thesis explains in some measure the inspiration of the authoress in Jane Austen—her dissatisfaction with the ineptitude of other authors.⁶³

Thus the period after 1940 was opened with an attempt to interpret the art of Jane Austen in terms of an evolving creative process. Another article published in 1940 may serve as an indication of another, unorthodox outlook on Jane Austen to follow. In the English magazine Scrutiny D. W. Harding published "Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen," in which he sought to enlarge what he believed to be the seriously misleading and generally false

⁶³J. M. S. Tomkins, "Elinor and Marianne: A Note on Jane Austen," Review of English Studies, XVII (January, 1940), 33-43. For influence of this study on later work, see below, pp. 73-74.

impression people have of Jane Austen as a comic satirist with an inimitable light touch who succeeded in expressing the gentler virtues of a civilized world. He said,

And yet the wide currency of this false impression is an indication of Jane Austen's success in an essential part of her complex intention as a writer: her books are, as she meant them to be, read and enjoyed by precisely the sort of people whom she disliked; she is a literary classic of the society which attitudes like hers, held widely enough, would undermine.⁶⁴

By a close reading of her works Harding was able to isolate several examples of Jane Austen's denouncement of her reading public under cover of censure of characters in her novels; and Harding explained that it was part of her conscious intention to do so as a result of her knowledge that people are willing to laugh at others for faults which they tolerate in themselves. Acceptance of this interpretation is likely to add a diabolical glow to "gentle Jane," and it is not difficult to understand why relatively few admirers of Jane Austen are in sympathy with Harding's views. A second part of his interpretation deals with Jane Austen's preoccupation with the Cinderella theme and with her rearrangement and development of it and associated themes in all her novels. Harding felt this unconscious preoccupation represented Jane Austen's sense of intellectual superiority to her social surroundings and revealed the successive stages of her reconciliation to

⁶⁴D. W. Harding, "Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Works of Jane Austen," Scrutiny, VII (March, 1940), 346.

her situation.⁶⁵ Harding's theories necessitate a great deal of speculation about Jane Austen's personal life and problems, and the results in essence interpret her personality in terms of her works—something many serious critics as a matter of principal are unwilling to do. Still other critics prefer to regard her creative impulse as something kindlier than as an outlet for her psychological oppressions. As far as enlarging the general view of Jane Austen is concerned, however, Harding's influence is apparent in the work of later critics who have cited the article.⁶⁶

A less iconoclastic theory, but one which is hardly less ambitious in its comprehensive intent, was expressed in a series of articles in Scrutiny by Q. D. Leavis, who evolved a critical theory of Jane Austen's writings by basing it upon a chronological survey which treated all her published works as source materials, and by relating it to her experiences and her reading. Leavis' theory is imposingly documented and so thoroughly pursued that one is likely to forget that it is still highly speculative. Throughout the series of studies, which Leavis said were part of a forthcoming book, she interpreted Jane Austen as using and re-using materials from her earlier works, which in turn came from her reading and her observation of incidents in her own surroundings, changed and reoriented through her own development and

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 346-362.

⁶⁶Among those who have noted the article are Q. D. Leavis, Marvin Mudrick, and Andrew H. Wright, see below, pp. 60-62, 78-81, 84-86.

expressed under the impulse of a personal experience which served as a sort of catalyst. Leavis' major examples show the processes by which Emma developed from the fragment called The Watsons and the stages through which Lady Susan developed into Mansfield Park. In discussing the evolution of Mansfield Park, Leavis presupposed an identification of Lady Susan and, later, Mary Crawford with Jane Austen's cousin Eliza, Comtesse de Feuillide, and regarded as obvious the existence of an epistolary version (now lost) of Mansfield Park in 1808-1809. Each stage in the evolution of the final version is interpreted as lying under the stimulus of some event related to Eliza: her marriage to Jane Austen's brother Henry provided the 1808 version, and her death in 1818 is regarded as stimulating old memories and emphasizing conceptions of worldliness to give impetus to the final version, written between 1811 and 1813. The evidence cited in support of Leavis' theory is mainly conjectural, in spite of her barrage of examples, and it is difficult to determine how far Leavis recognized authorial intent in Jane Austen's constant re-use of incidents and characters.⁶⁷ Even without Leavis' study it seems clear enough that Jane

⁶⁷There are three articles in the series: "A Critical Theory of Jane Austen's Writings," Scrutiny, X (June, 1941), 61-87; "A Critical Theory of Jane Austen's Writings: II Lady Susan into Mansfield Park," Scrutiny, X (October, 1941; January, 1942), 114-142, 272-294; and "A Critical Theory of Jane Austen's Writings: III The Letters," Scrutiny, XII (Spring, 1944), 104-119.

Austen's genius lay not in concocting elaborate plots but in using relatively commonplace incidents and people of the sort she knew, and for that reason Leavis' theory seems to raise more questions about Jane Austen than it answers for the critics. The study is significant, however, for the use made of all the available primary material in a critical theory of Jane Austen's writings as a continuous development in a specific direction—whether the direction is properly recognized or not. Later studies will be seen to approach Jane Austen from the standpoint of her creative development, although they will also trace other aspects of her art as well.

The last article in Leavis' series appeared in 1944, but early comments on the previous ones were in print by 1942. M. H. Dodds, a Janeite interested in problems of biography and historical background,⁶⁸ replied in Notes and Queries to some questions raised in the Memorabilia section of the same publication in regard to Leavis' interpretations of several characters in Mansfield Park. In answering them, Dodds was shown to be a perceptive Janeite who understood character as well as minute textual points.⁶⁹ Other comments on the Leavis series appeared in 1948 after the publication

⁶⁸See above, pp. 13, 14, 34.

⁶⁹M. H. Dodds, "Mansfield Park," Notes and Queries, CLXXXII (April 18, 1942), 212-213. The questions were raised in "Mansfield Park," Notes and Queries, CLXXXII (March 21, 1941), 155.

of R. W. Chapman's Jane Austen: Facts and Problems.⁷⁰ A series of letters from Leavis and Chapman published in that year in the London Times Literary Supplement exchanged scholarly "I-said-it-first's" about Chapman's mentioning Emma as a possible evolution from The Watsons.⁷¹ Leavis wrote to call attention to her theory of 1941 and to ask when Volume the Third would be published, which she needed in order to finish her prospective book.⁷² In reply Chapman pointed out that his paragraph had been written before 1940, that he could not accept Leavis' identification of Mary Crawford and Eliza, and that he lacked requisite authority to publish Volume the Third.⁷³

To return to the chronological appearance of articles on Jane Austen, in 1942 Leonard Woolf published "The Economic Determination of Jane Austin," in which he pointed out how Jane Austen's novels bear the imprint of the economic system in which she lived. He observed that the lines of snobbery in her novels were drawn from economic considerations and that her plots and characters are dominated by questions of money. Her attitudes toward "work," Woolf said, are the antitheses of those of the capitalist and are pre-eminently

⁷⁰See above, pp. 3-5.

⁷¹Chapman, Facts and Problems, p. 51

⁷²Q. D. Leavis, "Emma," London Times Literary Supplement, (December 4, 1948), 681

⁷³R. W. Chapman, "Emma," London Times Literary Supplement, (December 18, 1948), 713

those of the Victorian bourgeoisie. Otherwise, her attitudes are the type associated with the capitalist bourgeoisie, the social standards being those of money and snobbery.⁷⁴ Because Woolf did not suggest the purpose of his observations, this article could be classed as *Janeite*, except that it seems to have been undertaken through no adoring affection for Jane.

An item published in the Explicator in 1943 is interesting for its content and significant for its concentration on the structure of one of the novels. Royal A. Gettman pointed out that knowing how Pride and Prejudice was originally divided into three volumes can make the structure of the novel clearer. In the original division the first volume ended with Bingley's departure and Elizabeth's rejection of Mr. Collins. The second left Darcy humbled and Elizabeth humiliated by her misjudgment of Wickham, and the last volume opened with the journey to Pemberley.⁷⁵ This item should have interested Edd Winfield Parks in his later study of Jane Austen's chapter divisions as an aspect of her structural technique.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Leonard Woolf, "The Economic Determination of Jane Austen," New Statesman and Nation, XXIV (July 18, 1942), 39-41.

⁷⁵Royal A. Gettman, "Austen's Pride and Prejudice," Explicator, I (April, 1943), No. 45.

⁷⁶See below, pp. 82-83.

Several articles published in following years dealt primarily with Pride and Prejudice. Reuben A. Brower's "The Controlling Hand: Jane Austen and Pride and Prejudice," published in 1945 in Scrutiny, is important from a critic's standpoint rather than as an addition to critical knowledge of Jane Austen. An editor's note explained that the essay was intended as part of a book which would study the integrity of imagination as it is manifested by the ways in which a writer uses language. In the essay, Brower illustrated how Jane Austen defined the ironic implications of what her characters say so that a calculated degree of ambiguity was gradually limited to a specific interpretation through a finely controlled use of words.⁷⁷ Brower's study seems to point out only what any perceptive reader of the novels should already be aware of, but it is nonetheless valuable for having put into words some of the basic principles of Jane Austen's technique.

In 1947 Samuel Klinger published a study of Pride and Prejudice as an expression of the eighteenth-century pre-occupation with finding a just mixture of the two opposing qualities of art and nature. Klinger used many illustrations from the novel to show that Elizabeth Bennet represents art

⁷⁷Reuben A. Brower, "The Controlling Hand: Jane Austen and Pride and Prejudice," Scrutiny, XII (September, 1945), 99-111. Brower's The Fields of Light (London, 1952) contains a chapter on Pride and Prejudice.

and Darcy nature, and that both must change in order to come nearer the mean. The same theme was shown to have influenced other characterizations in the novels: Mary Bennet, for example, represents the extreme in art and Lydia the extreme in nature. The structure of the entire novel, in fact, was presented as based on the art-nature antithesis, and Klinger concluded that Jane Austen used the theme as a part of her art.⁷⁸ This study represents an attempt to interpret Jane Austen's work as reflecting a traditional philosophical and literary concept of her time. It is interesting by contrast with an interpretation of a later novel, Mansfield Park, as representing attitudes of the later nineteenth century.⁷⁹

W. Somerset Maugham's introduction to Pride and Prejudice as one in his list of the ten best novels in the world was published in 1948, and it is interesting as a gauge of popular opinion, though it adds nothing to critical interpretation of the novel. Maugham pointed out that Pride and Prejudice had always been the popular favorite among Jane Austen's novels and said he was inclined to accept the judgment of the masses since he believed public pleasure in reading a novel should be considered in judging its greatness. He found Pride and Prejudice on the whole the most

⁷⁸Samuel Klinger, "Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice in the Eighteenth-Century Mode," University of Toronto Quarterly, XVI (July, 1947), 337-370.

⁷⁹A later study by Barbara Bail Collins deals with Mansfield Park as Jane Austen's Victorian novel. See below, pp. 71-72.

satisfactory of Jane Austen's novels.⁸⁰ Maugham's choice is interesting from the standpoint of one craftsman's opinion of another, even though his critical comments are not profound.

Two brief surveys of Jane Austen and all her works appeared during this period of concentration on individual novels. G. C. Haddow published a study which seems to have been an attempt to adjust the traditional estimate of Jane Austen to proper proportions. Haddow made no striking critical revelations and concluded that Jane Austen is an unequalled miniaturist.⁸¹ Laura L. Hinkley's study of Jane Austen in Ladies of Literature (1946) has already been mentioned as distinguished primarily by Hinkley's preoccupation with Jane Austen's mysterious brother George.⁸² The criticism is not startling in content, and because the whole effect is rather dramatized in presentation, one is inclined to class it as Janeite. Neither of these surveys contributes anything indispensable to our knowledge of Jane Austen.

One article published in 1948 represents another attempt to define the economic implications of Jane Austen's novels.

⁸⁰W. Somerset Maugham, "Jane Austen and Pride and Prejudice," Great Novelists and Their Novels (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 77-93. The essay was first published in The Atlantic Monthly, CLXXI (May, 1948), 99-104. See above, for discussion of Maugham's use of biographical material.

⁸¹G. C. Haddow, "England's Jane," Dalhousie Review, XXIV (January, 1945), 379-392.

⁸²See above, p. 15.

In "Jane Austen, Karl Marx, and the Aristocratic Dance," David Daiches attempted to show that Jane Austen "is the most realistic novelist of her age, and the only English novelist of stature who was in a sense a Marxist before Marx."⁸³ In exactly what sense she was a Marxist is never made quite clear. Daiches did show, however, that Jane Austen is underrated when considered an "escapist" novelist. He went so far as to see her novels organized on the motif of a stately aristocratic dance, partly by the way she handled the characters and events in her novels, and partly by her making the description of dance have a central part in many of her novels. This study is perhaps of questionable value as a critical view of Jane Austen's novels, and it shows that professional literary critics can sometimes apparently misinterpret the aims of a major writer.

Also published in 1948 was a more valuable addition to Jane Austen study, R. W. Chapman's Jane Austen: Facts and Problems. This book has already been mentioned several times in this survey, but its value has hardly been over-emphasized. Although Chapman did not attempt any systematic criticism of the novels, his comments may be regarded as valid and also as an indication that the most intimate knowledge of Jane Austen does not necessarily provide a careful

⁸³David Daiches, "Jane Austen, Karl Marx, and the Aristocratic Dance," American Scholar, XVII (Summer, 1948), 289-296.

scholar with an explanation or a specific critical theory of her works. As a concise gathering of what is and is not known about Jane Austen and as an authoritative reference for any type of study of Jane Austen, Chapman's book is invaluable.

In 1949, a peak year in Janeite publication, several worth-while studies were published. One was a reprint of Lord David Cecil's Leslie Stephen Lecture of 1935 in a collection of Cecil's criticism called Poets and Story Tellers. In this study Cecil was concerned with Jane Austen as an artist who worked within limitations which were an integral part of her creative powers. She was considered also, according to Cecil's criteria, as an artist in the medium of the novel who knew how to reconcile reality with imagination and to express her personality in works which are convincing records of fact. Cecil believed Jane Austen recognized satire as an intellectual comment on life which is conveyed not by critical expression but by direct record. It is interesting to note that R. W. Chapman felt in 1948 that Cecil's lecture was the only account of Jane Austen as an artist and a moralist that was completely satisfactory.⁸⁴ The fact that this study was first published in 1935 shows that recent serious criticism should not be overemphasized as a reaction from recent Janeite study, and furthermore that the contrast between Janeite and more serious criticism is not a recent phenomenon.

⁸⁴Chapman, Facts and Problems, p. 173.

A second study published in 1949 shows how far serious criticism of Jane Austen had come since 1935, when Cecil's comments were first published. Mark Schorer's "Fiction and the Matrix of Analogy" is actually more important as an experiment in criticism than as a study of Jane Austen's works, but the technique is interesting enough to deserve attention. Schorer stated that his method was based on the assumption that fiction is a literary art and that the criticism of it must begin with the language and style as body of meaning. His study uses novels by three authors to illustrate his thesis. From Jane Austen Schorer chose Persuasion and analyzed it as having a stylistic base derived from commerce and property. He found words and phrases with commercial and legal connotations used consistently in the ordinary dialogue and narrative. Time is divided, troubles multiply, weeks are calculated, and a woman's prettiness is reckoned. Love is solicited, engagements renewed, and prosperous love is contemplated. Such phrases as "leisure to bestow," a fund of good sense," and "something that is entertaining and profitable" also derive from the same social source. Schorer believed the question is whether this emphasis on commerce and property for concepts of value is the very grain of Jane Austen's imagination and part of her way of thinking, or a special novelistic intention.⁸⁵ The

⁸⁵Mark Schorer, "Fiction and the Matrix of Analogy," Kenyon Review, XI (Autumn, 1949), 539-360.

latter supposition seems unlikely in terms of a conscious choice of words on Jane Austen's part; in view of the acquisitive society in which she lived, it seems more than likely that such expressions were very much a part of her imagination. Schorer's study seems rather unprofitable as an addition to Jane Austen criticism because it was not part of his purpose to examine for comparison the language in all her novels. He did succeed, however, in drawing closer attention to her peculiarly apt choice of words.

Also in 1949 was published Barbara Bail Collins' study of Mansfield Park as a novel in the Victorian mode. Collins pointed out that none of Jane Austen's novels belongs chronologically with the Victorian novels, which appeared mostly after 1835, but that Mansfield Park is conspicuously different from the others and seems to be a forerunner of "the dowdy prosperity and piety which blossomed in the fifties." In Mansfield Park she saw the treatment of the clergy, the theater, and the sanctity of the family to be a reflection of the high-minded and principled orthodoxy, strict propriety, and respectability characteristic of the bourgeois society of the nineteenth-century. Technical and literary aspects of the novel are also characteristic: the longer passage of time, the Cinderella story, the action bolder than drawing-room comedy, the didacticism, the indulgence in moral reflection, and, most important, the ugly sojourn in Portsmouth. Collins believed Jane Austen was not conscious

of creating anything new. "She put down on paper the world around her as she saw it, and it is thus that she mirrors a changing social attitude in Mansfield Park, the earliest of the great Victorian novels."⁸⁶ This interpretation represents a change in emphasis from other studies which recognize essentially the same characteristics but relate them to a changed outlook and moral intention as a result of strictly personal attitudes on Jane Austen's part rather than as primarily a change in what she observed in her social milieu. Collins' ideas seem at least not so conjectural as those dependent upon a view of Jane Austen's personal opinions.

One of the few deprecations of Jane Austen to appear since 1940 was also published in 1949. C. N. Hayes, in spite of the condemnation he believed his views would receive, wrote a dissenting opinion on Emma. His views were based on his personal standards and are in general too subjective to be considered valid. Hayes found the material excessively confined and believed that the novelist should rise above the particularities of his time. The plot, he said, is not well unified, and the characters, with the exception of Emma, are flat and neither interesting or significant. Furthermore, he resented that Jane Austen seems never

⁸⁶Barbara Bail Collins, "Jane Austen's Victorian Novel," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IV (December, 1949), 175-185.

to have participated in the lives of her characters or to have felt for them. He could not comprehend the popularity and praise of her novels unless they "so perfect in technique, so empty of deep thought and feeling, have served as soporific to the tired mind."⁸⁷ It would be interesting to know how much of the 1949 Janeite publication Hayes had read. His article is valuable for providing at least one example of the opinions which cause many critics of Jane Austen to have a consistently defensive attitude in their studies. In reply to this article, William Frost came to the defense by pointing out the impossibility of satisfying Hayes' criteria for literature. If Hayes' ideas were applied to all literature, Frost said, the traditional estimate even of Racine and Shakespeare would have to be reversed.⁸⁸

Two other articles published in 1950 were the result of systematic research in an effort to add concrete knowledge to Jane Austen study. Martin Melander made an exhaustive study of Mrs. Jane West's A Gossip's Story as a possible source for Sense and Sensibility, apparently unaware that the substance of his thesis had been explored ten years earlier by J. M. S. Tomkins.⁸⁹ In citing Leavis' articles in

⁸⁷C. N. Hayes, "Emma: A Dissenting Opinion," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IV (June, 1949), 1-20.

⁸⁸William Frost, "Emma: A Defense," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IV (March, 1949), 325-328.

⁸⁹See above, pp. 57-58.

Scrutiny, which stress the importance of Jane Austen's reading as adding insight to her technique as a novelist, Melander suggested that his study be seen as a continuation of the trend to consider Jane Austen's artistic impulse as partly a critical protest against contemporary novelists.⁹⁰ The second article, by Charles Beecher Hogan, is an investigation of Jane Austen's early reputation as a novelist. Hogan found no evidence that Jane Austen was neglected or forgotten by her contemporaries or that any generation was obliged to rediscover her. He believed the plainness and simplicity of the tributes of early critics may have contributed to the legend that her immense reputation is an altogether modern phenomenon.⁹¹

A 1950 article by Henry Seidel Canby used Jane Austen for purposes of comparison in a study of Henry James' technique as a novelist. Canby discussed the novelist as an observer who is at his best in causing one of his characters to be observer and reveal the story while the author steps aside. Jane Austen was mentioned as the early teacher of James, who never reached her perfection in this quality.⁹²

⁹⁰Martin Melander, "An Unknown Source of Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility," Studia Neophilologica, XXII (1950), 146-170.

⁹¹Charles Beecher Hogan, "Jane Austen and Her Early Public," Review of English Studies, New Series I (January 1950), 39-50.

⁹²Henry Seidel Canby, "Henry James and the Observant Profession," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXIII (December 2, 1950), 11-12, 70-71.

Jane Austen and Henry James have been compared briefly by several other critics,⁹³ but the resemblance between the novelists has apparently not yet been given really thorough study—at least not since 1940 and not for the purpose of adding to knowledge of Jane Austen rather than to that of James.

Jane Austen study after 1951 received an important addition in the publication in that year of Volume the Third, edited by R. W. Chapman. Printed then for the first time, from the manuscript in the possession of R. A. Austen-Leigh, the volume had previously been known only through a brief description of its contents in the Life and Letters by W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh published in 1913. The present edition includes the fragments written as early as 1793 called "Evelyn" and "Catherine, or the Bower," along with their mock-serious dedications and sometimes incorrect spellings. Each erasure was carefully noted by the editor, who also added some explanatory comments to identify allusions to unfamiliar persons and incidents. Chapman said in his preface that "Catherine," in spite of its absurd dedication, was Jane Austen's first essay in serious fiction, possibly drawn from the life of Jane Austen's aunt, the mother of Eliza Hancock, who became Comtesse de Feuillide. The volume shows how Jane Austen revised her work, and the

⁹³Notably Virginia Woolf and Rudyard Kipling. Chapman, Facts and Problems, p. 173.

preservation of these fragments must indicate their value to the author; for what purpose they were saved is not known. No one has yet publicly expressed the theory that Jane Austen might have kept her early works for sentimental reasons, much as a schoolgirl might keep early compositions.

Comments of reviewers showed that this formerly unpublished volume of juvenilia could add evidence to theories of Jane Austen's evolving talent. Mary Lascelles valued it for the insight it gives into Jane Austen's early habit of revision,⁹⁴ and Donald Barr noted that the sketches written for family amusement might have been preserved for future use.⁹⁵ Marghanita Laski was too awed by commenting on a new novel by Jane Austen for the first time to remark on anything except her habitual trouble with i and e.⁹⁶

A review in the London Times Literary Supplement was valuable for a reply it drew. The reviewer cited Q. D. Leavis' theory of Jane Austen's artistic development⁹⁷ and added to it by interpreting "Catherine" from Volume the Third as the first inspiration for the later Northanger Abbey. He added his belief that Jane Austen refused to

⁹⁴Mary Lascelles, Review of English Studies, New Series III (April, 1952), 183-185.

⁹⁵Donald Barr, "Miss Austen's Notebook," New York Times Book Review (December 30, 1951), 4.

⁹⁶Marghanita Laski, Spectator, CLXXXVI (June 8, 1951), 762.

⁹⁷See above, pp. 60-62.

disregard anything she might be able to use and pointed out that what strikes the reader most about the two compositions mentioned is neither the retention of the Cinderella theme nor the dropping of the independence theme. "It is the exuberance that became, in twenty-four years, the resignation behind the satire."⁹⁸ A reply from R. W. Chapman pointed out what to him were the incompatibilities of tone and expressed intention between the juvenilia and the major novels which make the Leavis theory untenable, "impressed as we all are by Mrs. Leavis' power of seeing through a brick wall."⁹⁹

One other article which appeared in connection with the publication of Volume the Third was published in Notes and Queries. A. D. McKillop wrote to identify with specific titles some allusions to prose fiction and to observe that "Catherine, or the Bower" is a satire on the silly novel-reader, not on the novels. He also suggested that the importance of Jane Austen's familiarity with Charlotte Smith's novels lies in Jane Austen's having written in reaction to them.¹⁰⁰

One article published in 1951 continued the trend toward concentration on Jane Austen's style and technique. Frank W.

⁹⁸"The Development of Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement, (June 22, 1951), 390.

⁹⁹R. W. Chapman, "Jane Austen's Development," London Times Literary Supplement, (July 13, 1951), 437.

¹⁰⁰A. D. McKillop, "Allusions to Prose Fiction in Jane Austen's Volume the Third," Notes and Queries, CXCVI (September 29, 1951), 428-429.

Bradbrook, in analyzing style in the novels, found it difficult to separate from content and materials. He pointed out how the style of writing contributes to the reader's judgment of the characters, and how style, in letter-writing, in conversation, and in elegance and good taste, is used as a means of characterization. In discussing irony as a part of literary style, Bradbrook recognized both its negative and positive intentions and observed how the novels were made complex by Jane Austen's insight into the mixed motives of all her characters.¹⁰¹ Bradbrook's comments are perceptive and serve to underline many of Jane Austen's elusive stylistic habits. His discussion of irony is especially interesting in view of the concentration on that aspect of Jane Austen's art found in recent criticism.

Jane Austen criticism since 1951 has increased in volume and has become so specialized in content that it is sometimes difficult to relate the studies to any specific trend except specialization. Some tendencies, however, do become apparent as the studies are examined. A book published in 1952 illustrates the trend toward specialization and is significant for its concentration on Jane Austen's irony. Marvin Mudrick's Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery is an analysis of irony as Jane Austen's consistent outlook on life.

¹⁰¹Frank W. Bradbrook, "Style and Judgment in Jane Austen's Novels," Cambridge Journal, IV (June, 1951), 515-537.

Mudrick believed that irony enabled Jane Austen to keep a distance from her material and that it saved her from having to commit herself emotionally; irony became her instrument of personal defense. In her later works, irony became her instrument for probing more deeply into life. Mudrick's study was undertaken in reaction against the general body of Jane Austen study,¹⁰² which he considered to have left important matters unexplored—principally her use of irony. He surveyed all of her writings and used quotations extensively to prove his points. Although Mudrick's interpretation of her irony is conceivable, it is based on an essentially subjective response to her works and thus has a limited value as a critical concept. Moreover, the strain is visible in that he was forced to interpret Mansfield Park as a failure (another matter of personal opinion) because the usual ironic approach (according to Mudrick's conception of irony) is abandoned in this novel. Mudrick's study is significant, however, as a single critical theory of Jane Austen's writings and as a means of enlarging at least the possibilities of critical interpretation.

¹⁰²It is perhaps significant that Mudrick believed the most valuable recent studies of Jane Austen to be D. W. Harding's "Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen" (see above, p.58) and R. A. Brower's "The Controlling Hand: Jane Austen and *Pride and Prejudice*" (see above, p.65). He believed that the Leavis theory (see above, p.60) is self-contradictory and that it ignores the central fact of Jane Austen's views of her materials—her alternation between an ironic and a conventional view of her society.

Reviewers' comments showed that Mudrick's book represented an extreme change in Jane Austen criticism. Most reviewers recognized its importance, even though some seriously disagreed with Mudrick. A reviewer for the Virginia Quarterly Review pointed out that the book was not designed for the general reading public and added that the theory was well-substantiated.¹⁰³ R. A. Gettman approved of Mudrick's willingness to take a stand and in general found no fault with his ideas.¹⁰⁴ De Lancey Ferguson and a reviewer for the Spectator valued the book as a relief from Janeite criticism.¹⁰⁵ The reviewer for the London Times Literary Supplement resented Mudrick's supercilious attitude toward, and his critical assumptions about, Jane Austen's personality, although he found the book well-written and the theory plausible. He feared Jane Austen would have been at a loss to know what Mudrick was talking about.¹⁰⁶ A reviewer for The Listener attacked almost everything about Mudrick's theory and found fault with his style of writing.¹⁰⁷ Earl R. Wasserman could not agree with Mudrick's views because they

¹⁰³Virginia Quarterly Review, XXVIII (Summer, 1952), lxvii-lxviii.

¹⁰⁴R. A. Gettman, Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LIII (April, 1953), 269-271.

¹⁰⁵De Lancey Ferguson, "A New Approach to Jane," New York Herald Tribune Books, XXVIII (June 8, 1952), 13, and P. T., Spectator, CLXXXIX (December, 5, 1952), 793.

¹⁰⁶"New Light on Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement, (September 19, 1952), 610.

¹⁰⁷The Listener, XLIX (January 8, 1953), 73.

ignore plot as a matter of controlling structure. Also Wasserman felt that irony as an instrument of exploration cannot be a means of literary design.¹⁰⁸ Winifred Husbands also could not accept Mudrick's conceptions of irony applied to Jane Austen's writings, and she defended traditional and even Janeite criticism as helping to explain Jane Austen's greater and ever-growing reputation. Mudrick's interpretation, she believed, does not.¹⁰⁹ Edd Winfield Parks felt that Mudrick's study would be valuable to future study, but that in narrowing his intent Mudrick failed to give attention to equally important aspects of Jane Austen's art.¹¹⁰

Other studies published in 1952 dealt with mechanical aspects of Jane Austen's technique as a novelist. Margaret Kennedy, in an article based on an address to the Jane Austen Society, analyzed the various positions an author may assume in his own stories and noted the purposes for which Jane Austen employed the device of letters and for which she assumed the position of author and onlooker. Kennedy believed part of the secret of Jane Austen's technique is in her casual treatment of her characters. No one, Kennedy said,

¹⁰⁸Earl R. Wasserman, Modern Language Notes, LXVIII (April, 1953), 258-262.

¹⁰⁹Winifred Husbands, Review of English Studies, New Series V (July, 1954), 305-308.

¹¹⁰Edd Winfield Parks, "Marvin Mudrick's Jane Austen," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, VII (September, 1952), 132-137. Parks did not suggest any specific aspects which Mudrick had neglected.

had ever been able to explain it.¹¹¹ Kennedy's article is proof that at least one person has not and that writers keep trying.

Edd Winfield Parks published two articles in 1952 which dealt with unrelated aspects of narrative technique. In the South Atlantic Quarterly Parks discussed exegesis or exposition in the novels and was able to point up some significant facts about Jane Austen's technique. Parks concluded that the use of exegesis in each novel depends finally on the concept of the heroine and that deficiencies in structure and unity as a result of a heroine's immaturity (Catherine Morland in Northanger Abbey) or weakness (Fanny Price in Mansfield Park) require more exegesis. Parks believed the novels are most artistic and most convincing when Jane Austen's intelligence is mirrored through that of her heroines.¹¹² The second article, published in Nineteenth-Century Fiction, was an analysis of Jane Austen's chapter endings as exemplified by those in Pride and Prejudice. Parks' analysis showed that the emphasis continually centers on character rather than action and that while episodes end, Jane Austen's people continue to grow. It is this growth which entices the reader.¹¹³

¹¹¹Margaret Kennedy, "How Ought a Novelist. . . ?" Fortnightly, CLXXVIII (November, 1952), 103-119.

¹¹²Edd Winfield Parks, "Exegesis in Austen's novels," South Atlantic Quarterly, LI (January, 1952), 103-119.

¹¹³Edd Winfield Parks, "Jane Austen's Lure of the Next Chapter," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, VIII (June, 1952), 56-60.

Both of Parks' studies show how closely Jane Austen's narrative technique is related to characterization, and it seems clear that the matter of characterization should be a point of departure for a more comprehensive analysis.

In 1953 the trend toward specialization in specific areas of Jane Austen criticism continued, and several interesting and valuable studies were published. One of these was R. W. Chapman's Jane Austen: A Critical Bibliography, which is a selective compilation of editions of Jane Austen's works and of the most important biographical and critical studies. Chapman stated in his preface that the bibliography is not complete and that it is critical largely through his exclusion of material. A reviewer for the London Times Literary Supplement pointed out that the most valuable part of the book is the highly selective survey of biography and criticism,¹¹⁴ and it is indeed interesting to note what Chapman excludes. Only twenty studies published since 1940 are listed. Chapman used quotations to show the general content of each and commented only in special cases. Studies by D. W. Harding, R. A. Brower, and Marvin Mudrick¹¹⁵ were grouped as iconoclasm, and Chapman commented that he was entirely out of sympathy with the views expressed. The fact

¹¹⁴"Concerning Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement, (November 6, 1953), 716.

¹¹⁵See above, pp. 58 (Harding); 65 (Brower); and 78-81 (Mudrick).

that a selective compilation was published in 1953 seems significant of the unwieldy proportions that Jane Austen publication has reached. Chapman's choices from biography and criticism, however, are so highly selective that the book seems more valuable as a general critical comment than as a guide to criticism.

Another book published in 1953, Andrew H. Wright's Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Structure, represents what seems to be an assimilation of much recent study applied to a single theory of Jane Austen's art, but a theory which is wide enough to encompass many unsolved problems while not being so general as to be ambiguous. Wright analyzed Jane Austen's restriction of her materials and her techniques of narrative management, and he was thus led to the essential factor in her artistic method—her handling of characters and characterization. Moreover, Wright restricted his analysis to her works without making assumptions about authorial intent and was thus able to add valuable explanation without dependence on biographical supposition, a rather remarkable achievement in itself. Wright's study is an analysis of irony, not as an instrument of personal defense as in Mudrick's view, but as a consistent way of looking at life.

Of the contradictions in human experience, Jane Austen has a perception which yields a detachment, and a detachment which grants a perception. There is, in her disengagement, an objectivity which is not scientific, because not disinterested. In fact she is deeply concerned with both aspects

of the contradictions she perceives: searching the orchards of human experience she finds the bitter-sweet fruit of confusing appearance and ambiguous essence—and she becomes a person of the divided, the ironic vision.¹¹⁶

Thus Wright was able to show that Jane Austen depended on more than a single viewpoint for the exposition of her themes and that as a result her technique was to focus upon interrelationships between characters rather than upon individuals. By analyzing these interrelationships Wright was able to conclude that

Jane Austen's characters are instruments of a profound vision: she laughs at man, but only because she takes him seriously; examines humanity closely, but the more she perceives the less she understands, the more she is perplexed by the contradictions which she finds.¹¹⁷

Wright's study is satisfactory because it is clearly organized and explicit in its purposes and conclusions.

Reviews of this book showed it to be received without the animosity which Mudrick's study aroused. A reviewer for The Listener granted that Wright had some perceptive observations on Jane Austen's stylistic devices, but could not approve of Wright's disregarding the facts of her life.¹¹⁸

The reviewer for the Spectator believed Wright might have overemphasized irony as an essential literary quality, but commended the book for its own high quality in spite of its

¹¹⁶Andrew H. Wright, Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Structure, (New York, 1953), p. 25.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 171-172.

¹¹⁸The Listener, LI (February 11, 1953), 271.

adding little really new to a view of Jane Austen.¹¹⁹ V. W. Fritchett approved of Wright's opinions and methods and was grateful that the study is free of "that cozy devotion of the Janeites."¹²⁰ The reviewer for the London Times Literary Supplement liked Wright's sensible attitude and his thorough manner of analysis.¹²¹ Edd Winfield Parks regarded the book as by no means the definitive study of Jane Austen's work, but as "the best critical introduction we now have to Jane Austen's major novels."¹²²

Shorter studies published in 1953 concentrated on widely differing aspects of Jane Austen's works. Noel J. King made an examination of French translations and criticism of the novels. King noted that the earliest, possibly pirated, translations were in existence during Jane Austen's lifetime and that these and subsequent ones, because of liberties taken by the translators, have not been very satisfactory. Thus a really accurate estimate of what the French think, or would have thought, of Jane Austen can not be made. French interest in Jane Austen, moreover, has been affected by France's preoccupation with her own literary evolution. From

¹¹⁹Spectator, CXLI (November 13, 1953), 271.

¹²⁰V. W. Fritchett, New Statesman and Nation, XLVI (September 19, 1953), 318.

¹²¹"More of Jane Austen," London Times Literary Supplement, (October 16, 1953), 663.

¹²²Edd Winfield Parks, "Andrew Wright's Jane Austen's Novels," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IX (June, 1954), 72-75.

a survey of French criticism of Jane Austen in the twentieth century, King concluded that Jane Austen's appeal is not confined to the Anglo-Saxon mind.¹²³

In another article published in 1953, Louise D. Cohen compared the original final chapter of Persuasion with the two which replaced it and pointed out how the differences reveal Jane Austen's insight into character and also how she made her insights more artistically perceptible through her technique. Cohen concluded that Jane Austen's style definitely reflects the degree of confidence she had in her characters.¹²⁴

D. J. Greene's "Jane Austen and the Peerage," also published in 1953, is a study based on certain coincidences by which names of actual families appear in the novels. Greene did not believe her use of the names was an attempt to satirize the noble families, but he did suggest that it illustrates how the social criticism in the novels is not that of a wholly detached, impersonal observer. This theory does not reverse Mudrick's interpretation, which Greene regarded as fundamentally sound, and he related his own findings to

¹²³Noel J. King, "Jane Austen in France," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, VIII (June, 1953), 1-26.

¹²⁴Louise D. Cohen, "Insight, the Essence of Jane Austen's Artistry," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, VIII (December, 1953) 29.

the Mudrick theory by expressing his belief that Jane Austen's defense against her personal involvement was the ironic approach.¹²⁵

The major portion of Jane Austen criticism in 1954 was in the form of articles on various aspects of the individual novels. Two articles emphasized the Cinderella theme. Joseph M. Duffy, Jr., outlined the plot of Persuasion, emphasizing its fairy-tale quality, and pointed out that in spite of its remarkable simplicity it is placed in a cultural and moral setting as complicated and ambiguous in its ramifications as that of a late play of Shakespeare. By analyzing the plot in relation to its ambiguous inversions, Duffy concluded that the theme of the novel is the creation of a compromise between the paradoxes of life.¹²⁶ This idea is not new, but Duffy's method of arriving at it is almost unique. This article seems to be an example of "new criticism" which for once relies heavily on historical background. R. W. Chapman, in a reply to the article, pointed out several of Duffy's mistaken assumptions about the structure of Jane Austen's society, but added that these fallacies do not keep the article from being a "stimulating" analysis.¹²⁷

¹²⁵D. J. Greene, "Jane Austen and the Peerage," Publications of the Modern Language Association, LXVIII (December, 1953), 1017-1031.

¹²⁶Joseph M. Duffy, Jr., "Structure and Idea in Jane Austen's Persuasion," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, VIII (March, 1954), 272-289.

¹²⁷R. W. Chapman, "A Reply to Mr. Duffy on Persuasion," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IX (September, 1954), 154.

In the second article Mary Scrutton discussed the Cinderella theme in Mansfield Park and compared Jane Austen's use of it with Richardson's in Pamela and Fanny Burney's in Evelina. Scrutton believed Jane Austen's intention was to place Cinderella in a plot more realistic than the exaggerated ones in contemporary novels.¹²⁸ Scrutton's intentions are interesting, but her study digresses so much that its value is lost. The idea of a critical intention behind Jane Austen's creative impulse is certainly not new.¹²⁹

In another study of Mansfield Park published in 1954, Lionel Trilling analyzed Jane Austen's use of irony and its deepest implications. Trilling's analysis is exceedingly complicated and is an excellent example of criticism for the critics. It is also open to the classic objection of being harder to understand than what it explains. Trilling's conceptions of Jane Austen's irony, however, are significant. He believed it is primarily a method of comprehension and only secondarily a matter of tone; and, he continued, it is by no means detached. He recognized also an element of malice in her irony in that it is directed not only toward certain of her characters, but also toward the reader himself. Trilling believed that irony is an underlying implication in

¹²⁸Mary Scrutton, "Bourgeois Cinderellas," Twentieth Century, CLVI (April, 1954), 351-363.

¹²⁹cf. pp. 57-58, 73-74, above.

the structure and moral content of Mansfield Park and that many readers find the novel distasteful because it would discover to themselves their secret inexpressible hopes, which are usually concealed because of the moral pressures of society.¹³⁰ This analysis probably takes itself more seriously than is warranted; these theories are in essence only complicated ways of expressing earlier ones.¹³¹

An article by Edd Winfield Parks showed that Pride and Prejudice still contains matter for analysis. Parks used the novel as his major example in a study of Jane Austen's "art of rudeness." Parks believed the comedy of manners is most entertaining when it is generously spiced with ill manners. Jane Austen, he said, realized this fact, for she often used social rudeness as a motivating force and built Pride and Prejudice largely around it. After pointing out the developments in the novel which stem from or turn on incidents of rudeness, Parks concluded that rudeness in Pride and Prejudice is not an artificial device or an extraneous decoration, but is woven into the story itself, heightening the tension between characters, especially in their relations

¹³⁰Lionel Trilling, "Mansfield Park," Partisan Review, XXI (September-October, 1954), 492-510. The same essay appeared as "In Mansfield Park" in Encounter (September, 1954), 9-19.

¹³¹cf. pp. 58-60, above.

with Elizabeth.¹³² This analysis illustrates a tendency in recent criticism to isolate an element in one or more of the novels merely to add a point of view rather than a critical concept to Jane Austen study.

Another study published in 1954 might be classed as a review of Volume the Third; the article was at least inspired by its availability. David Paul chose to analyze all the juvenilia in order to show Jane Austen's development from the confines of comic burlesque and to point out her early exploration of material which was not primarily literary. In discussing her progress as shown by the major novels, Paul touched on a number of points which could suggest areas for future study. He raised the question of her use of absurdity, considered apart from irony, and emphasized the elements of parody in even the maturer characterizations. Some suggestions were made about the Cinderella theme in Mansfield Park, in which Paul saw Fanny refusing the Prince Charming and adding a final twist by being perfectly right in doing so. Adding one last item for good measure, Paul implied that an aura of incest is to be found in Mansfield Park.¹³³ Paul's theories of Jane Austen's artistic

¹³²Edd Winfield Parks, "Jane Austen's Art of Rudeness," University of Toronto Quarterly, XX (July, 1954), 381-387.

¹³³David Paul, "The Gay Apprentice," Twentieth Century, CLVI (December, 1954), 539-550.

development were not wholly new, but his other comments and the aspects he pointed up are interesting, even if suggestion was not his intention.

Two shorter articles in 1954 provided some interesting information. Elizabeth Suddaby pointed out that throughout the novels the implicit injunction "Know thyself" can be inferred from Jane Austen's characterization, especially that of the heroine. She also pointed out the comic effect achieved in characters who are distinguished by their want of feeling or taste and who do not see themselves as they really are--for example, Mrs. Norris, Dr. Grant, Mrs. Elton, and General Tilney. Suddaby did not believe Jane Austen meant a moral by the injunction "Know thyself"; it was seen as a basic perspective in her novels and an outgrowth of the moralities of the Age of Reason.¹³⁴ The second article was a note by R. W. Chapman to show that Jane Austen set a fashion in fiction titles by the use of paired abstracts in Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice. Chapman could find few parallels in fiction before 1813, but examples were frequent later.¹³⁵

A doctoral dissertation completed in 1954 illustrated the current emphasis on structural and technical analysis of

¹³⁴Elizabeth Suddaby, "Jane Austen and the Delphic Oracle," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IX (December, 1954), 245-248.

¹³⁵R. W. Chapman, "Jane Austen's Titles," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IX (December, 1954), 154.

Jane Austen's novels. Helen Morse Sanders' study, Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Narrative Method, concentrates on structure in terms of Jane Austen's management of authorial point of view with the object of tracing the development of her art. The conclusion reached is that Jane Austen progressed toward an integration of her moral vision with the dramatization of her stories and that the integration is most successful when the heroine is sufficiently perceptive to act as Jane Austen's center of vision.¹³⁶

One publication in 1954 represented an addition to an already imposing and important collection of scholarship. Volume VI of The Works of Jane Austen, edited by R. W. Chapman, entitled Minor Works, contains "Volume the First"; "Volume the Second" ("Love and Freindship"); "Volume the Third"; "Lady Susan"; "The Watsons"; "Sanditon"; "Plan of a Novel"; opinions of Mansfield Park and Emma; and some verses and prayers. There are also useful and interesting illustrations from contemporary sources. The publication of this volume makes available to the student of Jane Austen virtually all the primary materials from the hands of authoritative scholarship, and the collection should provide a useful reference for future critical study of Jane Austen.

In this section a chronological survey of non-Janeite study published since 1940 has been made. An examination of

¹³⁶Helen M. Sanders, "Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Narrative Method," Dissertation Abstracts, XIV (1954), 2059-2060.

this recent publication has shown that although non-Janeite study has been in some ways as specialized and ingrained as Janeite, its approach to Jane Austen as a novelist has been basically different. Unlike the Janeites, who have seemed content merely to point out, restate, and underline the fact that Jane Austen was a great novelist, the non-Janeites have been interested in why and, most important, how Jane Austen was superior.

In the various studies investigated several critical approaches are demonstrably popular. One of these is represented by attempts to view Jane Austen's works as inspired by a creative impulse rising from her reaction to the poor fiction she was reading. After a source study in 1940 by J. M. S. Tomkins, the view recurred in the work of Q. D. Leavis and Martin Melander. The publication in 1951 of the last unpublished volume of the juvenilia was responsible for a re-emphasis of the approach in reviews of that volume and in studies by Mary Scrutton and David Paul. In a second type of approach, Samuel Kligar, Barbara Bail Collins and Elizabeth Suddaby considered Jane Austen as the exponent of philosophical and literary concepts of her time. A third important method of interpretation, especially in studies after 1950, involved the analysis of Jane Austen's use of irony as a motivating force or as a means of literary design. Studies by Marvin Mudrick and Andrew H. Wright are major examples. However, the major critical technique between 1950

and 1955 was to analyze in individual novels, and infrequently in all of them, matters of style, structure, exposition, and authorial point of view. This technique was employed in studies by R. A. Gettman, Edd Winfield Parks, Margaret Kennedy, Mark Schorer, Louise D. Cohen, Andrew H. Wright, and Helen M. Sanders. Their analyses usually showed that Jane Austen's technique as a novelist is dependent on her concept of her characters.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to survey Jane Austen biography and criticism published since 1940 in order to show the present state of Jane Austen study and to provide a bibliographical guide to recent publication. Secondary purposes have been to show the current critical estimate of Jane Austen, to point out methods being used in recent Jane Austen criticism, and to reveal areas of Jane Austen study perhaps touched on in critical excursions but not yet thoroughly explored. The publications included have been compiled from standard bibliographies and have been examined under the two general divisions of biography and criticism.

In the survey of biographical material published since 1940, primary materials as well as critical studies relying primarily on biography were included. The most important publication of the former type to appear since 1940 has been R. W. Chapman's second edition of Jane Austen's Letters to Her Sister Cassandra and Others. The Jane Austen Society, founded in 1940, has been responsible for the publication of much material concerned with residences and other places of importance in Jane Austen's life. Other factual material has been published in short notes and letters which dwell on minute points of little significance. The most important

collection of biographical information is R. W. Chapman's Jane Austen: Facts and Problems, which serves as an authoritative reference for both biographical and critical study and provides comprehensive notes to the novels and letters. In spite of the large volume of biographical and biographical-critical material which has appeared since 1940, none of it has made any important changes in the traditional portrait of Jane Austen. Many critics, however, have continued to examine the extant source materials for something which will explain or illuminate Jane Austen's talent.

The major emphasis in this thesis has been on Jane Austen criticism since 1940; and the material has been surveyed in order to determine, not the estimate of Jane Austen's place in English literature, but rather the current critical opinion of her as a novelist, and to examine and in some measure evaluate the methods critics have employed in their approach to her and her works.

The Janeites, one group of critics, are presented here as writers who are interested in Jane Austen as a person and who are fascinated by her world, both in and out of her novels. Their most valuable contribution to Jane Austen study lies in their illumination of historical backgrounds and their underlining and pointing out evidence of Jane Austen's talent as a novelist. Because the Janeites are interested mainly in the personal satisfaction they derive from knowing as much as possible about Jane Austen and her novels,

their biographical and critical study frequently seems pointless and absurd. Much of their writing has appeared in the form of short notes concerned with such matters as whether Jane Austen meant alder or elder in Emma when she referred to the plant as a sign of spring or with whether Jane Austen would have made a good librarian. Longer Janeite publications are exemplified in collections of essays by Sheila Kaye-Smith and G. B. Stern, Talking of Jane Austen (1944) and More Talk of Jane Austen (1949), in which the authors tell over and over why they like Jane Austen. Other Janeites have written fictionalized biography (Helen Ashton's Parson Austen's Daughter) and one a sequel to Pride and Prejudice (D. A. Bonavia-Hunt's Pemberley Shades). A recognition of the Janeites' limitations has probably caused the decrease in publication since 1949, and a comparison of Janeite and recent non-Janeite publication suggests strongly that readers and critics in general believe Jane Austen deserves more serious consideration than she has frequently been accorded.

Non-Janeite criticism since 1940 has shown critics to be using four principal critical approaches. Three of these— as exemplified by Q. D. Leavis' theory of Jane Austen's art as an evolving, evaluating process, Samuel Klinger's and Barbara Bail Collins' studies of the novels as reflections of philosophical and literary concepts of her time, and Marvin Mudrick's analysis of Jane Austen's irony as a means

of personal defense and intellectual discovery—necessitate the assumption that Jane Austen's art cannot be divorced from her own situation or from her reaction to personal experience and observation. The fourth critical approach, which characterizes a major portion of recent criticism, has been employed in studies by Edd Winfield Parks, Louise D. Cohen, Andrew H. Wright, and Helen M. Sanders. These critics have analyzed style, structure, technique, or authorial point of view in order to illustrate Jane Austen's artistry in the medium of the novel.

In general the current critical estimate of Jane Austen is expressed by implication rather than direct statement. The Janeites' idolatrous opinion is basically that Jane Austen is one of the greatest English novelists, and their study is essentially variation on that theme. The non-Janeites, on the other hand, reveal their opinion that Jane Austen is a great novelist only indirectly by the amount of serious criticism they devote to her and less effusively by analyzing her novels as works of art.

Several aspects of Jane Austen's novels have apparently not yet been thoroughly explored. A systematic examination of what Jane Austen seems to disapprove might aid in defining moral implications and even didactic elements in the novels. The Cinderella theme, Jane Austen's inversions of it, and her conscious and unconscious use of it have been

mentioned in recent criticism but have not received really serious attention. Mark Schorer's analysis of the use of language in Persuasion is an interesting technique, and a similar analysis of the other novels could perhaps reveal something positive about Jane Austen's creative imagination. Edmund Wilson's suggestion of the possibilities of a false sister-relationship as a recurrent motif is another area for further study. Yet it is clear that the completion even of these studies would leave Jane Austen's genius unexplained.

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