

NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

1. **Paula Byrne** p. 275f. “J. A. was particularly attuned to the discrepancies between rank and manners within the tightly circumscribed social structure of her world. That understanding was profoundly shaped and informed by her interest in the drama. [...] Austen’s superb art of dramatic dialogue in *P&P* owes much to the influences of both contemporary and Shakespearean comedy.”
2. **Richard Whately** p. 309f. “For most of that instruction which used to be presented to the world in the shape of formal dissertations, or shorter and more desultory moral essays [...], we may resort to the pages of the acute and judicious, but no less amusing, novelists who have lately [1821] appeared. [...] The praise and blame of the moralist are surely not the less effectual for being bestowed [in novels], not in general declamation, on classes of men, but on individuals representing those classes.”
3. **Margaret Oliphant** p. 311f. “[Austen’s cynicism is] only a softened tone of general disbelief — amusement, nay enjoyment, of all those humours of humanity which are so quaint to look at as soon as you dissociate them from any rigid standard of right or wrong.”
4. **Richard Simpson** p. 312 “That predestination of love [etc.] she treated as mere moonshine, while she at the same time founded her novels on the assumption of it as a hypothesis.” P. 313 “She was too great a realist to abstract and isolate the individual, and to give a portrait of him in the manner of Theophrastus of La Bruyère.”
5. **D. A. Miller** p. 318 “If at first the novel allows for the naive belief in a happy match between style and the social (Elizabeth: “I hope I never ridicule what is wise and good” [42]), its subsequent development of both terms requires, if not their divorce on grounds of mutual incompatibility, then an emphatic subordination of style to the social.”
6. **Andrew Elfenbein** p. 332 “A long tradition of reading Austen as a master realist has masked her weird, experimental minimalism.” P. 333 “Given all the developments in eighteenth-century culture, from empiricism to the picturesque, Austen ought to have crammed *P&P* with detail. We should read minute descriptions of faces, dresses, houses, gardens, landscapes and prospects, all understood as metaphors for their owners. Instead, with a few exceptions, the novel reads as if an overzealous editor had outlawed such information. This strange lack of detail marks Aus.’s allegiance to an older aesthetic style, long predating the eighteenth century [and revived by] Samuel Johnson’s best-selling *Rasselas* (1759).” P. 335 “*P&P* instead develops a counter-aesthetics that locates realism not in the pile-up of sensory detail but in an awareness of how human perception makes the same space look different to different observers.” P. 335f. “Instead of giving us detailed images of the contents of a room, Aus. makes us aware of how the room cordons off inner and outer spaces to be entered and exited. [...] The repetition [of “the room”] underscore that “the room” for Aus. means more than just a physical space: it is the indispensable ground for human relationships.” P. 336 “For the most part, the better that two characters get along, the more invisible their bodies; when bodies become too visible, alarms go off.” Id. “[Aus.’s novels] ask us to understand space not as picturesque detail or an empty void but as the precondition for social legibility.” P. 338 “[Eliz. & Darcy’s] “far” moments happen inside rooms; the “near” ones, outside, as if they can converse authentically only when they have left the room. While Dar.’s regrettable first proposal to Eliz. occurs inside, he gives her his autobiographical letter outside because he can dispense with indoor niceties.”

7. **P. Knox-Shaw** p. 345 “Dar.’s only rational cause of dislike for Eliz. is tied up with his recoil from bad “connections”, but it seems that the presence of a desire that resists conscious control is itself a cause of irritation to him.”
8. **Felicia Bonaparte** p. 347 “Precisely halfway through the novel (almost to the very letter by a computer count of words), Eliz. Ben. [...] is the recipient of a letter.” P. 348 “Once in a while we do [...] find [in Aus.’s novels] a moment so abstract as to convince us beyond doubt that Aus.’s purpose is philosophical.” P. 349 “Aus. seems to be asking, is there such a thing as truth? Can it be known? And by what means? And with what degree of certainty? [...]The novel is a map of misreading. Even its comedy often depends on the misconstruing of texts.” P. 350 “The narrative [of *P&P*] is a quest for an epistemological principle on which a suitable hypothesis of reality can rest.” P. 355 “Frequently Aus. foregrounds the hurdles that stand in the way of interpretation and when she does so she places her emphasis not on the fictional dilemmas her characters are attempting to solve but, metafictionally, on the act of decipherment itself. Different characters, for example, often make totally different pictures out of the identical dots.” P. 353 “Aus. in this novel rejects the idea of authority, the notion that there are truths to be had from the wise, or from the past, from our elders, or from religion, attacking, almost systematically, virtually every conventional site — parents, social standing, clerics — held in eighteenth-century culture, by traditionalists at least, as the venue of authority.”
9. **Sandra Macpherson** p. 389 “Mr. Bennet’s indolence and inertia, which comes from entailment, is not unlike Bingley’s precipitousness, which comes from renting. [...] In both cases an inability to commit oneself to duration, to extending one’s actions in time and ethical space, constitutes a threat to the safety of others. Lady Catherine imagines herself to be connected to and responsible for persons to whom she is not related [...]; and while this trait is objectionable in her, in Dar. it works quite differently.”

***The Cambridge Companion to P&P*, ED. JANET TODD, 2013**

10. **Thomas Keymer** “The need to treat letters as a slippery, inherently untrustworthy medium, always to be analysed or decoded with care, is nowhere more fully registered than in the chapter devoted to Eliz.’s obsessive, fluctuating reading of Dar.’s letter.” About the paucity of the narrator’s interventions: it is due to “Aus.’s general preference for coaxing readers, in the absence of full authorial explanation, to interpret and evaluate for themselves.”
11. **Robert Miles** “As we turn to smile with Eliz. at Dar.’s self-conceit, an important truth passes us by: there is danger in the pleasure Eliz. takes in making sport of her acquaintance. The lesson is there before her, in her father.”
12. **Robert Markley** “Pemberley isolates as well as enriches [Darc.]. His rejection of his inbred “pride and conceit” is both the precondition and the result of his recognition that he and Eliz. can be suitable marriage partners only if they are “equal”, only if Dar. learns to embrace a more tolerant and inclusive view of the relationships among money, inheritance and social status. He can be a gentleman, and a romantic hero, only when he accepts Eliz. as a gentleman’s daughter.” “It is not only that Dar. has inherited Pemberley but that Pemb. has inherited him. [...] While Pemb. secures Dar.’s income, it also commits him to the vast expenses of caring for his estate [...] and to dealing with his tenants and servants in a manner that serves Pemb.’s interest as much as it does his own.” “Bingley’s diffidence about buying an estate suggests why he is not an ideal romantic hero; he lacks the inherent senses of the responsibilities of owning an estate that help to form Dar.’s character as mater of Pemb.”

“SECRETS, SILENCE, AND SUPRISE IN *P&P*”, BRUCE STOVEL, *Persuasions* N° 11, 1989

13. “The surprises that astonish Eliz. in the first half of the novel are pseudo-surprises for the reader: [...] each of them has been clearly signalled in advance to us. Beginning with Dar.’s letter, however, which *is* a major surprise to us as well as Eliz., the last half of the novel contains a series of marvellous comic surprises: events which we could never have anticipated.”