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978-0-521-82419-4 - Jane Austen: Northanger Abbey

Edited by Barbara M. Benedict and Deirdre Le Faye

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THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION
OF THE WORKS OF

JANE AUSTEN

NORTHANGER ABBEY

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Janet Todd wish to express their gratitude to the
University of Glasgow and the University of Aberdeen for
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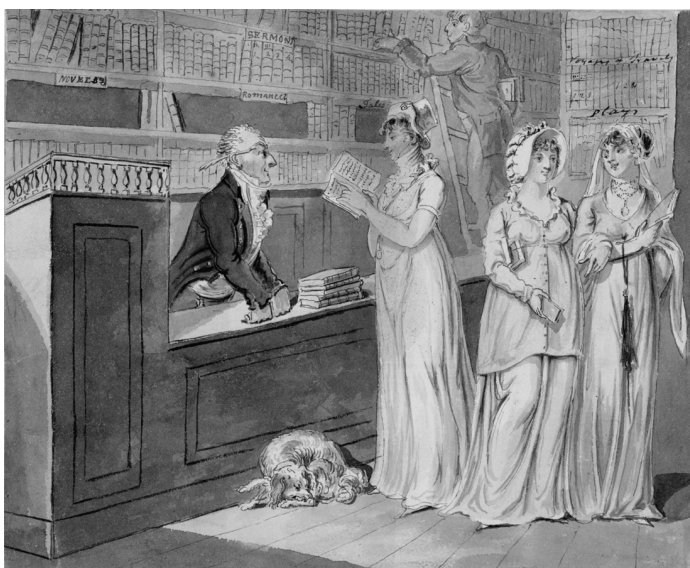
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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

Jane Austen wrote to be read and reread. '[A]n artist cannot do anything slovenly,' she remarked to her sister Cassandra. Her subtle, crafted novels repay close and repeated attention to vocabulary, syntax and punctuation as much as to irony and allusion; yet the reader can take immediate and intense delight in their plots and characters. As a result Austen has a unique status among early English novelists – appreciated by the academy and the general public alike. What Henry Crawford remarks about Shakespeare in *Mansfield Park* has become equally true of its author: she 'is a part of an Englishman's constitution. [Her] thoughts and beauties are so spread abroad that one touches them every where, one is intimate with [her] by instinct.' This edition of the complete oeuvre of the published novels and manuscript works is testament to Austen's exceptional cultural and literary position. As well as attempting to establish an accurate and authoritative text, it provides a full contextual placing of the novels.

The editing of any canonical writer is a practice which has been guided by many conflicting ideologies. In the early twentieth century, editors, often working alone, largely agreed that they were producing definitive editions, although they used eclectic methods and often revised the text at will. Later in the century, fidelity to the author's creative intentions was paramount, and the emphasis switched to devising an edition that would as far as possible represent the final authorial wishes. By the 1980s, however, the pursuit of the single perfected text had given way to the recording of multiple intentions of equal interest. Authors were seen to have changed, revised or recanted, or indeed to have directed various versions of their work towards different audiences. Consequently all states had

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validity and the text became a process rather than a fixed entity. With this approach came emphasis on the print culture in which the text appeared as well as on the social implications of authorship. Rather than being stages in the evolution of a single work, the various versions existed in their own right, all having something to tell.

The Cambridge edition describes fully Austen's early publishing history and provides details of composition, publication and publishers as well as printers and compositors where known. It accepts that many of the decisions concerning spelling, punctuation, capitalising, italicising and paragraphing may well have been the compositors' rather than Austen's but that others may represent the author's own chosen style. For the novels published in Jane Austen's lifetime the edition takes as its copytext the latest edition to which she might plausibly have made some contribution: that is, the first editions of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* and the second editions of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park*. Where a second edition is used, all substantive and accidental changes between editions are shown on the page so that the reader can reconstruct the first edition, and the dominance of either first or second editions is avoided. For the two novels published posthumously together, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, the copytext is the first published edition.

Our texts as printed here remain as close to the copytexts as possible: spelling and punctuation have not been modernised and inconsistencies in presentation have not been regularised. The few corrections and emendations made to the texts – beyond replacing dropped or missing letters – occur only when an error is very obvious indeed, and/or where retention might interrupt reading or understanding: for example, missing quotation marks have been supplied, run-on words have been separated and repeated words excised. All changes to the texts, substantive and accidental, have been noted in the final apparatus. Four of the six novels appeared individually in three volumes; we have kept the volume divisions and numbering. In the case of *Persuasion*, which was first published

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as volumes 3 and 4 of a four-volume set including *Northanger Abbey*, the volume division has been retained but volumes 3 and 4 have been relabelled volumes 1 and 2.

For all these novels the copytext has been set against two other copies of the same edition. Where there have been any substantive differences, further copies have been examined; details of these copies are given in the initial textual notes within each volume, along with information about the printing and publishing context of this particular work. The two volumes of the edition devoted to manuscript writings divide the works between the three juvenile notebooks on the one hand and all the remaining manuscript writings on the other. The juvenile notebooks and *Lady Susan* have some resemblance to the published works, being fair copies and following some of the conventions of publishing. The other manuscript writings consist in part of fictional works in early drafts, burlesques and autograph and allograph copies of occasional verses and prayers. The possible dating of the manuscript work, as well as the method of editing, is considered in the introductions to the relevant volumes. The cancelled chapters of *Persuasion* are included in an appendix to the volume *Persuasion*; they appear both in a transliteration and in facsimile. For all the manuscript works, their features as manuscripts have been respected and all changes and erasures either reproduced or noted.

In all the volumes superscript numbers in the texts indicate end-notes. Throughout the edition we have provided full annotations to give clear and informative historical and cultural information to the modern reader while largely avoiding critical speculation; we have also indicated words which no longer have currency or have altered in meaning in some way. The introductions give information concerning the genesis and immediate public reception of the text; they also indicate the most significant stylistic and generic features. A chronology of Austen's life appears in each volume. More information about the life, Austen's reading, her relationship to publication, the print history of the novels and their critical reception through the centuries, as well as the historical, political,

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intellectual and religious context in which she wrote is available in the final volume of the edition: *Jane Austen in Context*.

I would like to thank Cambridge University Library for supplying the copytexts for the six novels. I am most grateful to Linda Bree at Cambridge University Press for her constant support and unflagging enthusiasm for the edition and to Maartje Scheltens and Alison Powell for their help at every stage of production. I owe the greatest debt to my research assistant Antje Blank for her rare combination of scholarly dedication, editorial skills and critical discernment.

Janet Todd
University of Aberdeen

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Barbara M. Benedict

My thanks as always are due to the Impey family, senior descendants of James Edward Austen-Leigh, who were kind enough to allow me unrivalled access to their Austen-Leigh archive over a number of years, before it was deposited in the Hampshire Record Office in 1993; I thank also the staff at the Record Office who continued to provide me thereafter with answers to my further enquiries in this and other Hampshire family archives. For specific matters in the notes which accompany this text, I thank Tony Corley of Reading University for information on eighteenth-century banking practices, and also Judy Rudoe and Aileen Dawson of the British Museum for information respectively on jewellery and ceramics of the period. The General Editor of the series, Janet Todd, and her

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Deirdre Le Faye

CHRONOLOGY
DEIRDRE LE FAYE

1764	
26 April	Marriage of Revd George Austen, rector of Steventon, and Cassandra Leigh; they go to live at Deane, Hampshire, and their first three children – James (1765), George (1766) and Edward (1767) – are born here.
1768	
Summer	The Austen family move to Steventon, Hampshire. Five more children – Henry (1771), Cassandra (1773), Francis (1774), Jane (1775), Charles (1779) – are born here.
1773	
23 March	Mr Austen becomes Rector of Deane as well as Steventon, and takes pupils at Steventon from now until 1796.
1775	
16 December	Jane Austen born at Steventon.
1781	
Winter	JA’s cousin, Eliza Hancock, marries Jean-François Capot de Feuillide, in France.
1782	
	First mention of JA in family tradition, and the first of the family’s amateur theatrical productions takes place.
1783	
	JA’s third brother, Edward, is adopted by Mr and Mrs Thomas Knight II, and starts to spend time with them at Godmersham in Kent. JA, with her sister Cassandra and cousin Jane Cooper, stays for some months in Oxford and then Southampton, with kinswoman Mrs Cawley.

Chronology

1785	
Spring	JA and Cassandra go to the Abbey House School in Reading.
1786	
	Edward sets off for his Grand Tour of Europe, and does not return until autumn 1790.
April	JA's fifth brother, Francis, enters the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth.
December	JA and Cassandra have left school and are at home again in Steventon. Between now and 1793 JA writes her three volumes of <i>Juvenilia</i> .
1788	
Summer	Mr and Mrs Austen take JA and Cassandra on a trip to Kent and London.
December	Francis leaves the RN Academy and sails to East Indies; does not return until winter 1793.
1791	
July	JA's sixth and youngest brother, Charles, enters the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth.
27 December	Edward Austen marries Elizabeth Bridges, and they live at Rowling in Kent.
1792	
27 March	JA's eldest brother, James, marries Anne Mathew; they live at Deane.
?Winter	Cassandra becomes engaged to Revd Tom Fowle.
1793	
23 January	Edward Austen's first child, Fanny, is born at Rowling.
1 February	Republican France declares war on Great Britain and Holland.
8 April	JA's fourth brother, Henry, becomes a lieutenant in the Oxfordshire Militia.
15 April	James Austen's first child, Anna, born at Deane.
3 June	JA writes the last item of her <i>J</i> .
1794	
22 February	M de Feuillide guillotined in Paris.
September	Charles leaves the RN Academy and goes to sea.
?Autumn	JA possibly writes the novella <i>Lady Susan</i> this year.

Chronology

1795	
3 May	JA probably writes ‘Elinor and Marianne’ this year. James’s wife Anne dies, and infant Anna is sent to live at Steventon.
Autumn	Revd Tom Fowle joins Lord Craven as his private chaplain for the West Indian campaign.
December	Tom Lefroy visits Ashe Rectory – he and JA have a flirtation over the Christmas holiday period.
1796	
October	JA starts writing ‘First Impressions’.
1797	
17 January	James Austen marries Mary Lloyd, and infant Anna returns to live at Deane.
February	Revd Tom Fowle dies of fever at San Domingo and is buried at sea.
August	JA finishes ‘First Impressions’ and Mr Austen offers it for publication to Thomas Cadell – rejected sight unseen.
November	JA starts converting ‘Elinor and Marianne’ into <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> . Mrs Austen takes her daughters for a visit to Bath. Edward Austen and his young family move from Rowling to Godmersham.
31 December	Henry Austen marries his cousin, the widowed Eliza de Feuillide, in London.
1798	
	JA probably starts writing ‘Susan’ (later to become <i>Northanger Abbey</i>).
17 November	James Austen’s son James Edward born at Deane.
1799	
Summer	JA probably finishes ‘Susan’ (<i>NA</i>) about now.
1800	
	Mr Austen decides to retire and move to Bath.
1801	
24 January	Henry Austen resigns his commission in the Oxfordshire Militia and sets up as a banker and army agent in London.
May	The Austen family leave Steventon for Bath, and then go for a seaside holiday in the West Country. JA’s traditionary West Country romance presumably occurs between now and the autumn of 1804.

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1802	
25 March	Peace of Amiens appears to bring the war with France to a close.
Summer	Charles Austen joins his family for a seaside holiday in Wales and the West Country.
December	JA and Cassandra visit James and Mary at Steventon; while there, Harris Bigg-Wither proposes to JA and she accepts him, only to withdraw her consent the following day.
Winter	JA revises ‘Susan’ (<i>NA</i>).
1803	
Spring	JA sells ‘Susan’ (<i>NA</i>) to Benjamin Crosby; he promises to publish it by 1804, but does not do so.
18 May	Napoleon breaks the Peace of Amiens, and war with France recommences.
Summer	The Austens visit Ramsgate in Kent, and possibly also go to the West Country again.
November	The Austens visit Lyme Regis.
1804	
	JA probably starts writing <i>The Watsons</i> this year, but leaves it unfinished.
Summer	The Austens visit Lyme Regis again.
1805	
21 January	Mr Austen dies and is buried in Bath.
Summer	Martha Lloyd joins forces with Mrs Austen and her daughters.
18 June	James Austen’s younger daughter, Caroline, born at Steventon.
21 October	Battle of Trafalgar.
1806	
2 July	Mrs Austen and her daughters finally leave Bath; they visit Clifton, Adlestrop, Stoneleigh and Hamstall Ridware, before settling in Southampton in the autumn.
24 July	Francis Austen marries Mary Gibson.
1807	
19 May	Charles Austen marries Fanny Palmer, in Bermuda.
1808	
10 October	Edward Austen’s wife Elizabeth dies at Godmersham.

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- 1809**
 5 April JA makes an unsuccessful attempt to secure the publication of 'Susan' (*NA*).
 7 July Mrs Austen and her daughters, and Martha Lloyd, move to Chawton, Hants.
- 1810**
 Winter *S&S* is accepted for publication by Thomas Egerton.
- 1811**
 February JA starts planning *Mansfield Park*.
 30 October *S&S* published.
 ?Winter JA starts revising 'First Impressions' into *Pride and Prejudice*.
- 1812**
 17 June America declares war on Great Britain.
 14 October Mrs Thomas Knight II dies, and Edward Austen now officially takes surname of Knight.
 Autumn JA sells copyright of *P&P* to Egerton.
- 1813**
 28 January *P&P* published; JA half-way through *MP*.
 ?July JA finishes *MP*.
 ?November *MP* accepted for publication by Egerton about now.
- 1814**
 21 January JA commences *Emma*.
 5 April Napoleon abdicates and is exiled to Elba.
 9 May *MP* published.
 24 December Treaty of Ghent officially ends war with America.
- 1815**
 March Napoleon escapes and resumes power in France; hostilities recommence.
 29 March *E* finished.
 18 June Battle of Waterloo finally ends war with France.
 8 August JA starts *Persuasion*.
 4 October Henry Austen takes JA to London; he falls ill, and she stays longer than anticipated.
 13 November JA visits Carlton House, and receives an invitation to dedicate a future work to the Prince Regent.
 December *E* published by John Murray, dedicated to the Prince Regent (title page 1816).
- 1816**
 19 February 2nd edition of *MP* published.

Chronology

Spring	JA's health starts to fail. Henry Austen buys back manuscript of 'Susan' (<i>NA</i>), which JA revises and intends to offer again for publication.
18 July	First draft of <i>P</i> finished.
6 August	<i>P</i> finally completed.
1817	
27 January	JA starts <i>Sanditon</i> .
18 March	JA now too ill to work, and has to leave <i>S</i> unfinished.
24 May	Cassandra takes JA to Winchester for medical attention.
18 July	JA dies in the early morning.
24 July	JA buried in Winchester Cathedral.
December	<i>NA</i> and <i>P</i> published together, by Murray, with a 'Biographical Notice' added by Henry Austen (title page 1818).
1869	
16 December	JA's nephew, the Revd James Edward Austen-Leigh (JEAL), publishes his <i>Memoir of Jane Austen</i> , from which all subsequent biographies have stemmed (title page 1870).
1871	
	JEAL publishes a second and enlarged edition of his <i>Memoir</i> , including in this the novella <i>LS</i> , the cancelled chapters of <i>P</i> , the unfinished <i>W</i> , a précis of <i>S</i> , and 'The Mystery' from the <i>J</i> .
1884	
	JA's great-nephew, Lord Brabourne, publishes <i>Letters of Jane Austen</i> , the first attempt to collect her surviving correspondence.
1922	
	<i>Volume the Second</i> of the <i>J</i> published.
1925	
	The manuscript of the unfinished <i>S</i> edited by R. W. Chapman and published as <i>Fragment of a Novel by Jane Austen</i> .
1932	
	R. W. Chapman publishes <i>Jane Austen's Letters to her sister Cassandra and others</i> , giving letters unknown to Lord Brabourne.

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1933	<i>Volume the First</i> of the <i>J</i> published.
1951	<i>Volume the Third</i> of the <i>J</i> published.
1952	Second edition of R. W. Chapman's <i>Jane Austen's Letters</i> published, with additional items.
1954	R. W. Chapman publishes <i>Jane Austen's Minor Works</i> , which includes the three volumes of the <i>J</i> and other smaller items.
1980	B. C. Southam publishes <i>Jane Austen's 'Sir Charles Grandison'</i> , a small manuscript discovered in 1977.
1995	Deirdre Le Faye publishes the third (new) edition of <i>Jane Austen's Letters</i> , containing further additions to the Chapman collections.

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INTRODUCTION

COMPOSITION

Unlike some of Jane Austen's other works, where the geographical settings are only vaguely indicated, the greater part of this novel is very specifically located in Bath, the elegant inland spa patronised for holidays by the wealthy and leisured since the seventeenth century; out of thirty-one chapters, four are set at the heroine's home in fictitious Fullerton, nine at the eponymous and equally fictitious Northanger Abbey and eighteen in the genuine city of Bath. This emphasis is not surprising, since Bath was a constant backdrop to the life of the Austen family. Jane's mother, Cassandra Leigh (1739–1827), lived there for some years in her youth, and married the Revd George Austen (1731–1805) at Walcot church in 1764; Cassandra's elder sister, Jane Leigh, and her husband, Revd Dr Edward Cooper, lived in Royal Crescent and Bennett Street from 1771 to 1783; and Mrs Austen's brother, James Leigh-Perrot (1735–1812), and his wife, Jane Cholmeley (1744–1836) – a wealthy and childless couple, who are always referred to in Jane Austen's letters as 'my uncle' and 'my aunt' – soon developed the habit of spending half the year on their estate in Berkshire and the other half in Bath, at No. 1 Paragon Buildings.

It is not known when Austen herself first became personally acquainted with Bath, but it was probably in the spring/summer of 1794, when she and her elder sister, Cassandra, visited Leigh cousins in Gloucestershire; in travelling to and from Hampshire it would be very surprising if they did not pass through both Bath and Gloucester en route. It must have been this Gloucestershire trip which gave Austen the local knowledge that she used afterwards for her novel, and no doubt she too stopped off at

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Petty France to change horses when taking the main road northwards out of Bath. As we subsequently learn that Catherine Morland's return to Fullerton involved a journey of seventy miles (vol. 2, ch. 13), this means that Austen must have envisaged Northanger Abbey as being somewhere in the Vale of Berkeley, lying on the flood-plain of the river Severn and tucked under the steep western edge of the Cotswold limestone escarpment. Such a location accounts for its name: in Old English *hangra*, now modernised to 'hanger', means 'a wood on the side of a steeply sloping hill',¹ and Austen unobtrusively but carefully mentions the house as 'standing low in a valley, sheltered from the north and east by rising woods of oak' (vol. 2, ch. 2). When Catherine drives up, she finds that 'so low did the building stand', it could not be seen from the road (vol. 2, ch. 5); and later, when she walks out with the family to admire the house and grounds, she sees it has 'steep woody hills rising behind to give it shelter' (vol. 2, ch. 7) – that is, a hanger to the north. Henry Tilney's parish of Woodston is also on the Severn flood-plain, as 'the General seemed to think an apology necessary for the flatness of the country' (vol. 2, ch. 11). There was no country house in this part of Gloucestershire which in any way resembled Northanger Abbey as described by Austen, hence she could feel safe in placing it there, without being afraid that some local landowner might take offence in the belief he was being pilloried in the character of General Tilney.

Austen's first recorded visit to Bath was in November/December 1797, when she and her mother and sister stayed with the Leigh-Perrots in Paragon Buildings. Her next visit was in May/June 1799, when her brother, Edward Knight, brought a family party to lodgings in Queen Square; and finally, she and her family lived in Bath from 1801 to 1806. It is an interesting possibility that during the 1797 visit she may have met the Revd Sydney Smith, then only a country cleric and tutor to the squire's son, but soon to become well known as a wit, essayist, moral philosopher and joint founder of the

¹ Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, fourth edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

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Edinburgh Review in 1802; it was pointed out by John Sparrow² that Sydney's conversational style sounds remarkably like that of Henry Tilney, and there is documentary evidence that he paid several short visits to Bath between October 1797 and January 1798.³ Furthermore, Sydney's pupil, Michael Hicks Beach, was connected to the Bramston family at Deane, near neighbours of the Austens at Steventon; hence Mrs Austen may have been encouraged by the Bramstons to make contact with Sydney following her arrival with her daughters in Bath.

In the autumn of 1817 Cassandra Austen scribbled a brief memorandum of the dates of composition of her sister's novels, so far as she could recall them, finishing with: 'North-hanger Abby [*sic*] was written about the years 98 & 99',⁴ which suggests that Austen started it in early 1798 after her winter visit, and finished it in 1799, perhaps after refreshing her imagination and checking her facts during her summer visit. Having decided upon the geographical setting, she planned the action as a parody, or rather, a double parody, of the popular fiction of the period – the conduct novels or novels of manners on the one hand, and the gothic romances on the other. The former, epistolary in style and supposed to be letters to an intimate friend, are set in contemporary English society and follow a courtship plot. The heroine enters the world, encounters fortune-hunters, rakes, and false friends, masters the unstated rules of etiquette and wins the heart of a noble suitor through her natural superiority, exhibited and refined through a series of social and moral tests. The eighteen chapters set in Bath chronicle, in a deliberately wry and prosaic style, the problems that beset the naive and trusting Catherine as she makes her debut; they may indeed reflect something of what Austen herself experienced in 1794 and 1797.

Gothic romances were exceedingly popular from about 1790 to 1820. They were highly imaginative escapist literature – 'gothic' in

² *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 July 1954, p. 429.

³ Peter Virgin, *Sydney Smith* (London: Harper Collins, 1994), pp. 41–2.

⁴ Jane Austen, *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), plate facing p. 242; Brian Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 52–4.

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this context being taken to mean any historical period before 1700 and for preference as far back as medieval times, which by definition could provide more scope for wild and barbaric behaviour than could the civilised eighteenth century. They were usually set in European locations, and specialised in plots involving mystery, crime and horror, with a strong element of the supernatural to add terror to the mix. So far from entering high society, the heroines in these romances invariably find themselves imprisoned in ruined castles or abbeys in the Alps or Pyrenees, and threatened by libertines, brigands and – apparently – ghosts. The nine chapters covering Catherine's visit to Northanger Abbey parody her overheated romantic imaginings of the potential mystery she expects to find there, by setting them against the realities of life in a wealthy, modernised country house in Gloucestershire. A final twist in the tale, however, is that, although Catherine's initial imaginings are erroneous, there is indeed a mystery at Northanger Abbey, and she herself is at the centre of it.

PUBLICATION

When Austen finished her text in 1799, she called it simply 'Susan', and it seems she had then no thought of attempting to publish it – the manuscript must have remained in the cupboard or on the bookshelf, no doubt being read with amusement by her family, who would recognise the parodies and also the genuine background to the story. In 1801 the Revd George Austen suddenly decided to leave Hampshire and retire to Bath, and it was probably the fact of finding herself now actually living in the city which inspired Jane to look afresh at 'Susan', perhaps in the autumn of 1802, and to accept her family's advice that it should be offered for publication. By this time her brother Henry was a London banker, and it was his lawyer/agent, William Seymour, who sold the manuscript in the spring of 1803 to the firm of Benjamin Crosby & Co., of Stationers' Hall Court, London, for £10, with a verbal agreement for early publication. Crosby advertised it – *Susan; a Novel, in 2 vols.* – in their *Flowers of Literature for 1801 & 1802* (1803), as

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being 'In the Press'; it was No. 15 in their list of 'New and Useful Books'.

In the event, however, Crosby never did publish 'Susan'. There is nothing to indicate how long it was before Jane Austen realised that he did not intend to fulfil his bargain, and nothing to indicate the reason for the firm's change of mind. In her preface to a new edition of *Northanger Abbey* in 1932, Rebecca West drew an amusing pen-picture of what might have happened: Benjamin Crosby glanced casually at the manuscript, and thought it 'a pleasant tale about pleasant people, written in simple English; and it had the further advantage, from the point of view of the circulating libraries, that it was plainly written by a lady who wrote from her own knowledge of life as it was lived in country seats and at Bath',⁵ hence he was agreeable to paying £10 for it. However, when he looked at it for a second time, more closely – perhaps when on the verge of sending it actually to the printing press – he found it disconcerting and full of mockery, quite unlike the novels that were the stock in trade of the circulating libraries. The author seemed to be laughing at her characters, possibly laughing at her potential readers, or even laughing at himself for accepting such an unromantic, unsentimental tale. For whatever combination of reasons, Crosby put the manuscript aside and mentally wrote off his £10.

The early 1800s were an unsettled period in the Austen family's life, with much time spent travelling on seaside holidays and visits in Kent and Hampshire, until Mr Austen died in January 1805 and such journeyings came to an end. Mrs Austen and her daughters eventually left Bath in 1806 and moved to Southampton, where they stayed until the spring of 1809, before moving to their final home at Chawton. It must have been exasperating for Austen to see that another anonymous two-volume novel called *Susan* was published in London early in 1809 by the firm of John Booth;⁶ and it may have been the knowledge of this rival production, plus a

⁵ *Northanger Abbey*, ed. Rebecca West (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932).

⁶ Peter Garside, James Raven and Rainer Schöwerling, eds., *The English Novel 1770–1829* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), vol. 2, p. 292.

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wish to tidy up the loose ends of her literary hopes, which led her to write to Crosby & Co. on 5 April 1809 using the pseudonym of 'Mrs Ashton Dennis', c/o the Post Office, Southampton.⁷ She reminded them of the circumstances of the sale six years ago, and stated that if they were no longer interested, she would send a second copy of the manuscript to another publisher. Richard Crosby replied on his father's behalf by return of post (8 April 1809, *Letters*, p. 175), denying that there had been any promise of early publication, threatening legal action if she published elsewhere, and offering to return the manuscript for the £10 the firm had paid for it. This sum was presumably beyond Austen's means, so there the matter rested for the time being.

Once settled in Chawton, Austen devoted herself to literary composition, revising and publishing her two early works, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and going straight on to write *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (late 1815) without a pause. Now with the confidence of a published author, she thought of recovering 'Susan', and early in 1816 her brother Henry 'undertook the negotiation. He found the purchaser very willing to receive back his money, and to resign all claim to the copyright. When the bargain was concluded and the money paid, but not till then, the negotiator had the satisfaction of informing him that the work which had been so lightly esteemed was by the author of "Pride and Prejudice".⁸

In view of the publication of the other novel called *Susan* in 1809, Austen changed the heroine's name to 'Catherine' Morland, and wrote an 'Advertisement', or preface, explaining that the story had been intended to appear in 1803, and apologising therefore to readers in 1816 for those parts which might now appear 'comparatively obsolete'. However, it seems that even as she wrote this

⁷ *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 174; referred to as *Letters* hereafter.

⁸ James Edward Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 106; referred to as *Memoir* hereafter.

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‘Advertisement’, she discouraged herself thereby, for she made no further attempt to offer it to another publisher. It may be, too, that Henry Austen’s sudden bankruptcy in March 1816, which obliged him to leave London, further disheartened her, since he would no longer be on the spot to negotiate with publishers on her behalf. Her health started to fail this year, and she felt her current work on *Persuasion* was not going well – yet another reason for putting ‘Susan’/‘Catherine’ aside once again. On 13 March 1817 Austen wrote to her niece Fanny Knight: ‘Miss Catherine is put upon the Shelf for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out’ (*Letters*, p. 333), and there is no further mention of the work in her letters before her death in July 1817.

At some time in the second half of 1817, Henry and Cassandra – the latter being Austen’s heiress for both real and literary property – negotiated with John Murray for the publication of *Northanger Abbey* (evidently their choice of title, presumably because they considered it more attractive to readers than a simple *Catherine*) together with *Persuasion*. Murray was quite happy to accept the manuscripts, and in December 1817 wrote to Lady Abercorn: ‘I am printing two short but very clever novels by poor Miss Austen, the author of “Pride and Prejudice”.’⁹ Henry provided a ‘Biographical Notice of the Author’, dated 13 December 1817, which appeared as a preface to the four-volume edition (two volumes for each of the novels); and in his ‘Notice’ (reproduced in the *Persuasion* volume of the Cambridge edition) Austen’s name appeared in print for the first time as acknowledged author of the six novels.

The two works were first advertised in *The Courier* of 17 December 1817 for publication on 20 December, *Northanger Abbey* being described as a ‘Romance’ and *Persuasion* as a ‘Novel’, though this distinction does not appear on the title pages. Possibly the advertising copywriter had read the novelist Clara Reeve’s definition of the difference:

⁹ Samuel Smiles, *A Publisher and His Friends* (London: John Murray, 1891), vol. 2, pp. 64–5.

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The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things.—The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen.—The Novel gives a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friends, or to ourselves; and the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses, of the persons in the story, as if they were our own.¹⁰

But perhaps Henry and Cassandra made a mistake in calling it *Northanger Abbey* – between 1784 and 1818 no fewer than thirty-two novels had been published containing ‘Abbey’ in the title, not to mention many others using such related nouns as ‘Convent’, ‘Monastery’ or ‘Priory’, ‘Abbot’, ‘Friar’ or ‘Nun’. The readers in 1818 may well have thought that such a title betokened a predictable rehash of a foolish and hackneyed plot, along the lines of the ‘romances’ as categorised by Reeve.

The four-volume set was priced at £1.4s.0d., and the official publication date was 1818. Murray had printed 1750 copies, and most of these sold during 1818–19, with the last few being remaindered in 1820, but there was no second edition. A French translation, *L'abbaye de Northanger*, appeared in 1824; Carey & Lea of Philadelphia published the first American edition in January 1833 (*Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* separately, each in two volumes); but the next English edition was not until May 1833, when Richard Bentley issued it in his Standard Novels series. During the nineteenth century Austen’s works were several times reprinted as multi-volume sets, and the individual novels also appeared separately, but *Northanger Abbey* has never been as popular as the others. From 1818 up to 1976 the number of individual reprints (disregarding foreign, abridged or school editions) is respectively as follows: *Pride*

¹⁰ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries and Manners with Remarks on the Good and Bad Effects of it, on them Respectively* (Colchester: W. Keymer, 1785), vol. 1, p. 111.