

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-20699-0 — Jane Austen and Other Minds
Ordinary Language Philosophy in Literary Fiction
Eric Reid Lindstrom
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JANE AUSTEN AND OTHER MINDS

Jane Austen's fiction is itself philosophy, a fact to which Stanley Cavell attested when he honored his philosophical teacher, J. L. Austin, through homage to her and her work. Engaging equally in criticism and in philosophy, *Jane Austen and Other Minds* demonstrates the standing of Austen's fiction as a philosophical investigation, both in its own right and as a resource to ordinary language philosophy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Eric Reid Lindstrom addresses a long-standing shortcoming of Austen scholarship by locating in her fiction a linguistic phenomenology available to the novelistic everyday but not afforded her in intellectual history. He simultaneously advances recognition and understanding of J. L. Austin and Stanley Cavell, and of ordinary language philosophy, within Austen scholarship and the broader field of contemporary literary studies. This book argues compellingly for Cavell's choice of Austen as a means to pursue "passionate exchange," reimagining her common association with restriction and confinement.

ERIC REID LINDSTROM is the author of *Romantic Fiat: Demystification and Enchantment in Lyric Poetry* (2011), and editor of *Stanley Cavell and the Event of Romanticism* (2014). His essays on Jane Austen, Romantic and modern poetry, ordinary language, and philosophical poetics have appeared widely in academic journals. He lives in Vermont and Louisiana.

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JANE AUSTEN AND
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ERIC REID LINDSTROM

University of Vermont



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Acknowledgments

In order to reach something closer to its best form, this book has required many years longer than I had initially planned for it, when it took shape out of my talk “Austen and Austin,” at the 2009 New Directions in Jane Austen Studies Conference at Chawton. I had a summer cold at that conference, and I think it cost me a chance for a timely meeting with Linda Bree; thanks should go, I suspect, to Linda and to the whirligig of time at a much later date for bringing Cambridge University Press back into the picture as the ideal home for this book. At CUP, Bethany Thomas’s commitment to this project has seen it through more than one dire strait over the past couple years. Her support and flexibility have been in every sense decisive. George Paul Laver has seen it through production with alacrity. The final study has benefitted greatly from the comments of three anonymous press readers of the script, all of whom insisted on needed elements of structure, clarity, and concision that have strengthened my aim and made it possible to find an audience at all. They gave me some well-deserved pains and saved me many more. Five other anonymous external readers of the manuscript – this time serving in the cause of a promotion review in 2020 – sharpened, validated, and challenged much that is here too. In the person behind two of these reports, especially, I found precious community. Jim Chandler’s and Bethany Thomas’s suggestion to bring the book into the Cambridge Studies in Romanticism series was unexpected and professionally gratifying. I am honored to have *Jane Austen and Other Minds* enter and be in the world within this distinguished line of studies.

For her supportive and pointedly helpful initial response to its proposal as a first communication, I wish to thank and remember Helen Tartar. Valerie Rohy and Todd McGowan, colleagues at the University of Vermont, responded with readiness and insight to an in-house version of that initial proposal back in 2013. At Vermont, thanks also to Tony Magistrale, Val Rohy, Dan Fogle, and John Gennari: Each of these

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Chairpersons of English during the decade-plus spent on this project have given it, and me, critical support.

In very different forms and much compacted, portions of Chapters 1 and 2 have appeared in print in my article “Austen and Austin” at *European Romantic Review* (2011). Much of Chapter 3 appeared as “Sense and Sensibility and Suffering; or, Wittgenstein’s Marianne?” in *English Literary History* (2013). A small slice of Chapter 5 was taken, further divided, and revised from my essay “Perlocution and the ‘Rights of Desire’: Cavell, Nietzsche, and Austen (and Austin),” published online in *Conversations: The Journal of Cavellian Studies* (2016). A group of eight students and myself “lab” composed the essay “Lady Catherine, Out of Order,” which now has appeared in *Persuasions On-Line* (2021). This essay expands a subject touched on at the end of Chapter 4 here, without strict overlap, in my own solo voice. The students in that 2019 Masters seminar “Austen and the Ordinary” contributed to my thinking and reading during a key push toward a view of the finish. Lively, generative panels at the American Comparative Literature Association conference in 2016, 2019, and 2021, and at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism conference in 2015, 2016, and 2018 were resources to my exploration of Romanticism, Austen, and ordinary language philosophy and criticism.

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Among many friends, colleagues, and fellow travelers in Romantic Studies, Emily Sun, Eric Walker, Nancy Yousef, Anne-Lise François, and (crossing into philosophy) Richard Eldridge have most nourished this book, in equal parts through their conversation, shared work, and example as writers. I’ve concluded that Paul Fry seeded this book with wise inadvertency, sometime back in the early 2000s, when he once let pass that my dissertation was smart to bring up Cavell only at the end, because it clearly was too indebted to dig out. I think Paul rightly surmised I only learn by being spiritually behind-hand. (And if I’m making all this up, there are a dozen other reasons to thank Paul.)

An awaited acknowledgment of Stanley Cavell himself could be done very simply – I never met him in person – and also could be rightly understood to take nothing less than the scope of the work itself. I have learned to think productively and even joyfully, not back in regret, about this, from Cavell’s own stories about the intimacy of a major acquaintance he made too late to force. His words in print do plenty. It is enough to eat from the gleanings. A talk I gave at Harvard in Spring 2013, “Stanley Cavell and (British) Romantic Perfectionism: Godwin, Austen, Keats,” found its way into his hands. Warm thanks to Andrew Warren for inviting me.

A short-term fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge, in late 2019 just before the global-health curtain fell, enabled me to conduct research on the unpublished writings of D. W. Harding, held in the Library of Emmanuel College. (See the largesse there?) I am particularly grateful to Anne Toner as a truly thoughtful and gracious host for this period and to Cambridge for providing a range of sociable atmospheres for me and Kira, and (not least) a wonderful audience for hearing about the *next* project.

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Abbreviations

<i>CH</i>	B. C. Southam, <i>Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage</i> . 2 vols. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968.
<i>Claim</i>	Stanley Cavell, <i>The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
<i>CM</i>	Gilbert Ryle, <i>The Concept of Mind</i> . London and New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1949; London: Penguin, 1990.
<i>CT</i>	Stanley Cavell, <i>Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
<i>E</i>	Jane Austen, <i>Emma</i> . George Justice. Ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012.
<i>How to Do Things</i>	J. L. Austin, <i>How to Do Things with Words</i> ; 2nd ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. Eds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.
<i>In Quest</i>	Stanley Cavell, <i>In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
<i>MP</i>	Jane Austen, <i>Mansfield Park</i> . Claudia L. Johnson. Ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.
<i>Must</i>	Stanley Cavell, <i>Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
<i>NA</i>	Jane Austen, <i>Northanger Abbey</i> . Susan Fraiman. Ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.
<i>P</i>	Stanley Cavell, <i>Philosophy the Day after Tomorrow</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

x	<i>List of Abbreviations</i>
<i>Per</i>	Jane Austen, <i>Persuasion</i> . Patricia Meyer Spacks. Ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013.
<i>PI</i>	Ludwig Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> . Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001.
<i>Pitch</i>	Stanley Cavell, <i>A Pitch of Philosophy: Autobiographical Exercises</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
<i>PP</i>	J. L. Austin, <i>Philosophical Papers</i> ; 2nd ed. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock. Eds. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
<i>P&P</i>	Jane Austen, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> . Donald Gray and Mary A. Favret. Eds. New York: Norton, 2016.
<i>Scandal</i>	Shoshana Felman, <i>The Scandal of the Speaking Body: Don Juan with J. L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages</i> . Catherine Porter. Trans. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
<i>Secret of Style</i>	D. A. Miller, <i>Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
<i>Senses</i>	Stanley Cavell, <i>The Senses of Walden</i> ; an expanded edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
<i>SS</i>	J. L. Austin, <i>Sense and Sensibilia</i> . London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
<i>S&S</i>	Jane Austen, <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> . Claudia L. Johnson. Ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2002.