



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Worldly Realism

Morris, Pam

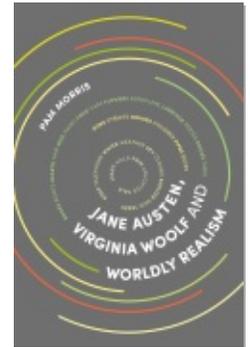
Published by Edinburgh University Press

Morris, Pam.

Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Worldly Realism.

Edinburgh University Press, 2017.

Project MUSE.[muse.jhu.edu/book/65984](https://muse.jhu.edu/book/65984).



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/65984>

---

Access provided at 29 Mar 2020 15:42 GMT with no institutional affiliation



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

**Part II**

# **Nation and Universe**



## *Emma*: A Prospect of England

*Emma* (1815) is one of those literary works which can seem to exist within the timeless glow of its own perfection. For many readers, Emma's world evokes an ideal of England. Of all Austen's novels it is perhaps the one that most lends itself to what Roger Sales calls the promotion of a 'particular idea of Englishness'.<sup>1</sup> The 'association between Austen and Englishness is currently a very strong one', he says. The perception of timeless, quintessential national values is, however, an illusion largely imposed on Austen's text by an idealist regime of interpretive practice. Rather than depicting a pastoral England that never was, *Emma* is a novel that proclaims, from its very first page, the inevitability of change. As in *Sense and Sensibility*, this process is enacted as a shift away from the settled order of inherited place to the motility of social space. A vertical regime of the proper gives way to horizontal recognition of those previously regarded as below notice. Again, as in the earlier novel, the focus of change is a young woman, Emma Woodhouse. The transition that Emma makes in the novel continues Austen's social critique of subjective idealism, as an imposition of self upon the world. Equally, the narrative trajectory explores the changing identity of the English nation, challenging the consensual acceptance of hierarchical social exclusiveness with the possibility of greater horizontal inclusivity.

Questions as to the proper nature of social relations and political settlements were central concerns within eighteenth-century British Enlightenment. Austen was rooted in that interrogative mode of thinking but she was writing in the aftermath of the French Revolution, and, importantly, after the publication of Edmund Burke's influential *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Burke's romantic idealism produced a powerfully imagined vision of an immemorial England, sustained by hierarchical traditions of patrician and religious ideals.

National sentiment, Burke claimed, is nurtured in the small ‘platoon’ of childhood and that early reverence for local attachments expands and cements the ties of gratitude, benevolence and obedience that secure the unity of the nation.<sup>2</sup> This ideal appealed powerfully to public reaction and anxiety in the wake of the Revolution and has retained a central place ever since in conservative concepts of English national identity.<sup>3</sup>

A sense of privileged English destiny was much enhanced during the time Austen was writing *Emma* by the defeat of Napoleon in 1814 and the conclusion of a quarter of a century of continental wars. It was a momentous event. It requires an act of historical imagination now to comprehend what the removal of that constant threat to national safety must have felt like at the time to all shades of public opinion. The *Edinburgh Review* expresses something of the immense relief to people’s spirits and the sense of renewed social possibilities for the nation when it speaks of ‘the enchanting prospect of long peace and measureless improvement’ at last opening up.<sup>4</sup> The journal goes on, this scene that has ‘burst on our view’ has arrived ‘like the balmy air and flushing verdure of late spring after the dreary chills of a long and interminable winter’.

The *Edinburgh* plays here upon both the literal meaning of the word ‘prospect’ as an expansive view of English landscape and the metaphorical elevation of this primary, material sense into a mental image of some future possibility or hope. It thus operates across the matter–mind, empiricist–idealist dualism. ‘Prospect’ is also a word that resonates in the text of *Emma*, articulating its thematic concern with processes of transformation, the movement from the fixture of ‘here’ to an emergent or possible ‘there’, from the vertical order of metaphor to the horizontal movement of metonymy. In particular, there is a striking use of the term, prospect, in which Austen, too, plays across the material and metaphoric meanings. Her imagery and language are not only similar to that used in the *Edinburgh Review*, they also trace, at Emma’s personal level, the same emotional transformation of hopeless stasis into delighted possibilities of ‘measureless improvement’. The moment of release from the paralysis of misery occurs when Emma’s spirits are at their lowest as she contemplates the closing off of her future due to her own class arrogance and blindness. ‘The prospect before her was threatening [. . .] Hartfield must be comparatively deserted; and she left to cheer her father with the spirits only of ruined happiness.’<sup>5</sup> The physical prospect outside offers added gloom ‘with cold, stormy rain’ and a ‘despoiling’ wind (p. 459). Yet the following morning, with the wind changed into a softer quarter, ‘it was summer again’ and

the view of the garden warm and brilliant. Emma is experiencing bodily release from physical enclosure even as Mr Knightley makes an unexpected appearance that will totally transform her hopes for expansive change (p. 362).

The celebratory spirit marking the end of the Napoleonic wars gave powerful impetus to popular rhetorical representations of England as a united community or family, but these imagined identities were always politically inflected. Two opposing ideas of national identity struggled for legitimacy of representation. The conservative *Gentleman's Magazine* rejoiced that bread, meat and drink were so distributed that in every town and almost every village, people were able to participate 'in the general joy and to keep the feast of peace, as one united family'.<sup>6</sup> The naturalising image of nation as a family constitutes the country as a benign organic hierarchy. Patronage of the poor by the rich, in the form of food and drink, was seen by conservatives as engendering those feelings of gratitude and benevolence that cemented the bonds of social unity. Within this ideal of nationhood, the privilege of rank and its bestowal of favours were viewed as essential for the maintenance of civility, cultivation and social order. In 1814, for example, the *Gentleman's Magazine* published a letter deprecating the violent changes that had occurred to the internal structure 'of ranks in old England'.<sup>7</sup> As the nostalgic reference to 'old England' suggests, the writer is hostile to what he sees as the growing importance of commerce and the City fostered by the administration of William Pitt. The new men, the writer claims, have 'ousted the old Country gentlemen [. . .] and shoved them into insignificance'. Another writer to *Gentleman's Magazine* even blamed a rise in suicide on 'this attempt to overthrow the bounds of society that have hitherto kept ranks of society distinct, and to confound and mix all that ought to have been kept separate'.<sup>8</sup> Those who feared such social and political confusion tended to look to Edmund Burke's powerful advocacy of rank and deference as the only sure foundation of national identity and as bulwark against social anarchy.

Not all imaginings of the nation as a unity were so opposed to change. As the *Edinburgh Review* claimed, peace brought with it possibilities of 'measureless improvements'. Progressive opinion welcomed the ending of war as offering the opportunity for a widening of participation in the public and political activities that, in effect, constituted a more inclusive ideal of national identity. In *British Society 1680–1880*, historian Richard Price writes, 'The French Revolution allowed the unthinkable to be imagined in politics.

It was for this reason that from the 1790s the boundaries of the politically (and socially) possible were continually tested and stretched.’ The revolution, Price argues, put reform irrevocably on the agenda, ‘largely because the French Revolution had extended the possibilities for the role of “the people” in the political nation’.<sup>9</sup> The question of who was recognised within perceptions of England as a nation became a matter of contestation. It was a moment of potential dissensus, to use Jacques Rancière’s term, when Burke’s vertical exclusivity of rank was challenged by an emergent horizontal regime making visible and audible those formerly regarded as beneath notice.<sup>10</sup> The Liberal *Edinburgh Review*, for example, argued that the whole revolutionary period had demonstrated that national prosperity and security rest upon ‘expressing and giving effect to the general sense of the community’.<sup>11</sup> The question of Catholic emancipation much debated in the public sphere during 1813 was also expressed, by those in favour of reform, as encouraging ‘expanded affections which embrace the whole community in one system of fair and equal legislation, by which the several parts of the social body shall be as it were amalgamated into an harmonious whole’.<sup>12</sup>

Both the above quotations are implicitly drawing upon a widely recognised sense that a literate public opinion had developed rapidly during the latter part of the eighteenth century and was continuing to extend its social boundaries. This expanding community of the informed and literate, ‘the people’, was a strengthening presence within national life. In *Emma*, the young tenant farmer, Robert Martin, provides a fictional illustration of the new class of citizen. Emma dismisses Robert Martin as having nothing to do with the public realm of books although he is actually well-informed and well-read. Emma’s initial response, here, in refusing to ‘notice’ Martin, voices the traditional regime of the perceptible in which those of lower rank are rendered mute and invisible within a tightly-circumscribed, elite perception of who constitutes England.

Nevertheless, in the real world, despite reactionary views like those of Emma, there were increasing voices in the public sphere, warning of the damaging effects of patronage as the dominant form of social relations. Critics argued that rather than maintaining national stability, patronage was exerting a deadening influence on the country’s energies, holding back necessary change. In early 1814, the *Monthly Review*, a moderate liberal journal, was rehearsing the evils of government by patronage.<sup>13</sup> Maria Edgeworth

contributed to this critical discourse in her novel appropriately titled *Patronage* (1814), which contrasts the fortunes of two families, one relying only on their own energetic endeavours and the other resting upon hope of influence. A reviewer in the *Edinburgh Review* explained that the book offered 'a picture of miseries resulting from a dependence on *Patronage*, in every form and degree, and throughout every station in society'.<sup>14</sup> The strongest critics of patronage and privilege were those advocating the ideology of competitive individualism. They were, in effect, the spokespeople for the aspiring middle class. The pernicious effects of influence are also at the centre of *Emma*, and Austen, like Edgewood, sees patronage as damaging those who bestow favour as much as those who are recipients. Nevertheless, Austen's representation is more nuanced in terms of social class. Austen recognises that patronage was a source of influence and power that many of the middle class were willing, even eager, to exploit in their own interests.

As this suggests, it is a mistake to understand the conflict between traditional values like patronage and the new competitive ethos of individualism in unambiguous binary terms of old ruling elite against new commercial middle class. The main aim of the aspiring middle class was elevation into the elite, to become part of those recognised as the perceptible nation. Richard Price argues that, 'Competition and convergence describe the relationship between the middling classes and the patriciate. It is helpful [. . .] to imagine middle-class consciousness as a spectrum bounded at one end by emulation of the landed elite and at the other end by competition with its styles and politics' (*British Society*, p. 311). In particular, Price claims, the middle class consolidated its hegemonic visibility and audibility by emulating and competing in the assertion of economic, cultural and social patronage. One of the main locations in which the middle class was able to challenge the traditional elite in the exercise of influence and patronage was within the cultural realm demarcated as taste. Taste is a pre-eminent means of rendering status visible. The other sphere of competition was patriotism. Any real or perceived threat to the nation was seized upon as an oratorical and practical opportunity to display public patriotism. Middle-class women vied with aristocratic ladies in proclaiming loyalty as English women.

During the early years of the nineteenth century, there was indeed plenty to alarm even those less timid than Mr Woodhouse as to the precariousness of social order. Luddism was still a threat, and a series of bad harvests had exacerbated the hunger and suffering

of the poor, resulting in bread riots, attacks upon property, and an increase in burglary and housebreaking. Even those living in unaffected areas of the country could have their fears aroused by the frequent reports of law-breaking and disorderliness in the lower classes that featured prominently in all the daily, weekly and monthly journals.<sup>15</sup> In 1811, the *Gentleman's Magazine* carried an appeal to the Women of England to concern themselves with the plight of the poor by teaching the bible, presumably with the aim of preserving deference.<sup>16</sup> Emma certainly concerns herself with helping the poor, but the emphasis is upon her practical administration to physical needs and well-being rather than to their minds or souls. She also inadvertently benefits when Mr Woodhouse's fear of housebreaking persuades him to look more favourably on the change her marriage will bring.

The opening paragraphs of the novel, however, play not upon threats of disorder, but upon fairy-tale motifs that evoke an arrested, spell-bound world. Emma is the youngest daughter, her mother died while she was still a child, and like all princesses she is handsome, clever and imperious. Her doting father allows her full sway over their small kingdom or platoon, to borrow Burke's term. Yet the language hints that the stasis of this select community is precarious. The use of the conditional 'seemed' in the first sentence hints that the idyllic existence may lack reality. This suggestion is reinforced three paragraphs later by the deictic phrase 'at present'. Even more than Austen's recurrent use of 'now' in her narratives, 'at present' foregrounds temporality, the inevitable progression from past through to future. 'At present' evokes simultaneously the apparent immediacy of the moment and its ephemeral span.

Hartfield can be read metaphorically as symbolising those national values, revered by Burke, of tradition, stability, fixture and civility. In the terms set out by Michel de Certeau, Hartfield is a 'place' as opposed to a 'space'. A place, de Certeau suggests, is ruled by the law of the proper.<sup>17</sup> 'Place' implies stability, boundaries and order. By contrast, space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. While the former is viewed rather in the manner of a completed tableau, the latter exists largely as an experience of movement. In the novel, Hartfield is perceived by all the characters as a small world existing under the inviolable law of regularity and fixity. Geographically, socially and mentally it exists complete within the boundaries of its own self-sufficiency. Although Hartfield 'did really belong' to Highbury – the language again signals reluctance by its inhabitants to accept that reality – it is separated

from the town by extensive lawns and shrubberies, another hint of *Sleeping Beauty* seclusion (p. 5).

Mr Woodhouse is the almost caricatured representation of all of Hartfield's time-resisting values. He hates the idea of matrimony because it is the origin of change. He is correct about this in that marriage alliances are the nexus of money and property transactions, of status and power relations, and of generational movement of past to future. The transformation of Miss Taylor into Mrs Weston not only introduces change into Hartfield, it also signifies the possibility of movement across divisions of rank, as formerly dependent governess becomes wife of property-owning Mr Weston. Not surprisingly then, perhaps, the marriage provides the catalyst which sets in motion, directly or indirectly, all the other changes and social reconfigurations in the narrative.

Emma, too, is set firmly against change. She is resolute in her determination not to marry. 'I cannot really change for the better', she tells Harriet with wonderfully unknowing irony (p. 90). For most of the story she is adamant as to the importance of maintaining a fixed social hierarchy, a wholly vertical ordering in which only the speech and visibility of the higher classes are deemed worthy of notice. Emma's language echoes that of conservatives in the public sphere of the day. 'One should be sorry to see greater pride or refinement in a teacher of a school' she asserts (p. 58). Her immediate negative assumption is that Robert Martin and his family are intent on climbing out of their lower-class invisibility (p. 27). As this suggests, she views any mixed social interaction as occasioning risk of irregularity, insubordination and transgression of the proper. Even Frank Churchill displeases her with his 'indifference to a confusion of rank, [that] bordered too much on inelegance of mind' (pp. 213–14). Emma maintains a social distance around herself no less than the physical separation of lawns and shrubbery. Her language suggests an almost visceral fear that contact with the socially unrecognised will contaminate the integrity of her sovereign self. Her 'horror [. . .] of falling in with the second rate and third rate of Highbury' is such that she 'seldom went near them' (p. 165). To fall from privileged eminence is to lose perceptibility in the mass of undistinguished others.

Hartfield, then, as a place, symbolises a regime of vertically regulated order, and absolute, unchanging values. Highbury, by contrast, can be understood horizontally as a space of possibility and change, brought about by chance meetings, empirical contiguity and unregulated social interaction. Harriet bumps into Robert

Martin and his sister when she is sheltering from the rain in Ford's shop. Jane Fairfax is seen by Mr John Knightley as she goes to the post-office to forestall any letter from Frank Churchill (p. 316). Highbury, a 'populous village', in the process of becoming a town (p. 5), can be seen as a synecdoche for a changing England. It is a space in which social boundaries are porous and social relations largely governed by reciprocity rather than patronage. In particular, the continual circulation of gossip in Highbury constitutes a space in which identity is understood as primarily social rather than private and in which truth is dispersed into an interactive multiplicity of viewpoints.

It is worth noting that Emma's hatred of Highbury gossip is not because it is in any way malicious, but because it flows horizontally violating her strict sense of vertical social divisions. It takes liberties in other words. Highbury gossip can be thought of in terms of what Rancière calls the garrulous muteness of previously inconsequential social life to which democratic realism gives voice. The text offers an intriguingly modern image of the nation as a larger version of an interactive community brought into being through a continuous, horizontal circulation of news, gossip and shared consciousness. 'The post-office is a wonderful establishment,' Jane Fairfax declares, 'The regularity and dispatch of it! [. . .] So seldom that a letter among the thousands that are constantly passing about the kingdom, is ever carried wrong' (p. 320). John Knightley, in agreeing, attributes the efficiency and capacity of the system to the fact that it serves and is paid for by 'the public', the new, anti-hierarchical force in post-revolutionary politics.

Another way of reading the contrast of values between Hartfield and Highbury is that of the Enlightenment opposition between idealism and materialism, continuing Austen's critique of the former mode of thought. Throughout *Emma*, recurrent distinctions are drawn between body or person, terms used synonymously, and mind. Mr Woodhouse is introduced as a valetudinarian, inactive in 'mind or body' (p. 5). Emma finds little elegance of 'person or of mind' in Highbury, while Mr Elton is deemed by its inhabitants to be perfection 'both in person and mind' (pp. 179, 187). Even more frequent than these dualistic references in the text is the recurrence of the word 'idea'. Many of the characters speak of having an idea but Emma does so most of all. She uses the term three times in her speculations with Mr Knightley as to what sort of person Frank Churchill will prove to be. 'I have no idea of him being a weak young man,' she asserts, adding, 'My idea of him is, that he can

adapt his conversation to the taste of every body' (pp. 160, 161). Later in the story, she comically accuses Mrs Weston of taking up an 'idea' and running away with it and later she 'even wept over the idea' of leaving her father should she marry (pp. 244, 474). What this last example demonstrates is the emotive force of ideas, and yet what the many textual references also imply is that this mental speculation is often untested by material reality. The world of mind is largely unchecked by physical actuality. There is similarity here with Marianne Dashwood, in *Sense and Sensibility*, whose enthusiasm for her own 'systems of thought' are based upon 'ignorance of the world'.

As in *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen ironises the willingness to allow mind tyranny over matter, especially the imposition of subjective perceptions upon the lives of others. Mr Woodhouse is the most humorously treated example of this dominance of the mental over the actual. His 'general benevolence' remains just that, a largely abstract principle undirected by any real knowledge of others. Typically he 'protects' his guests from those very dishes they would most enjoy. Such vague well-meaning has little moderating force upon his life-long 'habits of gentle selfishness' (p. 6). Like other idealists he is 'never able to suppose that other people could feel differently from himself' (p. 6). Equally, like many idealists he is governed by a pervasive bodily fearfulness and dislike of the physical world. He shuns exposure to outside elements just as doggedly as he shuns any opinion he dislikes, rarely venturing away from the fireside and even then fearful of draughts. Indeed, a striking feature of the text, generally, is a preoccupation with the state of the weather. This is one of the several means by which Austen underlines the physical nature of existence in contrast to Emma's concern with ideas. Mr Woodhouse regards food, also, with deep suspicion, as harmful rather than nurturing, only able to recommend thin gruel. Apart from events organised 'on his own terms' he has a horror of change to routine, of any activity or event, seeing them only as openings for physical harm, illness and discomfort (p. 19). As far as possible, Mr Woodhouse disavows the fact of physical life.

Emma lacks her father's nervous rejection of the physical and the text is at pains to stress her bodily vigour. Indeed, Emma's vitality is represented as so integral with her lively imagination and feelings that notions of the mind-body separation as invoked by Emma and others are implicitly challenged. Austen's representation of her characters, especially her heroines, gives powerful dramatic expression to David Hartley's sense of self as embodied energies, the physical,

the mental, the imaginative and the affective completely inseparable. So, too, Mr Knightley ‘always moves with the alertness of mind’ that suggests the indivisibility of physical and mental activity (p. 420). One reason why readers are convinced of the sexual charge between her characters is that, although she is the least explicit writer, she nevertheless conveys a full sense of them as embodied beings. Part of Austen’s irony in *Emma* is that Emma is so sure of her own mind that she fails to notice what her bodily feelings might well be able to tell her.

Certainly, for most of the narrative Emma privileges the mental realm at the expense of the empirical. She has ‘a mind delighted with its own ideas’ and she readily imposes these upon reality, as Mr Knightley terms it, quoting William Cowper, ‘Myself creating what I saw’ (pp. 23, 373). Typically, with Mr Elton she is ‘too eager and busy in her own previous conceptions and views to hear him impartially or see him with a clear vision’ (p. 105). We could understand this as a case of the metaphorical form of prospect or ‘vision’ overriding the basis of physical sight from which the figurative meaning ultimately derives. The distribution of the perceptible is regulated by the mind, as Austen’s persistent linking of the mental realm with verbs of seeing and hearing indicates. Emma’s prospect is indeed governed by her willed sense of the distanced eminence she enjoys, an Olympic perspective, conferred by the privileged entitlement of Hartfield. This produces, in Emma, a belief in her own panoptic insight, the source of much of the text’s irony. Emma assumes a patrician, god-like confidence in her knowledge of others and thus a habit of treating them as objects, subordinated to her greater scheme of things. This is the characteristic perspective of the idealist who imposes a mental conception on the particularity of the actual world. Adam Smith’s warning, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiment*, that the idealist is ‘so often enamoured with the supposed beauty of his own ideal plan’ that he imagines people can be arranged in accordance with it as easily as pieces can be arranged on a chess board applies with great aptitude to Emma.<sup>18</sup>

Emma repeatedly asserts that her judgements are beyond error. ‘There can be no doubt of your being a gentleman’s daughter’, she tells Harriet with sweeping confidence based upon nothing (p. 30). Similarly, she ‘could not feel a doubt’ about directing Harriet’s feelings towards Mr Elton, and as for her ability to manipulate and predict Mr Elton’s intentions, ‘I cannot have a moment’s doubt,’ she proclaims, adding, ‘I could not be so deceived’ (pp. 43, 78). This sense of vertical overview of others objectifies those who are subjected to

such Olympic speculation. They are indeed treated like chess pieces. Emma thinks of Harriet in terms of 'how useful' she will be; she was exactly 'the *something* which her home required' (p. 25, emphasis added). Jane Fairfax, equally, is of interest only for the use-value she has for Emma's imaginative plots and even Frank Churchill figures as much in Emma's romantic self-fictions as he does for her as a real person in his own right.

That Emma does have the redeeming capacity to enter into the perspectives of others is perhaps hinted at in her practical approach to poor families where she attends to their real physical needs. This contrasts positively with her father's inactive 'general benevolence' but even more so with Mrs Elton's Marie Antoinette posturing in wishing to ride to the strawberry-picking at Donwell on a donkey (p. 386). Mrs Elton's desire for a donkey as symbol of Arcadian simplicity provides a wonderfully comic image, yet it is typical of Austen's materialist psychology. Idealist assertions of the mental realm as the primary reality are undercut in her novels as objects persistently point to the way things are required to give substance to the immaterial. Things, in Austen's texts, demonstrate the necessary interdependence of the subjective and the objective, the idealist and the empirical. We know ourselves, even our interiority, through our interaction with things. The most explicit example of this in *Emma* is the sad little collection of '*Most precious treasures*', comprising a piece of plaster and a pencil stub, that Harriet stores away as a means of substantiating her romantic dreams of Mr Elton (p. 366).

In her fiction, Austen frequently foregrounds the metaphoric substantiation of immaterial values by means of those things closely associated with the physical necessities of life. This effects a transference from the empirical realm to the ideal, a shift which paradoxically disguises the physicality that the mental realm depends upon for existence. In this way, Austen's realism brings to notice a field of visibility – the materiality of human life – just as it is about to be rendered invisible in genteel discourse. As the nineteenth century progressed, only the embodied materiality of the poor, a presence betokening lack, the absence of interiority, was allowed perceptibility. In *Sense and Sensibility* references to fires and hearths afford substance to the textual opposition between cold-hearted civility and the warmth of traditional embodied sociability. In *Emma*, food is the main material thing by which immaterial values are mediated and concretised. As such, food participates in the characters' imaginative constitution of a self. While the text shows characters

wittingly and unwittingly using food to convey abstract meanings, Austen's references are meticulously particularised: leg of pork, fric-  
assee of sweetbread, scalloped oysters, asparagus and baked apples. Methods of cooking are also detailed as is the fact of butchering. For Mr Woodhouse, it is this materiality of food that provides him with means of expressing, by contrast, his sense of self as purely nervous sensibility. He elaborates exacting rules for cooking to render food less dangerous and is particular in sending away from the table anything he deems not up to his fanciful standards. Cooking is, of course, the most basic means by which we transform the physical into cultural values.

For Miss Bates, food constitutes one of the main currencies of traditional sociable reciprocity, a reciprocity firmly based in the physical exigencies of existence. When Emma unexpectedly gratifies her with a rare visit, Miss Bates's welcome flows metonymically, but always materially, from anxiety about wet shoes, to concern for Mr Woodhouse's health, to pressing invitations to take some 'sweet-cake from the beaufet' which Mrs Cole had earlier 'been so kind as to say she liked very much' (p. 166). When the Bateses receive a gift of pork from Hartfield their immediate response is to invite friends to share it. Miss Bates welcomes apples from Donwell so that they can be given to Jane who is without appetite. For Miss Bates, who has no wealth, food is a means of generosity, of expressing her care for others. As such, it secures her sense of self as a wholly social being.

Quite the opposite is the case with Mrs Elton. Food for her functions as individualistic self-promotion and status enhancement. She boasts to Emma of living in such a style as makes unexpected guests for dinner no inconvenience. 'I should be extremely displeased if Wright were to send up such a dinner as could make me regret having asked more', she declares (p. 306). She plans to impress Highbury with a 'very superior party' with waiters engaged 'to carry around refreshments at exactly the proper hour, and in the proper order' (p. 314).

References to giving, cooking and eating food form a continuous, discursive thread throughout the text, indicating the interdependence of the physical with the immaterial. Yet, the 'thing' that most dramatically appears in the story is the piano given to Jane Fairfax. This is certainly not merely a device required by the plot. The piano can be thought of as a 'gathering' to use Bruno Latour's terminology.<sup>19</sup> It constitutes a pivotal intersection of the various forces contending for national dominance in early nineteenth-century England.

In particular, the piano mediates the mixture of competition and emulation by which the middle class sought to impose themselves as part of the perceptible nation. It is Austen's ironic representation of this competitive emulation that drives the narrative of *Emma*, as Mrs Elton's assertive individualism challenges Emma's presumption of inborn right.

In *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History*, Arthur Loesser associates the rapid growth in popular appeal of the piano, from its first introduction into England in the 1750s, with a growing obsession to achieve and maintain gentility. By the nineteenth century, he claims, this was the 'most anxious ambition, the very aim of life of most English middle-class people [. . .] an endless quest [. . .] [that] was relative and competitive'.<sup>20</sup> As middle-class wealth grew this aspiration for gentility was proclaimed by conspicuous display of 'all its paraphernalia and insignia. Among the latter, one of the most persistent was the keyboard instrument' (*Men, Women*, p. 188).

In *Piano Roles: Three Hundred Years of Life with the Piano*, James Parakilas confirms this centrality of the piano within the cultural shift taking place in post-revolutionary England, whereby power and status were in process of transferring from the old landed elite to a widening 'circle of the population thinking of itself as "the people"'.<sup>21</sup> Parakilas goes further, linking the role of the piano in this cultural revolution with the processes of change set in motion by the Industrial Revolution. It constituted a shift towards the mass production and consumerism that would breach the exclusivity of the cultural capital of landed wealth. The rapidly growing market for musical products fostered by the competitive cultural ambitions of the middle class 'involved new means of producing and distributing cultural goods – pianos, printed music, journals, systems of education and opinion – on a mass and international scale' (*Three Hundred Years*, p. 93). In his study, Loesser argues that the actual physical form of the piano rendered it adaptable to mass production. The piano, unlike other instruments, was 'the factory's natural prey' (*Men, Women*, p. 233). John Broadwood's son, James, seems to confirm this claim. In 1798, he wrote to a wholesaler anxious for his order to be filled, 'Would to God we could make them like muffins!' (quoted in *Three Hundred Years*, p. 41).

In addition to its situation as a nexus of cultural competition and widening access to taste through mass production processes, the piano also played a pro-active role in directly promoting and enlarging the public sphere. In doing so it was part of the forces

that commercialised the public realm. The drive to make the piano an ever-cheaper product to meet a mass market required a commensurate increase in public promotion of the instrument. One of the first means of advertising the virtues of pianos was by putting on public concerts entirely of piano performances. This in turn fostered the production and mass sale of music for the piano, as well as an expanding job market for music teachers. Soon, leading journals began to carry regular reviews of new music, musical clubs were formed and specialist music publications acted, in effect, like mail-order catalogues allowing the public to keep up with all that was new and fashionable in the musical world. This range of activity, spreading horizontally across the public sphere, undoubtedly helped to bring into being an imagined national community of those aspiring to be recognised as bearers of taste and cultivated consumerist life-style. More generally, like the circulation of mail, the circulation of music helped generate and swell a self-identifying national community of 'the people'.

It is not surprising that both Loesser and Parakilas include sections on Jane Austen in their books, as a writer keenly aware of the cultural implications of the instrument. Certainly music features throughout *Emma*. One of Frank Churchill's first questions to Emma is whether Highbury is a musical society (p. 206). In contrast to Frank's enthusiasm, Emma fears that musical events will entail inattention to proper social divisions. Certainly, music is most emphasised by those characters wishing to underpin or enhance their social status. The newly wealthy Coles have purchased a grand pianoforte for display in the drawing room although the expensive instrument is only of use for the daughters' music lessons. Mrs Cole explains that Mr Cole is 'so particularly fond of music that he could not help indulging himself in the purchase' (p. 233). Mrs Cole is also careful to point out that although the piano sent to Jane is 'a very elegant looking instrument it is not a grand' (p. 232). As the price of pianos fell with increased production, competition in display was safeguarded by the ostentatious size and luxury wood and fittings of grand pianos only available to the wealthy.

Mrs Elton, rather like Mr Cole, protests that while her playing is mediocre, 'I am dotingly fond of music – passionately fond; – and my friends say I am not entirely devoid of taste' (p. 298). What is registered here is an elevation of subjective taste over physical performance. For young women, like Jane Fairfax, needing to earn a livelihood as governesses or to sustain claims to gentility as an asset in the marriage market, the ability to play well depended

on long hours daily devoted to the physical drudgery of repetitive practice. For the well-to-do, affirmation of passionate appreciation was sufficient to confirm privileged status as superior interiority. Mrs Elton almost claims that music replaces physical needs to sustain her life. 'I do not think I can live without something of a musical society,' she declares, 'without music, life would be a blank for me' (p. 298). In addition to substantiating inner superiority, music provides Mrs Elton, as it did non-fictional middle-class women, with opportunities to gain visibility and influence. Mrs Elton proposes that she and Emma establish a musical club to hold regular weekly meetings (p. 299).

Mrs Elton's challenge to Emma's privileged position extends beyond the sphere of musical activities, however. She asserts the right of patronage. In so doing she threatens the fundamental vertical structure of class power. Emulation in this particular is highly competitive. Emma is loud in her protests against the offensiveness of Mrs Elton's patronising manner, largely because Emma's own patrician identity is given substance by exercising her power for benevolence.<sup>22</sup> Early on in their friendship, Harriet assures Emma that while she finds favour at Hartfield she has no fear of others looking down upon her birth. Emma replies complacently, 'You understand the force of influence pretty well, Harriet' (p. 30). Later, Emma comically boasts that her patronage has had a beneficial influence on Harriet in that she has 'perhaps given her a little more decision of character' (p. 44). She has, of course, completely undermined and confused whatever independence of mind and action Harriet might originally have possessed. When Harriet shows even the most deferential impulse to follow her own inclination towards Robert Martin, the threat of displeasure and penalty, always present in relations of patronage, is quickly revealed. 'It would have grieved me to lose your acquaintance, which must have been the consequence of your marrying Mr Martin [. . .] I could not have visited Mrs Robert Martin, of Abbey-Mill Farm' (p. 56). Harriet is aghast at her narrow escape from exile from favour and rendered more debilitatingly grateful than ever.

The case of Mrs Weston, by contrast, points to the desirability of independence over dependence, even for one so affectionately regarded by those she serves. 'She had lived long enough to know how fortunate she might well be thought [. . .] her [new] situation was altogether the subject of hours of gratitude to [her]' (p. 17). Mr Knightley is of the same opinion: 'I have a great regard for you and Emma,' he tells Mr Woodhouse, but, he asks rhetorically, 'when it

comes to the question of dependence or independence!’ (p. 9). Mr Woodhouse deplores the changes brought about by the marriage and another way of understanding these changes within the narrative structure would be as a movement away from vertical relations of superiority and subordination towards a less hierarchical social formation in which patronage and dependence are replaced by horizontal interdependence and reciprocal esteem.

It is Mr Knightley who points out the dangers involved for those who exercise influence. It fosters a complacent sense of their own self-sufficiency with a consequent blindness to the actual needs and rights of others. The flattery inherent in any relations of patronage enhances the patroniser’s sense of power and omniscience, hence the egoistic dividend it constantly provides in magnifying the idea of self. Harriet is, in this sense, the ‘very worst sort of companion’ Emma could have, Mr Knightley complains, ‘She is a flatterer in all her ways [. . .] How can Emma imagine she has anything to learn herself, while Harriet is presenting such delightful inferiority?’ (p. 39). Emma does indeed boast, ‘I cannot change for the better.’

The Woodhouses are ‘first in consequence’ in their community due to birthright.<sup>23</sup> They represent neither new money nor new blood, Emma takes pride in thinking. What infuriates Emma is that Mrs Elton utterly refuses to give place or recognition to the old hierarchy of rank upon which Emma relies. ‘I am Lady Patroness, you know. It is my party’, Mrs Elton informs Mr Knightley in regard to the strawberry-gathering at Donwell (p. 385). She graciously bestows her favour upon Mr Woodhouse, this ‘dear old beau of mine’, and Mrs Weston, ‘I was rather astonished to find her so very lady-like! But she is really quite the gentlewoman’ (pp. 326, 300). By thus sweeping everyone in Highbury into her condescending bestowal of recognition, she magnifies her own imagined idea of self as measured by the extent of her social dominion. Mrs Elton is one of those many characters in Austen’s fiction whose representation seems strikingly to dramatise self as factitious; yet it is a performance driven by embodied needs and passions. Mrs Elton’s discourse resembles a torrent of egoistic energy that sweeps all topics into the vortex of her sense of self-importance. Hartfield becomes only a copy of Maple Grove, the distance from Enscombe in Yorkshire to London only a means of comparison for the distance of Maple Grove to the capital. Her speech might be understood as a discursive caricature of the new, unstoppable, highly audible force of individualistic ambition.

The humiliation inflicted upon those who are in no position to resist patronage is most graphically demonstrated in Mrs Elton's officious assumption of the right to take control of Jane Fairfax's life, to promote her social visibility. Soon after her arrival in Highbury, she tells Emma grandly, 'my resolution is taken as to noticing Jane Fairfax [. . .] [I] shall introduce her wherever I can, shall have musical parties to draw out her talents' (p. 306). Although Emma would have been loath to recognise it, there are ironic parallels here with her own objectification of Harriet. Her resolution on first meeting Harriet is, '*She* would notice her; she would improve her' (p. 23). Mrs Elton is also like Emma in her sweeping assumption that Olympian elevation over others affords her a privileged perspective into their characters. 'I know what a modest creature you are', she informs Jane Fairfax (p. 325). She reassures Mr Knightley, 'Indeed I do you justice my good friend. Under that peculiar sort of dry, blunt manner, I know you have the warmest heart. As I tell Mr E., you are a thorough humourist' (p. 387).

Emma's trajectory from the idealist exclusivity of Hartfield towards a more integrated mode of social interaction requires a rejection of her sense of interiority as location of privileged knowledge, authorising the right to speak and decide for others. This process is narrated as a movement from the vertical hierarchies of place to the horizontal motility of space, from metaphor to metonymy, and from subjective idealism to social being. Emma is first impelled beyond the social exclusivity of Hartfield by an invitation from the Coles to admire the new pianoforte. After much hesitation she is forced to recognise that her former 'dignified seclusion' no longer compensates for the denial of social interchange, even if some of those contacts are vulgar. She agrees to dine with a large socially mixed party of Highbury folk at the Coles, although she still condones this to herself in terms of patronage: 'She must have delighted the Coles – worthy people, who deserved to be made happy' (p. 249). From this point her shift of orientation towards Highbury continues until her brother-in-law, John Knightley, can point out, 'There can be no doubt of your being much more engaged with company than you used to be [. . .] Your neighbourhood is increasing, and you mix more with it' (p. 337). Through this expansion beyond the boundaries of Hartfield, Emma slowly learns to move beyond her solipsistic complacency, exchanging a vertical perspective on others for a horizontal ability to enter into viewpoints that differ from her own and to accord them validity. Her extended recognition dramatises a redistribution of the perceptible.

This entails a radical transformation. When Mr John Knightley perceptively warns her of Elton's romantic interest in her, Emma laughs to herself at his mistake in terms which are much more applicable to herself: 'She walked on, amusing herself in the consideration of the blunders which often arise from a partial knowledge of circumstances, of mistakes which people of high pretensions to judgement are for ever falling into' (pp. 120–1). With such comical self-certainty, it takes considerable time and some painful experience before she is able to recognise the narrow partiality of her own construct of reality. She is reluctantly forced to concede that from Mr Elton's perspective a very different notion of truth might have seemed reasonable. 'Emma was obliged in common honesty to stop and admit that her own behaviour to him had been so complaisant and obliging [. . .] if *she* had so misinterpreted his feelings, she had little right to wonder that *he*, with self-interest to blind him, should have mistaken hers' (pp. 147–8). What Emma begins to move towards here is a shift into the perspective of others, as advocated by Adam Smith (*TMS*, p. 157). For Smith, it is this capacity for extended consciousness that promotes and sustains a just and humane community.

Throughout the story, Harriet is the recurrent victim of Emma's delusions of Olympian knowledge of others. The final catastrophe is when she again imposes her own perspective upon Harriet's mind and mistakenly gives approval to Harriet's inclinations for Mr Knightley. It is this final shock to her sense of self-security that drives home to Emma the harmful folly of presuming the right to know and direct the lives of others. 'With insufferable vanity had she believed herself in the secrets of everybody's feelings; with unpardonable arrogance proposed to arrange everybody's destiny [. . .] She was proved to have been universally mistaken' (p. 449).

For much of the novel, Miss Bates forms a striking contrast with Emma's patrician self-sufficiency. For Miss Bates, no-one is beyond or beneath the range of her sympathetic recognition. Her being is almost wholly social, a continuous metonymic flow from self to others. Her unstoppable discourse is sometimes likened to that of Mrs Elton but, in fact, it represents the opposite pole from egoistic self-assertion. Miss Bates's speech is largely responsible for the narrative constitution of the imagined community of Highbury; it teems with the presence of others. 'I do not care for myself', she declares at the beginning of one of those voluble outflows that moves without pause from Jane, to Mrs Weston, to Mrs Stokes, to Mr Woodhouse, to Mr Dixon and Colonel Campbell and so on (p. 348). If Mrs

Elton's speech represents the acquisitive centripetal energy of individualism, Miss Bates's discourse represents the centrifugal force of social being. Austen's representation of Miss Bates gives audibility to those who are indeed part of the national community but who are unheard and unseen within the privileged consensus of who constitutes England.

She goes further than this. Miss Bates becomes the agency by which Emma begins to radically adjust her vertical system of values towards a perception of egalitarian mutual esteem. Miss Bates, a woman without money, status, husband, beauty or youth becomes an active determinant upon the course of Emma's privileged life. On Box Hill, Emma thoughtlessly sacrifices Miss Bates's feelings for the sake of exhibiting her own wit. As Mr Knightley insists, just for 'the pride of the moment', Miss Bates is humiliated in front of her friends (p. 408). The truth of this accusation strikes home. Emma 'felt it at her heart. How could she have been so brutal, so cruel to Miss Bates!' (p. 409). The starkly physical language registers embodied shock as Emma takes in the inhumanity of her conduct. Her enclosure within an imaginary realm of self-complacency is shattered. Miss Bates had, up to then, no tangible presence for her. Social distinction, like Emma's, does not lead to shared consciousness of others as fellow beings; rather it renders others imperceptible, of no consequence. In Adam Smith's words Emma has to accept that she is 'but one of the multitude and in no respect better than any other in it' (*TMS*, p. 158). When the consequence of her brutality is brought home to her, Emma commits herself to a complete transformation of attitude: 'it should be the beginning, on her side, of a regular, *equal*, kindly intercourse' (p. 410, emphasis added).

Robert Martin is the other character whom Emma regards as existing beneath the level of the perceptible. Ironically, he, too, like Miss Bates, measures the transformation of Emma's viewpoint from vertical distance to horizontal respect. When Harriet first mentions Robert Martin, Emma's dismissal of him is unequivocal, 'A young farmer [. . .] is the very last sort of person to raise my curiosity,' she says haughtily, 'The yeomanry are precisely the order of people with whom I feel I can have nothing to do [. . .] a farmer can need none of my help, and is therefore in one sense as much above my notice as in every other he is below it' (p. 29). At this point in the story, Emma can only envisage social relations in terms of bestowing patronage. Her use of the already somewhat old-fashioned term 'yeomanry' also suggests the backward-looking perspective she is adhering to. It echoes the perspective of those nostalgic for a mythical 'old England'.

Emma's enforced further considerations of Robert Martin serve in the text to challenge conservative opinion as to what constitutes a gentleman and claims to gentility. Austen's representation engages actively with current debates in the public sphere as to who constitutes 'the people' of a modern nation. It was a conflict between two regimes of the perceptible, the one structured upon a traditional vertical order and the other on an emergent possibility of social inclusion. Robert Martin represents the growing, heterogeneous public realm of the literate and informed. Indeed, Emma's class prejudices are most strongly challenged by the articulacy of Robert Martin's letter proposing marriage to Harriet. Emma is compelled to recognise that it is a composition that 'would not have disgraced a gentleman', grammatically correct, using strong, unaffected language and expressing 'good sense, warm attachment, liberality, propriety, even delicacy of feeling' (p. 53). Faced with such unimpeachable material evidence of admirable human qualities, Emma uneasily admits surprise. She quickly reasserts her superiority, however, through the assumption of knowledge, 'Yes, I understand the sort of mind' (p. 53). Soon she is happy to ignore the physical substance of the letter. She reverts to her mental preconception, reconsigning Robert Martin to those who can be dismissed from visibility and audibility as 'the society of the illiterate and vulgar' (p. 56). The stark contradictions within Emma's judgements here are further foregrounded by the subsequent ill-natured and affected behaviour of Mr Elton, whom she has been holding up to Harriet as the gentlemanly model against whom Robert Martin must be found wanting.

Mr Knightley's consistent praise for Robert Martin also sustains the text's questioning of what is meant by 'gentleman' and 'gentility' within a changing social order. When Emma insists that Harriet 'knows what gentlemen are' and will not be satisfied with less, Mr Knightley retorts, 'Robert Martin's manners have sense, sincerity and good-humour to recommend them; and his mind has more true gentility than Harriet Smith could understand!' (p. 69). In contrast to Emma's snobbish rigidity in asserting she can have no curiosity about Robert Martin since she can be of no use to him, Mr Knightley communicates with him as a friend. What is more, he overthrows the relations of patronage by readily admitting his dependence upon Martin's good sense (p. 516). The complete transformation of Emma's view of social possibilities is confirmed in her acknowledgement that 'It would be a great pleasure to know Robert Martin' (p. 519). Knowledge of others, she recognises, at last, does not reside in the Olympic perspective conferred by privileged place,

but arises out of the horizontal processes of non-hierarchical social interaction in a space of possibility.

It needs to be stated that while the narrative structure of *Emma* points to the possibility of a new inclusive representative regime of who constitutes the nation, it in no way contemplates a redistribution of wealth or property. Sandie Byrne rightly points out that despite Austen's depiction of a 'mobile and consumerist society [. . .] Robert Martin is not invited to the Donwell strawberry-picking [. . .] anymore than he is to the ball or the Box Hill expedition'.<sup>24</sup> Of course, the fact that he is a busy working farmer would deny him the leisure for the first and last of these events. What the novel seems to advocate is a shift of recognition from the rules of vertical exclusion to a more horizontal and egalitarian engagement with the perspectives of a wider social interaction. In advocating this new regime of perceptibility, Austen engages dialogically in the more progressive, inclusive discourse of 'the people' and 'the public' of the post-Revolutionary era. Like them, she welcomes the prospect of the nation as a less hierarchical community, a view of social interaction at odds with an idealist version of 'old England'. The several references in *Emma* to England and Englishness are striking. Yet while Austen joins in the criticism of rank and patronage, as expressed by liberal journals like the *Edinburgh Review*, she saves her harshest satire for the new force of competitive individualism, as exemplified by Mrs Elton. As against both exclusivity of birth and the aggressive dominance of self-interest, Austen holds out the possibility or prospect of horizontal social interaction as a basis of self and of England. What is more, the vehicle of this radical transformation is a young woman, Emma.

The novel is set in motion by a marriage and it concludes with one. Since marriage instigates change it is reasonable to ask what kind of values will be inaugurated in the union of Emma and Mr Knightley. Claudia Johnson argues persuasively that Mr Knightley represents a modern, business-like, untraditional hero; that he is 'in some respects a new man'.<sup>25</sup> Yet, some readers and critics have been uneasy about Emma's apparent capitulation into wifely domesticity at the conclusion of the story. Emma certainly expresses deep humiliation at her conduct and acknowledges the superiority of Knightley's judgement in regard to Robert Martin, yet her sense of the ridiculous cannot sustain prolonged moral penitence, 'there was no preventing a laugh' (p. 519). Similarly to Woolf, laughter, for Austen, is a radical force against presumption and power. Indeed, the strongest bond between Emma and Knightley resides in their egalitarian willingness

to tease and challenge each other. ‘Do you dare suppose me so great a blockhead,’ Knightley cries with mock masculine outrage, ‘What do you deserve?’ Emma’s reply, ‘Oh! I always deserve the best treatment because I never put up with any other’ does not suggest a wife willing to subordinate herself (p. 517). This point is underlined more seriously by the narrator’s comment that Mrs John Knightley’s ‘extreme sweetness of temper must hurt his’ (p. 100).

Emma’s readiness to argue for her opinions and point of view ensures no such dominance of one perspective over the other’s. After a typical conflict of views, Knightley says, ‘let us be friends’, a word denoting equality of respect (p. 106). The contrast with her sister’s and John Knightley’s mode of marriage also suggests that domestic privacy will not be the ideological ethos of Emma’s and Knightley’s partnership. The narrative is at pains to represent Knightley as more sociable and communicative than his brother, John, and while her brother-in-law’s self-sufficient attachment to home at the expense of sociability is awarded respect by Emma, she is luke-warm in her approbation (p. 104). This suggests she and Knightley will inhabit a location that has more of the openness of a space than the vertical proprieties of a private, domestic place. The marriage, after all, locates change at the very heart of Hartfield.

Perhaps the national ‘prospect’ represented by the union of Emma and Knightley is figured imaginatively in the moment of shared vision (of both sight and thought) when Emma comes across Mr Knightley teaching Harriet about agricultural matters (surely a challenge to gender divisions) at the end of the lime avenue at Donwell overlooking Abbey-Mill Farm: ‘It was a sweet view – sweet to the eye and the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive’ (p. 391). It is ‘a sweet view’ of a horizontal prospect of the nation, bringing together Harriet of illegitimate birth, Robert Martin, tenant farmer, Knightley, landed-proprietor, and Emma of ancient stock. It is a scene in which oppression is absent, one uniting the needs of eye and mind, the physical equally with the mental, and associated with Emma’s and Knightley’s good-humoured tolerance of their differences of perspective.

It is, though, a mental prospect or idea of the nation only, without material evidence to substantiate it. It shimmers as a possibility, a vision. It is significant, perhaps, that almost the last word in the novel is awarded to Mrs Elton as voice of the new force of individualistic competitive consumption: ‘Very little white satin, very few lace veils; a most pitiful business! Selina would stare when she heard of it’ (p. 528).

## Notes

1. Roger Sales, *Jane Austen and Representations of Regency England*, p. 17.
2. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 135.
3. Richard Bourke, *Empire and Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke* offers a detailed account of Burke's influence upon conservative ideology.
4. *Edinburgh Review*, 1814, vol. 23, p. 2. Napoleon abdicated in April 1814 following the decisive invasion of Paris and capitulation of its leaders to the Coalition powers. He was exiled to Elba, from where he escaped in March 1815. In June 1815, he was conclusively defeated by the combined armies of Prussia and Britain, commanded by the Duke of Wellington.
5. Jane Austen, *Emma*, p. 460.
6. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1814, vol. 84, p. 131.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
8. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1808, vol. 78, p. 406.
9. Richard Price, *British Society 1680–1880: Dynamism, Containment and Change*, pp. 261, 262.
10. Jacques Rancière, 'Ten Theses on Politics', in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, pp. 1–2.
11. *Edinburgh Review*, 1814, vol. 22, p. 29.
12. *Monthly Review*, 1813, vol. 70, p. 60. In 1801, William Pitt had been forced to resign when he was unable to enact an emancipation bill due to the opposition of George III. The topic continued to arouse passionate public debate even though a bill was not passed until 1829.
13. *Monthly Review*, 1814, vol. 73, p. 291.
14. *Edinburgh Review*, 1814, vol. 22, pp. 416–34.
15. See, for example, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1812, vol. 82, pp. 80, 85, 285, 479–80, 483.
16. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1811, vol. 8, p. 502.
17. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 117.
18. Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, p. 275.
19. Bruno Latour, 'Why has Critique Run out of Steam: From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', in Bill Brown, ed., *Things*, p. 158.
20. Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History*, p. 187.
21. James Parakilas et al., *Piano Roles: Three Hundred Years of Life with the Piano*, p. 13.
22. William Galperin, *The Historical Austen*, also notes the aspirational similarities between Emma and Mrs Elton, but he argues that while those of the latter typify a utopian nostalgia, Emma moves from an early longing for a possibilist world to an acceptance of the regulatory nostalgia of domestic ideology.

23. Janine Barchas, *Matters of Fact in Jane Austen: History, Location and Celebrity*, argues that Austen's recurrent use of names, like Emma Woodhouse, belonging to actual people from the ranks of the nobility, often of some notoriety, is deliberate; if this is the case, it would add another layer of irony to the representation of Emma's transition from the snobbery of rank to a more egalitarian sense of social being, pp. 3–4, 225.
24. Sandie Byrne, *Jane Austen's Possessions and Dispossessions: The Significance of Objects*, p. 117.
25. Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, p. 201.