

The Language Of Jane Austen: A Study Of Some Aspects Of Her Vocabulary

Myra Stokes

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The Language of Jane Austen. A Study of Some Aspects of her Vocabulary. Myra Stokes. M. Macmillan. © Myra Stokes 1991. Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1991 All rights reserved. British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data Stokes, Myra The language of Jane Austen: a study of some aspects of her vocabulary - (The language of literature) 1. Fiction in English. Austen, Jane, 1775-1817 1. Title II. Series 823.7 ISBN 978-0-333-48305-3 ISBN 978-1-349-21309-2 (eBook) DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-21309-2. Contents. Abbreviations 1 The Social Context: Time, Place and Manner 2 Character: The Conceptual Context 3 Spirits 4 Manners 5 The Head 6 The Heart. Notes Bibliography Index a/Words. vi 1 28 46 80 117 153 185 193 196. Abbreviations. Jane Austen's six short novels, with a volume of letters and a handful of juvenilia and fragments, have given rise to a stream of critical commentary which, starting quietly enough in her own lifetime and hardly increasing in the course of the nineteenth century, has in our own generation swollen to a mighty torrent. At times, indeed, its rushing and roaring threatens to drown the author's own voice; and it may well be wondered whether there is just cause for yet another full-length study of the modest oeuvre of this novelist, whom Ian Watt has aptly described as "the most lucid and the least

Jane Austen critic Myra Stokes informs her readers that "we tend to have such a caricatured notion of the "drawing-room-world" of this period that it is perhaps worth emphasizing that formality was distinctly out of fashion." (Stokes 99) This was certainly true for Jane Austen. Towards the end of the novel, she lets the implied author seem to be fed up with describing the same formalities over and over again. Mr Bingley's formalities towards Mrs Bennet are rendered as follows: "He should be particularly happy at any time, etc. etc." (p.264, bold added).¹ *The Language of Jane Austen: A Study of Some Aspects of Her Vocabulary*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1991. p.96. Hereafter abbreviated Stokes. Jane Austen had six brothers, and one sister whose name was also Cassandra. Two of her brothers became naval officers and attained the rank of admiral. Her sister, Cassandra, was her close companion and friend. The immediate social circle of Jane Austen included the kind of men whom we meet in her novels—a landowner, a militia officer, two clergymen, and two sailors.² Jane Austen began to write stories early. Some of her early works survive in three note-books entitled *Volume the First*, *Volume the Second* and *Volume the Third*, containing short novels, plays, etc., all written before she was sixteen. By 1796, she had written a novel called *Elinor and Marianne*, in the form of a series of letters modelled on Richardson.