

Jane Austen 1775-1817

- The *Watsons* (between 1804 to 1807) becomes *Emma* (1816). In *Watsons*, character Emma Watson: good health, attractive, openhearted but constricted financially. In *Emma*, two separate characters—Emma and Jane Fairfax
- Austen never married (turned down a marriage proposal) and lived with her mother and sister
- Died at age 41, a year after the publication of *Emma*

Social History/World of Emma

- Jane Austen--"pictures of domestic life in country villages." Business ("little matters," 1.14) of everyday life. Provincial, insular world. Mr. Woodhouse--view of the gentry—conservative, tradition, landed property
- Novel of manners--traditional categories of social class distinction are challenged—Emma and Mr. Knightley's debate over Harriet Smith, Robert Martin, and Mr. Elton. Necessity of women to marry—alternative is to become governess or spinster (1.10)
- No cross section of society--compare to Dickens
- Domestic life--parlors, games--cards, picnics, balls, visiting, dinners//Farming--Robert Martin//Mr. Knightly (Abbey-Mill Farm/Donwell Abbey)
- Locations/Travel: Highbury, Enscombe, London, Maple Grove (What is considered a great distance?—2.18)

Novel and Realism

- The novel develops as a new and important literary form because it consciously foregrounded the individual's relationship to reality/daily life
- Individual's ideas originate in the impressions of external sensations on the mind—sensory impressions. Importance and value of emotions in mental and social life:
Romanticism and Sensibility
- Reality was defined by the individual confronting and perceiving it. Individual perception defines what he or she sees (e.g., Locke, Berkley), thus the interest in first-person narration. For Austen—dialogue

Realism and Emma

- Emma--anticipates and engages Romanticism--focus on individual and feelings, emotions (sensibility), not didacticism or universals
- Emma's views and actions show her struggle to maintain her independence within a class/gender system and societal preoccupation with marriage. Emma's desire is driven from her own sense of self, not strictly by social boundaries
- Narrative--romantic view of life is undercut by ironic commentary--social realities of class and gender. Subtext of the romance/marriage plot—role/value of female friendships/family