

# InsideOUT

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KENT THOMPSON,  
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World Premiere  
**Sense &  
Sensibility**  
*the musical*

*SENSE & SENSIBILITY THE MUSICAL*  
BOOK AND LYRICS BY JEFFREY HADDOW | MUSIC BY NEAL HAMPTON  
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY JANE AUSTEN

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# InsideOUT

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# Synopsis

*Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favor of matrimony.*

—Jane Austen,  
*The Illustrated Letters of Jane Austen*

When Mr. Henry Dashwood dies, leaving all of his money to his first wife's son, John Dashwood, his second wife and her two daughters are left with no permanent home and very little income. Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters, Elinor and Marianne, are able to rent a cottage at Barton Park in Devonshire, a three-day journey from London.

Elinor is sad to leave their home at Norland because she has become attached to Edward Ferrars, the brother-in-law of her half-brother, John. However, once at Barton Park, Elinor and Marianne make many new acquaintances, including the retired officer and bachelor Colonel Brandon, and the gallant and impetuous John Willoughby, who rescues Marianne after she twists her ankle running down a hill in the rain. The dashing Willoughby openly and unabashedly courts Marianne, until he suddenly announces that he must depart for London on business, leaving Marianne lovesick and miserable. Meanwhile, Lucy Steele appears in Barton Park. She ingratiates herself to Elinor and confides that she has been secretly engaged to Mr. Ferrars for four years. Elinor initially assumes that Lucy is referring to Edward's younger brother, Robert, but she is shocked and pained to learn that Lucy in fact means her beloved Edward.

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**E**linor and Marianne are welcomed by the ebullient Sir John and the jovial Mrs. Jennings. The girls travel to London with Mrs. Jennings who seems to know the gossip about everyone. Marianne is anxious to be reunited with Willoughby, but when she sees him at a fancy dress ball in London with another woman, he cruelly rebuffs her and then sends her a letter apologizing if he misled her. Marianne is profoundly crushed and disraught.

Colonel Brandon privately reveals to Elinor Willoughby's history of callousness and debauchery. Mrs. Jennings confirms Brandon's story and, sadly for Marianne, tells her the young man has squandered his fortune and is now engaged to the wealthy heiress, Miss Grey.

**T**his beginning does not bode well for the Dashwood sisters but these intelligent, young women eventually are able to secure a happier future. ■

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# JANE AUSTEN—A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

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*Nobody who has been in the interior of a family can say what the difficulties of any individual of that family may be.*

—Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Chapter 18

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Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1775 to Reverend George Austen of the Steventon rectory and Cassandra Austen of the Leigh family; she was the seventh child and second daughter to the couple. As her siblings were made up largely of brothers, she developed a close relationship with her elder sister, Cassandra. In order of birth, the Austen children were: James, Edward, Henry, Cassandra, Francis, George, Jane and Charles. Of all the brothers, Jane formed the closest bond with Henry, who became Jane’s literary agent in the later stages of her writing.

Growing up, the Austen children lived in an environment of open learning, creativity and dialogue. Reverend Austen, in addition to his clerical duties, supplemented his income by farming and tutoring. The Austen children flourished within this close-knit family, and Jane herself formed an exceptional bond with her father.

In 1783, at age 8, Jane was sent off to boarding school with sister Cassandra for three years for their formal education, which included French, music and dancing. Returning home, the rest of Jane’s education centered mainly on what her father and brothers taught her and, of course, what she gained from her own reading. Mr. Austen’s library was open to Jane and Cassandra and he supplied Jane with writing materials.

In 1787 Jane began taking more of an interest in generating her own stories and poems and keeping them in notebooks for future reference. These works became known as her *Juvenilia* and filled three notebooks.

In December 1795, when Jane was 20, a nephew of nearby neighbors began visiting Steventon. Tom LeFroy was a student in London studying to become a barrister. Jane and Tom began spending much time together and both families noticed it. Their relationship marks the one documented instance of Jane Austen admitting to falling in love; she spent much time writing to sister Cassandra about their growing attachment. Unfortunately for the pair, Tom LeFroy’s family viewed any engagement as highly impractical because Tom’s family was wealthy while Jane’s family

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wasn't. So Tom's family intervened and sent him away; every effort was made to keep the couple apart and Jane never saw him again.

**I**n December 1800, Jane's father George retired from the clergy, an announcement that seemed to take the whole family by surprise. The family left Steventon and moved to Bath where the elder Austens retired.

In 1802, when Jane was 27, she met Harris Bigg-Wither, a childhood friend of the family. Jane received her one and only marriage proposal from him and, sensing the practical measure of both their situations, Jane accepted. She expressed no feeling for him, but the convenience of being mistress of a large estate and providing for her family, proved attractive. Then, like one of her heroines, Jane revoked her acceptance the next day. In a letter to a niece some years later, she advised her not to marry if the affection was not there.

**I**n 1805 father George Austen died. The Austen family in crisis, the brothers agreed to help support Mrs. Austen and her two daughters. Eventually, brother Edward offered the women a cottage in Chawton village close to his estate. This quiet environment proved a productive setting to write, for Jane completed four novels there.

In 1811, brother Henry, a burgeoning banker who doubled as Jane's literary agent, approached publisher Thomas Egerton with the manuscript for *Sense and Sensibility*. Egerton agreed and the novel became a financial success for Jane. In 1813 he published *Pride and Prejudice*.

In early 1816, Jane noticed a decline in her health. However, she maintained an upbeat attitude and continued writing the final two chapters of *The Elliots*. While working on a new project, *The Brothers*, Jane was unable to walk and was simply exhausted with simple chores. Though Henry and Cassandra sought medical help in Manchester, little could be done. Jane Austen died on July 18, 1817 at the age of 41. She never wrote a memoir, sat for an interview or a portrait. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral. ■

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Spence, Jon. *Becoming Jane Austen*. London: Hambleton Continuum, 2007.

Tyler, Natalie. *The Friendly Jane Austen*. New York: Viking Press, 1999.

<http://www.janeausten.org/jane-austen-biography-2asp>.

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# THE NOVELS OF JANE AUSTEN

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## *Sense and Sensibility*

Begun in 1795 under the title *Elinor and Marianne*, it was published in 1811.

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## *Pride and Prejudice*

The first draft was written in 1796-77 under the title *First Impressions*, it was rewritten in 1811-12.

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## *Northanger Abbey.*

Originally entitled *Susan*, it was written in 1798-99.

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## *Mansfield Park*

Written between 1811 and 1813.

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## *Emma*

Written between 1814-15.

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## *Persuasion*

Written between 1815-16. ■

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<http://www.austen.com/novels.htm>

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# THE CREATIVE TEAM OF *SENSE & SENSIBILITY THE MUSICAL*

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**Jeffrey Haddow (book and lyrics)** is a 2009 winner of the BMI Harrington Award for Creative Achievement. With John Driver, Mr. Haddow created the musical revue *Scrambled Feet* which ran two years Off-Broadway, and was produced as a Showtime TV special starring Madeline Kahn. With Mr. Driver he also wrote the play *Chekhov in Yalta*, which had its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum in L.A., won a Los Angeles Drama Critics Distinguished Playwriting Award and was produced as a TV special starring Tom Courtenay. Other produced plays include *Ducks* (Musical Theatre Works), *Thin Ice* (WPA Theatre), *Scully & Royce* (Detroit Repertory Company) and *The Drunken Boat* (Circle Repertory Co.) Current projects include *At the Back of the North Wind* (book and co-lyrics with Thomas Tierney) a family musical based on the 19th century novel by George MacDonald; *Get Happy* (co-book with Sam Scalamoni, co-lyrics with Thomas Tierney); a new stage version of the MGM musical *Summer Stock*, and *The Year of Living Dangerously* (book and co-lyrics with composer Mr. Tierney), a musical adaptation of the novel by Christopher Koch. Mr. Haddow is a graduate of Northwestern University and a member of the Dramatists Guild and the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop.

**Neal Hampton (music)** wrote music for *The Chimes* (book, music/lyrics), which received a stage reading at NOMTI's Birth of a Musical Festival, incidental music for Lanford Wilson's *Book of Days* (Canadian premiere in Toronto), and additional songs (music/lyrics) for a production of *The Little Matchgirl* at Gloucester Stage. His arrangement of the *Splendor of Creation* can be heard in the Columbia Pictures release, *Mona Lisa Smile*. His compositions for ballet have been performed in the US and Europe. His song, "Something Must be Wrong with My Mistletoe," was recorded by the cast of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* on the 2006 *Carols for a Cure* CD. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild and the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop.

Mr. Hampton has conducted concerts with the Savannah Symphony, the Rhode Island Philharmonic, the Handel and Haydn Society, the Tallahassee Symphony and London's Westminster Philharmonic. He has premiered numerous contemporary works and conducted theatre and opera productions for the Boston Conservatory, Boston University, the College Light Opera

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Company and the Hasty Pudding Theatricals. His most recent New York appearance was at Town Hall as conductor of the Stoppard/Previn collaboration, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*. He currently serves on the faculties of Brandeis University and Wellesley College as Conductor of the Brandeis-Wellesley Orchestra.

**Marcia Milgrom Dodge** (director and choreographer) directed and choreographed the acclaimed Kennedy Center and Broadway revivals of *Ragtime*. She received a 2010 Tony Award nomination for Best Director of a Musical, two Drama Desk Award nominations for Direction and Choreography and an Astaire Award nomination for Choreography. Marcia also received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Direction of a Resident Musical. Her work as a director and choreographer has been seen throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain, South Korea and Denmark. New York productions include *Venus Flytrap* by Anthony Dodge (Active Theatre); *Seussical* (Theatreworks USA, Lortel Award nomination for Choreography), *Cookin'*, *Radio Gals*, *Closer Than Ever*, *Romance in Hard Times* (the Public) and *The Music Man* (New York City Opera). Regional: Reprise Theatre Company (*Cabaret*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*; Garland Award for Choreography), Flat Rock Playhouse (*Chicago*), many shows at Sacramento Music Circus, Maltz Jupiter Theatre (*Anything Goes*, Carbonell Award for Choreography), Bay Street Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Riverside Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Lyric Stage, Goodspeed, Huntington and Arena Stage. Exciting collaborations with Julie Andrews (*Simeon's Gift*), Stephen Sondheim (*Merrily We Roll Along* at Arena Stage), Rupert Holmes (*Thumbs!*), Robert Falls and John Logan (*Riverview* at the Goodman) and Des McAnuff (*Elmer Gantry* at La Jolla Playhouse). Television choreography: *Sesame Street* and AMC's *Remember Wenn*. Also a published and produced playwright; her first play, *Sherlock Holmes and the West End Horror*, was co-written with her husband Anthony Dodge and received a 2002 Edgar Award nomination for Best Play from the Mystery Writers of America. Faculty: American Musical and Dramatic Academy. Proud SDC Executive Board member. ■

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<http://senseandsensibilitymusical.com/creative-team/>

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# DEVONSHIRE

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**D**evon, archaically known as Devonshire, is a county of England, reaching from the Bristol Channel in the north to the English Channel in the South. It is a part of Southwest England and bounded by Cornwall to the west, Somerset to the northeast and Dorset to the east. The city of Exeter is the capital city of Devon.

Devon has its historical origins in classical antiquity and derives its name from Dumnonie, which, during the British Iron Age and Roman Britain, was the home of the Dumnonie Celts.

**D**evon is distinguished as the only county of England to have two separate coastlines (northern and southern), both of which are peppered by lofty cliffs and sandy shores. Devon's bays are typically used as fisheries, ports or seaside towns used for tourism. The economy of Devon is linked closely with tourism. The comparative mild climate and landscape make Devon a destination for recreation and leisure. ■

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devon>

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## “SENSE” AND “SENSIBILITY”

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“Sense” and “sensibility,” the two terms that comprise the title of Austen’s novel, are often used as lenses through which to analyze the book. Elinor, the older sister, exhibits dominant qualities of “sense”: reason, restraint, social responsibility and a concern for the feelings of others. In contrast, Marianne, her younger sister, primarily exhibits qualities of “sensibility”: emotion, spontaneity, impulsiveness and rapturous devotion. Whereas Elinor conceals her feelings for Edward Ferrars, Marianne openly and vociferously proclaims her passion for John Willoughby.

This contrast between “sense” and “sensibility” has cultural and historical resonances as well. Jane Austen wrote this novel around the turn of the 18th century into the 19th when one era (Classicism or the Enlightenment) changed into the new era of Romanticism. Elinor can be seen as representing the characteristics associated with 18th century neo-Classicism, including rationality, insight, judgment, moderation and balance. Marianne, on the other hand, can be seen as representing the 19th century Romantic movement writ large. She embraces romance, imagination, idealism, excess and a dedication to the beauties of nature. Austen’s portrayal of Marianne reminds us the writer was a contemporary of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Sir Walter Scott, luminaries of the English Romantic literary scene.

Another prominent theme in the novel is the importance of money, rank and social status. The Dashwood women live precariously on the margins of the landowning gentry, always threatened with the possibility of being ejected from society because of lack of money and social connection. Elinor and Marianne are worthy and likeable women in every way, but their good qualities are nothing in finding good husbands because they have little money and few social connections. ■

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Austen, Jane. *Sense and Sensibility*. New York: Modern Library, 1992.

Carson, Susannah, ed. *A Truth Universally Acknowledged*. New York: Random House, 2009.

Watt, Ian. “On *Sense and Sensibility*.”

Tyler, Natalie. *The Friendly Jane Austen*. New York: Viking Press, 1999.  
<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/sensibility/section12.rhtm>  
[http://www.novelguide.com/Sense\\_and\\_Sensibility/themeanalysis.htm](http://www.novelguide.com/Sense_and_Sensibility/themeanalysis.htm)

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# THE REGENCY ERA

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*In society/high society  
Polite society, In society  
It takes propriety  
To climb the ladder...*

—*Sense & Sensibility The Musical*

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**T**he Regency Era in England (strictly defined as 1811-20, but is often extended at both ends from 1795-1830) was a time of stark contrasts, of defining styles, tastes, scandal and gossip. It saw the madness of kings (George III), the ascendancy to the throne of his scandalous son, Prince Regent George IV, the rise and fall of Napoleon (1769-1821) and the struggle for power in North America (The War of 1812). The term “Regency” refers to the time when George III was unable to rule because of his mental instability and his son, the future George IV, served in his place as Regent.

The titled folk in England were dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, barons, bishops and archbishops and were known as the peerage. They composed the House of Lords and were generally extremely wealthy with gigantic landed estates. “Land was perhaps more the key than anything else to real social distinction.”<sup>1</sup> Landed people avoided manual labor and would never be involved in trade.

**T**he chief target of the socially ambitious was London and “the season.” In London, “society” dwelt within a relatively small area of the West End, with residences right next to Hyde Park, the western border of Mayfair, St. James and Belgrave Square. Society shopped on Bond Street and Regent Street. The London social season coincided with the sitting of Parliament, which could begin any time after Christmas or Easter. The month of May signified the official start of the season with an overabundance of court balls, concerts, private balls, dances, parties and an exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art.

**B**alls and dances started at 10pm and went as late as 3am, with an ensemble playing an equal number of waltzes and quadrilles. A young girl could attend as many as 50 balls, 60 parties, 30 dinners and 25 breakfasts. “London became

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a virtual marriage market during the season.”<sup>2</sup> Many people packed in small spaces looking for a spouse and all within a few weeks time. The season ended on August 12 with the adjournment of Parliament and everyone who was anyone went home.

**T**here were rules among family and friends as to how one addressed non-titled individuals. The man of the house was always Mister —, the woman was Mrs.—, and the parents were addressed as “mama” and “papa” (with the accent on the second syllable). Elinor, as the eldest daughter, was addressed as “Miss Dashwood” while Marianne was “Miss Marianne.”

Land was the basis of wealth during the Regency period. “Land...produced rent from tenant farmers that was probably the major source of income for most of the landed gentry and nobility during much of the 1800s.”<sup>3</sup>

**O**f particular importance to the Dashwood girls was the entail. The entail was a means of keeping the land in the family for generations, so the eldest son (or eldest male relative) was given the land with restrictions put on what could be done to the estate (no mortgages or dividing it up). According to primogeniture inheritance, John Dashwood, as the eldest male relative, inherits Norland and his manipulative wife determines how well (or not) his stepsisters and mother will be provided for. If all the heirs are girls, well, that is the problem Mr. Bennett faces in *Pride and Prejudice*.

The Church of England enjoyed a position of extraordinary influence in English society. At the top, below the King, were the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York, chosen by the Prime Minister.

**T**he fashions of the Regency Era emphasized the freedoms of the French Revolution. This overthrow of French royalty made periwigs and powdered wigs unfashionable. Men wore linen trousers and overcoats with breeches and boots influenced by the dandy “Beau Brummel.” Women wore the new *Empire* silhouette: a dress of thin muslin with only light stays and

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a chemise underneath. They buttoned down the back and were cinched up high just under the bosom to suggest a high waist. The dresses usually had a low square *décolleté* neckline and clung to the body defining the natural body outline. ■

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1. Pool, p. 48.
2. www. literary liaison
3. Pool, p.88.

Hughes, Kristin. *Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writer's Digest Books, 1998.

Pool, Daniel. *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew*. New York: Touchstone Books, 1998.

[http://www.usq.edu.au/artsworx/schoolsources/emma/the regency period](http://www.usq.edu.au/artsworx/schoolsources/emma/the_regency_period)

[http://www.literary liaison.com/article/o24.html](http://www.literary_liaison.com/article/o24.html)

[http://www.fashions-era.com/regency\\_fashion.htm](http://www.fashions-era.com/regency_fashion.htm)

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# A RECTOR'S LIFE

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*A quiet life  
A cottage and a vegetable garden  
A parish in the country kind of life...*

—*Sense & Sensibility The Musical*

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**T**he clergy occupied a special place in Jane Austen's works because her father was a clergyman as were her brothers James and Henry. The position of clergyman at that time was generally filled with a well-educated, well-spoken man of sound morals; the salary of the post of vicar was agreeable for work that was not onerous and a clergyman could start a family earlier than a naval officer.

Jane Austen did not always portray religious men in the most flattering light. Mr. Elton in *Emma* is excessively ambitious and pretentious; Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice* is obsequious, arrogant and narrow-minded. Henry Tilney in *Northanger Abbey* is absent from his parish half the time. As for Edward Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, he insists he always preferred the Church as a profession over the life of a landed gentry. He also desires to live away from London.

**T**he rector conducted services in the local church, tended to the sick, officiated at baptisms, christenings, funerals, etc. The income of a clergyman varied from place to place; a small rural village might be worth only 100 pounds a year while a large parish could afford more. The clergyman could also benefit from the tithe, a form of taxation that had existed in England since the 9th century. Once collected the revenue had to be managed, since in a poor rural economy the tithe might be paid in chickens, eggs, vegetables and the like. The glebe was a parcel of land donated to the church that was often cultivated and farmed by the clergyman and his family. ■

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian\\_society\\_in\\_Jane\\_Austen's\\_novels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_society_in_Jane_Austen's_novels).

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# MARRIAGE

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*Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance.*

—Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Chap. 18

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**T**he hunt for a husband in Regency England was serious business and upper class families invested much money to give their daughters a season in London. An unmarried woman had no occupation other than to find a husband, but in no way was she to signal that was her intention. It was up to the single man who wanted a wife to do the wooing and winning according to a strict code of conduct.

Prohibitions put upon the single young people were to protect the woman's reputation and to prevent the man from being ensnared against his will. For example, "couples could not converse privately or be alone in a room, travel un-chaperoned in a carriage, call one another by their Christian names, correspond with or give gifts to one another, dance more than two sets together or touch intimately—and that included handshakes."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, contact was established through exchanged smiles, sighs, blushes, chaperoned walks and chaperoned dances.

**S**trict rules also governed marriage. In order to marry legally, a couple needed a license and the reading of the banns. Parental consent was also required if either person was under the age of 21; the ceremony had to be conducted in a church or a chapel by an authorized clergy. If one was extremely wealthy, a special license could be obtained from the Archbishop of Canterbury that allowed the couple to marry at a location other than a church.

During the Regency Period, weddings were mostly private affairs and even fashionable weddings were sparingly attended. However, in the book, *The Habits of Good Society*, the unknown author gives advice on the marriage ceremony: "The bridesmaids are two to eight in number. When a bride is young, the bridesmaids should be young, but it is absurd to see a 'single woman of a certain age' or a widow, surrounded by blooming girls...." ■

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1. [www.isabellegoddard.com](http://www.isabellegoddard.com)

Hughes, Kristine. *Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writer's Digest Books, 1998.

Pool, Daniel. *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew*. New York: Touchstone Press, 1994.

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## FEATURE FILMS AND VIDEO ADAPTATIONS

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**1971**—*Sense and Sensibility*, Great Britain. Made for the BBC. Directed by David Giles; Screenplay by Denis Constanduros. Joanna David (A&E/BBC’s “Pride & Prejudice”) as Elinor; Ciaran Madden (A&E’s “Ivanhoe”) as Marianne; Robin Ellis (“Poldark”) as Edward Ferrars; Clive Francis (“Poldark”) as John Willoughby; Patricia Routledge (“Keeping Up Appearances”) as Mrs. Jennings. 178 minutes, available on DVD.

**1981**—*Sense and Sensibility*, Great Britain. Made for the BBC. Directed by Rodney Bennett. Irene Richard as Elinor; Bosco Hogan as Edward Ferrars; Tracy Childs as Marianne; Peter Woodward as Willoughby. 174 minutes. Available on video. Screenplay by Alexander Baron.

**1995**—*Sense and Sensibility*, Great Britain. Directed by Ang Lee. Emma Thompson as Elinor; Kate Winslet as Marianne; Alan Rickman as Colonel Brandon; Hugh Grant as Edward Ferrars; Gemma Jones as Mrs. Dashwood; Greg Wise as Willoughby; Imogen Stubbs as Lucy Steele. Screenplay by Emma Thompson. 135 minutes. Video.

**2008**—*Sense and Sensibility*, TV series made for the BBC adapted by Andrew Davies and directed by John Alexander. ■

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# SENSE AND SENSIBILITY: IT'S NOT A SIMPLE CHOICE

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By Joan Klingel Ray, Ph.D.,  
Professor Emerita of English, University of CO, Colorado Springs

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Jane Austen's alliterative title for her first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, reminds us that its supposedly quiet, retiring, spinster author was well aware of the eighteenth-century British intelligentsia's preoccupation with moral philosophy, which focused on how persons behave. Should sense (reason) or sensibility (feelings, emotions) guide us?

Novels of sensibility, also known as sentimental novels, flooded Britain's reading market from the mid to late 18th century. The most famous bears the telling title of *The Man of Feeling* (1771); its author was a Scottish lawyer, Henry Mackenzie. Along with poems and plays, such novels created a cult of sensibility, placing high values on shedding the so-called "sympathetic tear" for others' misfortunes and fainting from an overflow of emotion. Mackenzie's novel was the literary hit of the 1770s, with contemporary translations into French, Swedish, German, and Polish. But it also prompted numerous essays in popular periodical publications warning that, as one title says, "Sensibility and Virtuous Feeling Do Not Always Lead to Beneficence and Virtuous Conduct" (*The Lounger*, 1785-86, 3: 78). These articles were particularly directed at impressionable young persons: remember that Marianne Dashwood is at that dangerous age that Rodgers and Hammerstein musically warned us about in *The Sound of Music*, "Sixteen Going on Seventeen."

However, the sensible 15-year-old Jane Austen knew the dangers of indulging in sensibility. At this age she wrote the highly clever "Love and Freindship," in which, despite her neglect of the "i before e"-spelling rule, she has her heroine Sophia memorably expire with the following words of warning, "Beware of fainting-fits. . . Though at the time they may be refreshing and agreeable yet beleive me they will in the end, if too often repeated and at improper seasons, prove destructive to your Constitution. . . . Run mad as often as you chuse; but do not faint--" (especially on the wet grass where Sophia has fainted repeatedly!).

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**I**n 1797, the 22-year-old Austen began a more serious two-heroine manuscript, “Elinor and Marianne,” the names of her heroines in *Sense and Sensibility*. While we no longer have the manuscript of “Elinor and Marianne,” scholars reasonably speculate that the original story is the basis for her completed novel, possibly revised around 1809/1810, and published in 1811. It is also reasonable to speculate that Austen might have taken her novel’s title from another of the many essays warning about sensibility called “The Effects of Mistaken Synonymy” and bearing the subtitle “SENSE and SENSIBILITY ” (*The Lady’s Monthly Museum*, January 1799: 21).

**I**n her novel of this title, a mature Jane Austen shows that sense and sensibility do not exist as a purely black and white dichotomy for behavior. For while Marianne permits her reliance on sensibility to lead her into many obviously painful situations and errors, Elinor’s sense is also error-prone. Logic convinces Elinor that the hair in the ring worn by Edward Ferrars is hers; it’s Lucy Steele’s. Sense dictates to Elinor that Edward Ferrars will not secure a church living enabling him to marry Lucy Steele any time soon. Then Colonel Brandon immediately offers to Edward, with Elinor as his messenger (no less!), the church living at his estate. And while Elinor, having been co-opted by Lucy into becoming her confidante, hides the secret of Lucy and Edward’s engagement from everyone and appears calm and collected, she later confesses to Marianne that ““The composure of mind with which I have brought myself at present to consider the matter, the consolation that I have been willing to admit, have been the effect of constant and painful exertion”” (S&S 3:1). With her overt indulgence in sensibility Marianne made her suffering public; Elinor’s reliance on sense caused her to suffer in silence.

**J**ane Austen thus leaves us wondering if behaving according to sense or sensibility is the better moral choice. Perhaps the best choice is to balance them. ■

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For information about the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA), and to find a region near you go to [www.jasna.org](http://www.jasna.org). JASNA welcomes all readers of Jane Austen.

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# PARTICIPATE

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Free events designed to spark dialogue between actors,  
experts and audiences.

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**DCTC @ The TC: *The Art of Making Art*** - Attention Janeites!  
Eden Lane (*In Focus with Eden Lane* on channel 12) joins cast  
members from *Sense & Sensibility The Musical* for a lively  
discussion about their life in the theatre, bringing these beloved  
characters to the stage and how this world premiere – six years in  
the making - came to open in Denver!  
4/23, Noon, Tattered Cover LoDo

**Perspectives** - Denver Center Theatre Company's own "Creative  
Team" and community experts host interactive, topical discussions  
with attendees that provide a unique perspective on the production.  
This provides an in-depth connection that makes the stage  
experience even more rewarding.  
4/5, 6pm, Jones Theatre

**Higher Education Advisory Discussions** - Audience members gain  
scholarly insight into the productions through discussions,  
facilitated by faculty members from regional colleges and  
universities.  
4/21, Post-show

**Talkbacks** - Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate a production is  
by engaging in a stimulating dialogue with your fellow audience  
members and the actors who bring it to life.  
4/28, Post-show

**Theatre & Theology Discussions** - In our continued partnership  
with Pastor Dan Bollman with the Rocky Mountain Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod and cast members, this discussion examines the  
relevant connections to the productions through a theological lens.  
5/7, Post-show

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# QUESTIONS

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## PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. Do you consider status when falling I love? Why do different cultures place different values on love and status? What is “real love”? What is more important to you, love or status?
1. Why do you think the novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, has stood the test of time? Why has the novel continued to be adapted for different mediums? What are your expectations of seeing the adaptation of the novel as a musical?

## POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What does the title *Sense and Sensibility* have to do with the characters?
2. How have the adapters kept the integrity of the story and the characters in *Sense and Sensibility*? What changes did the adapters make for the musical?
3. Do the songs help convey the story? Do they move the story forward or are they moments of reflection?
4. Compare and contrast the two sisters Marianne and Elinor? How do the characters reflect the title of the play?
5. How would you characterize the other women in the play? How are the older women portrayed? What is the purpose of Lucy Steele and Miss Grey to the story?
6. How would you describe the men in the story? How does your perception of the male characters change in the play?
7. How would you describe the relationship of the sisters to their respective suitors? How do they react to their suitors actions? Does their esteem for the suitors change?
8. How are the secrets of the characters kept and revealed in the play? Do they propel or hinder the telling of the story?
9. Do you think the sisters and their suitors are well matched? Do you think they will live happily ever after?

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# ACTIVITIES

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## **ADAPTING *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY***

Materials: Pen and paper

1. Start by picking a scene from the musical *Sense and Sensibility The Musical*. After reading the scene, find some key themes and character choices that you can adapt from the script to a paragraph.
2. From this scene, transform what transpires on stage into a couple of paragraphs describing what happens and what the characters do actively on the stage. If you have seen the musical, describe what the actors did on stage.
3. Once the first draft is written, find some areas that you can embellish. Look for moments where you can expound upon what each character is feeling or thinking in your adaptation. Are there other areas from the musical that you could build upon?
4. Discuss how it was to adapt what you read or saw in the musical to paragraphs. What were some of the obstacles that you faced? Why do you think it would be easier or more difficult to adapt the novel into a play?

**Colorado Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.**

**Colorado Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.**

**Colorado Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.**

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## CONTEMPORIZING *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*

Material Needed: Pen and paper

1. Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* takes place in the early 1800s. Either individually or in a small group, pick a scene from the adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* to contemporize.
2. By utilizing stage directions and dialogue, adapt a scene from the play or novel that sets the scene in the 21st Century.
  - a. Discuss what changes from Jane Austen's novel would need to be made. How would the costumes change? How would the underlying themes change in your version? How would the way your characters speak differ from the Austen's?
  - b. How does your scene differ from the scene from the play? From the novel?
3. After writing the scene, have different students read the parts of the scene.
  - a. How can you improve the scene to make it easier to understand?
  - b. How does the scene change by updating the scene?
  - c. Explain what the adapters did to contemporize the scene without changing Jane Austen's idea.

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## STATUS CARD GAME

Material needed: Deck of cards

1. Choose five students and have them stand in a line in front of the class. Without looking at the card, each student receives a card that they are to place face out on their forehead. Explain that the cards' ranking is equal to the student's status in relation to the other students. For example, a student with a queen would have high status, but a king or an ace would have more and a two would have the least amount of status.
2. Students must determine their status in relation to the other students through an improvisation game. Because the students are not able to see their cards, they must behave in the position that the other students might treat them.
3. After the exploration, have the students line-up in the order where they think their card would place them.

### Discuss the activity:

How does it feel to be treated well or poorly by your peers?

What are some of the ways that you were treated to indicate what your status was?

How could you tell if it was a high card or low card? What about a middle card?

Discuss the play: Who are the characters in *Sense and Sensibility* that have more status than others? How do the characters interact and display that they have more or less status than the other characters? Which characters use status for their own advantage?

**Colorado Social Science PG: Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens.**

**Colorado Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.**

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# THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

at the Denver Center Theatre Company  
also offers the following programs:

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**Denver Center Theatre Academy On-Site Classes:** affordable, high-quality theatre classes for children, teens and adults taught by industry professionals. Classes are offered on-site four times a year. Classes are available for all interest and skill levels for ages 3-103. Scholarships are available. Call 303/446-4892 for information.

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**Dramatic Learning:** Teaching Artists from the Academy bring the creative process into classrooms to support and enhance core curriculum. Workshops and residencies in any discipline are tailored for each classroom. Dramatic Learning benefits more than 90 schools and 5,000 students annually. Call 303/446-4897 for more information.

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**Family Fun Forum:** This event is FREE. Families juggle, sing opera, and hula-hoop on the tightrope. These are just a sampling of the zany and fun things families learn in this two-hour skills hunt presented by Denver Theatre Academy teaching artists. Families will rotate from classroom to classroom, learning news skills and winning tokens for the entire family. Families spend their “earnings” on face painting, balloon animals, fun food and much more. Call 303/446-4892 for more information.

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For more information also check out our website at  
[www.denvercenter.org](http://www.denvercenter.org)