



Jane Austen on Film and Television: A Critical Study of the Adaptations

Sue Parrill

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Jane Austen's career as a novelist began in 1811 with the publication of *Sense and Sensibility*. Her work was finally adapted for the big screen with the 1940 filming of *Pride and Prejudice* (very successful at the box office). No other film adaptation of an Austen novel was made for theatrical release until 1995. Amazingly, during 1995 and 1996, six film and television adaptations appeared, first *Clueless*, then *Persuasion*, followed by *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, the Miramax *Emma*, and the Meridian/A&E *Emma*. This book traces the history of film and television adaptations (nearly 30 to date) of Jane Austen manuscripts, compares the adaptations to the manuscripts, compares the way different adaptations treat the novels, and analyzes the adaptations as examples of cinematic art. The first of seven chapters explains why the novels of Jane Austen have become a popular source of film and television adaptations. The following six chapters each cover one of Austen's novels: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*. Each chapter begins with a summary of the main events of the novel. Then a history of the adaptations is presented followed by an analysis of the unique qualities of each adaptation, a comparison of these adaptations to each other and to the novels on which they are based, and a reflection of relevant film and literary criticism as it applies to the adaptations.

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