



# Understanding Austen: Key Concepts in the Six Novels

*Maggie Lane*

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**Understanding Austen: Key Concepts in the Six Novels** Maggie Lane

**From an acclaimed Austen expert, a study of the author's use of language, for the Austen fan and general reader**

The acclaimed author of many Jane Austen books turns her attention to the fascinating nuances of Austen's language, and the way it embodies her most profound beliefs about human conduct and character. This book enhances understanding of Austen's moral values through the discussion of key words, investigates changes of meaning, and explains words which may confuse modern readers. It also affords Austen fans who cannot get enough of her writing the pleasure of encountering familiar passages in new contexts. No other author uses abstract nouns as extensively as Jane Austen. Three of her six novels even draw on such words for their titles: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Persuasion*. Terms like "elegance," "gentility," and "propriety" seem to define her well-ordered, judgemental world. In making the fine moral, psychological, and social discriminations on which her plots depend, Jane Austen draws on the vocabulary of her age, which is both more abstract and more fixed than that of today. But as this study shows, she was capable of subtlety and even ambiguity in her deployment of such key concepts.

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