

Editorial

Considerable controversy developed following the publication in *Persuasions* of an article titled “Desperately Seeking Jane—in New Orleans,” which reviewed JASNA’s 1994 annual conference. The article reflected one person’s view of the conference. As with all articles, it was not intended to represent the opinion of the editors. We certainly regret any pain the article may have caused and along with many others in JASNA extend our sincere gratitude to the conference co-ordinator, the many volunteer assistants, the speakers, and all the others who helped make the 1994 conference a typical JASNA conference—enlightening and pleasurable.



Jane Austen wrote to her new publisher, John Murray, on Monday 1 April 1816:

I return you the Quarterly Review with many Thanks. The Authoress of *Emma* has no reason I think to complain of her treatment in it except in the total omission of *Mansfield Park*—I cannot but be sorry that so clever a Man as the Reviewer of *Emma*, should consider it as unworthy of being noticed.—

If Jane Austen could have been in Madison, Wisconsin, 179 years later she might have thought little of the omission by the “Reviewer of *Emma*,” though he *was* Sir Walter Scott. Three entire days were devoted to *Mansfield Park*, its characters, setting, language, political implications, pretences, even its *continuations*! Not just one “review” but complex examinations of the novel and the times. And that those three days may be more than a fleeting memory, *Persuasions* offers in this issue a selection of the papers presented over the long conference weekend. Enough attention to *Mansfield Park* to please even Jane Austen herself.

Over the years *Persuasions* has published a few letters to the editor; it may be of interest that communications have come from some illustrious figures—Queen Elizabeth II (through her Private Secretary), Lord David Cecil, the novelist James T. Farrell. But we do not wait for “celebrity” names; we want to hear from *you*, as we did in former days. One of our earliest issues featured snippets and brief comments from twenty readers. The editors wish to re-establish the “Letters to the Editor” tradition. We invite readers to send short comments or opinions relevant to articles in the journal. Address items to Gene Koppel, Department of English, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721. We will publish a selection of your comments.

No one doubts that just now Jane Austen is a “growth industry.” Evidence of the extraordinary attention being paid to her greets us in the media and on the screen. *Persuasions* offers its own substantial proof of this “Jane fever” in “Jane Austen Works & Studies,” a detailed compilation of the printed material disseminated in the last year or two by scholars and writers; nine pages have been needed to cover the subject.

Thank you readers for your generous praise and helpful words over the past year; we look forward to having your comments continue in the future, perhaps sent to us along with short articles “light, and bright, and sparkling.”

THE EDITORS