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2012-41510 CIP

Social & Behavioral Sciences \ General

Chwe, Michael Suk-Young. **Jane Austen, game theorist**. Princeton, 2013. 272p bibl index afp ISBN 0-691-15576-3, \$35.00; ISBN 9780691155760, \$35.00. Reviewed in 2013sep CHOICE.

Game theory, developed by mathematician John von Neumann and economist Oskar Morgenstern in the 1940s, is about strategic decision making. UCLA social scientist Chwe (Univ. of California, Los Angeles) argues that 19th-century English novelist Jane Austen may have beaten them to the punch. His book's first several chapters introduce basic game theory concepts and constructs and provide a CliffsNotes-like review of Austen's six major works. Then Chwe sets about, omitting the quantification that usually accompanies one of economics' more model- and math-laden subfields, to dissect her writing, and aspects such as intentions, manipulation, persuasion, and "cluelessness," in observing human behavior and relationships. Well researched and with an excellent index, the book will appeal to Austen fans who can see her characters in another light, and to students of game theory who will see vindication for the Nobel committees having awarded economic prizes in 1994, 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2012 to game theorists. (Chwe's applications to African American folktales and US military mistakes are more speculative and ideological in nature and, in this reviewer's opinion, detract.) But make no mistake: this is not light reading, and it is first and foremost an intellectually rigorous exposition and analysis of game theory. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Students at all levels, faculty, general readers. -- *A. R. Sanderson, University of Chicago*

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