30 GREAT MYTHS ABOUT JANE AUSTEN

Claudia L. Johnson
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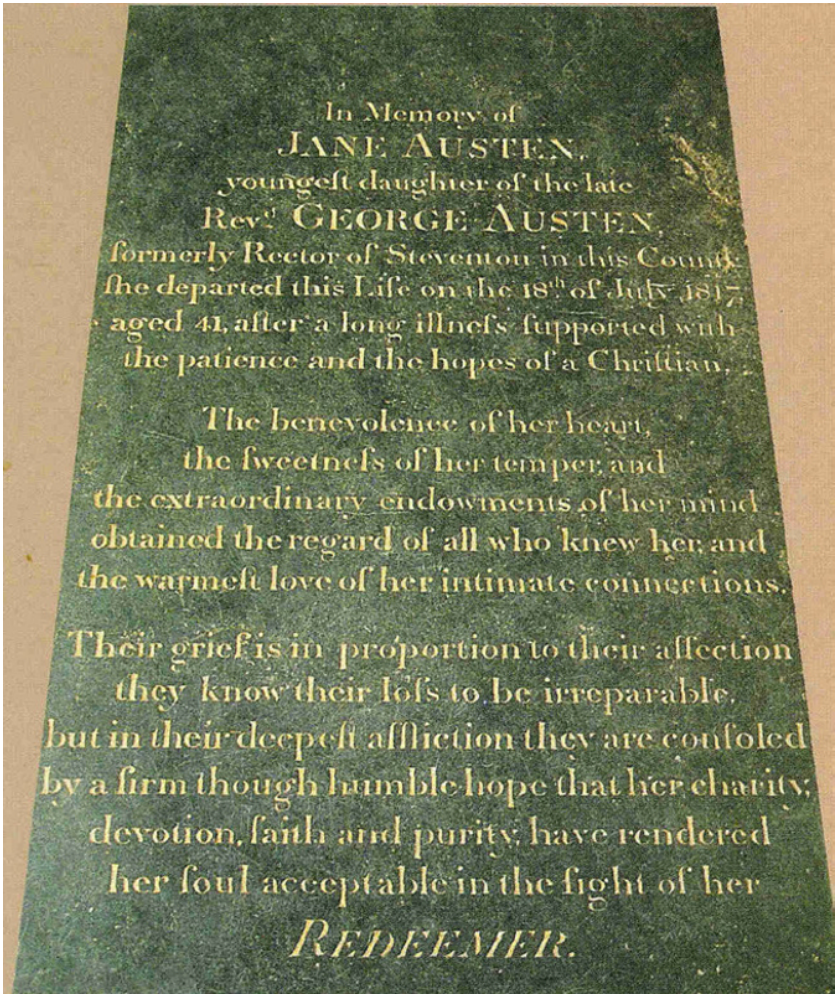
WILEY Blackwell



Jane Austen Memorial Stone at Winchester Cathedral

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON THE TEXT

All quotations from Jane Austen's novels and other works are taken from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen* (2005–2008), General Editor, Janet Todd. They are indicated by parenthetical references in the text, with an abbreviated title and page number.

J	*Juvenilia*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
NA	*Northanger Abbey*, ed. Barbara M. Benedict and Deirdre Le Faye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
SS	*Sense and Sensibility*, ed. Edward Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
PP	*Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
MP	*Mansfield Park*, ed. John Wiltshire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
E	*Emma*, ed. Richard Cronin and Dorothy McMillan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
P	*Persuasion*, ed. Janet Todd and Antje Blank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
LM	*Later Manuscripts*, ed. Janet Todd and Linda Bree (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Quotations from Jane Austen's letters are taken from *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

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INTRODUCTION

All canonical authors are mythical creatures. They exist within the aura of their posthumous reputations – assessments, assumptions, facts, and fantasies that have accreted over time – sometimes taking on new associations as the social and historical conditions of readings and readers change. But some authors exercise a particularly powerful purchase on the imaginations of their readers over the centuries. Jane Austen is one of them. She has mobilized powerful, wishful, and sometimes contradictory ideas and feelings about issues as diverse as family, intimacy, taste, history, class, nationality, desire, manners, and society; and all these have contributed to forming the "myth" of Jane Austen, transforming her from Jane Austen into the beloved and sometimes despised figure of "Jane Austen."

Jane Austen is thus one of the most complex mythological creatures to inhabit the literary canon – continually invented and re-invented, as she is, by adoring critical readers and fans (and detractors) alike. It is Austen's ability to command re-readings that makes her such a compelling and commanding novelist – still – in the twenty-first century. One sign of Austen's greatness is precisely her ability to inspire the invention of myths. Indeed, mythmaking about Austen is a thriving and dynamic activity, sustained by a global community of readers. Austen's novels have always inspired a diversity of critical opinions, as well as continuations, remakes, parodies, biographical romances, and fantasies. For this reason, Austenian mythmaking is often surprising and unpredictable. One of its most intriguing features is a tendency to produce Austens that are diametrically opposed: Austen the Tory who is also a liberal feminist; Austen the husband-hunting butterfly who was also gay; Austen the acerbic satirist who is also a supreme romantic; Austen the master stylist who was also unconscious of her art.

Our volume takes its cues from previous volumes in this series in regarding the myth as a form of accepted belief (not necessarily untrue), and indeed as a particular body of knowledge (albeit one that is not strictly factual). Myths are dynamic and historically contingent, changing over time. Like Austen's works, these myths can claim greatness. A great myth is one with a powerful impact on how we read and re-read. In this volume, we examine 30 of the greatest, most compelling myths that have shaped our readings of Austen. In examining these myths, we are not embarking on a mission of dedicated myth-busting; nor we do set out to correct these myths as misreadings – though we fully acknowledge the wonderfully wild and often wacky world that Austen-mythmaking can be. Rather, in the spirit of inhabiting and celebrating these worlds of mythmaking, we explore the social, emotional, and imaginative lives of these myths and the readerly transactions they enable. (And we acknowledge that some of these myths are generated by Austen's writings themselves.) We seek to illuminate these myths as vital forms of engagement with the life, work, and reception of Jane Austen. In the process, we attempt to introduce readers to the dynamic history of Austen reception both within academic scholarship and in the opinions of the general public, across two centuries, including the period well before academic literary criticism as such existed. Indeed, it becomes apparent that Austen was formative in the development of literary criticism as a discipline. Along the way, we apply the most up-to-date scholarship to understand how myths continue to shape our appreciation of Jane Austen.

In this volume, we take 30 of what we regard as the most powerful myths about Austen and explore them as ways of illuminating Austen's work and the histories of her reception – evaluating their reach, significance, and stakes, and assessing the gains and losses they have brought. Most often these myths take the form of declarative statements, such as: "There is no sex in Jane Austen" or "Jane Austen was a star-crossed lover." At other times, however, the myths we discuss occupy a deeper level of the collective imagination and are not always fleshed out. In our discussion of "Regency Austen," for example, we explore not simply how Austen has been considered a novelist belonging to the Regency period but rather how she has in some sense been made equivalent to the Regency Period. In an exploration which ranges over the areas of Jane Austen's life and letters, her historical contexts, the texts, and their afterlives, Jane Austen's novels are central to our discussion. A separate essay is devoted to each of the six main novels, as well as the juvenilia (considered as a separate body of work). This is not an exhaustive representation of Austen's oeuvre. But it does treat the texts about which there has been

heavy mythmaking. The posthumously published *Sanditon* and *The Watsons* are not the subject of separate essays, because they are perhaps not yet the subject of avid mythmaking. But this will surely change. One myth about Jane Austen that virtually everyone has had a hand in perpetuating is the story about the elegant minimalism of her oeuvre – six little gems. But counterintuitively, perhaps, it is a sign of the vastness of that oeuvre that there are still – miraculously – texts that are relatively unexplored and not yet associated with powerful myths, but which, as interest and fascination develops, will surely command the great Austenian myths of the future.

Myth 1 JANE AUSTEN HAD NO INTEREST IN FAME

This myth was hatched by Jane Austen's brother, Henry Austen, in the "Biographical Notice of the Author" that appeared with *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* when they were posthumously published in 1818: "Neither the hope of fame nor profit mixed with her early motives."[1] According to this myth, Austen took up novel-writing in secret, merely as a leisure pursuit; she had no intention of publishing, but her brothers found the manuscripts and brought them to life as published works, with little involvement or investment from Austen herself.

The trouble with this account of Austen's "motives" is that it assumes she was not interested in being a professional writer. But this is problematic. To be sure, Jane Austen's name did not appear on the title-pages of any of the lifetime editions of her novels; and it was not until Henry's obituary notice appeared that Austen's novels were attributed to her in print. But her letters make it clear that being a published author – not just a writer – was important to her.

How and why did the myth come about? The mythmaking can be understood partly as the Austen family's attempt to deal with the increasing public interest in Austen and her writing that developed after her death. Cultured but religiously orthodox and occupying the fringes of the gentry, the family managed Austen's growing reputation by ensuring she would be remembered as a model of modest and devout femininity. According to the traditional view, "proper" women did not put themselves out in public for money, and the elite were traditionally ambivalent about writing for money as a form of lowering oneself to "trade."

This is not to deny that large numbers of women took up writing for money in this period. They did. But when they did so, they had to contend with traditional understandings of proper femininity as incompatible

30 Great Myths About Jane Austen, First Edition. Claudia L. Johnson and Clara Tuite.

with publicity and therefore of fame almost as a form of social impropriety. Despite these social obstacles, the early nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of women's writing. Austen was among a vast number of women at this time who were challenging these traditional understandings by publishing their writing. But her family was ambivalent.

We should also consider the motivations of Henry Austen himself. Having been declared bankrupt in 1816, he probably sought some measure of recognition as the enterprising agent who conducted his sister's business dealings. So, paradoxically, his declaration of modesty on Jane's part was a likely claim for vindication, vying for attention himself. Although Henry portrayed himself as Austen's enterprising agent, who was assumed to have done most of the negotiations on her behalf, Austen met with her first publisher, Thomas Egerton, about a second edition of *Mansfield Park*; and in her later negotiations with James Stanier Clarke and John Murray, she acted as an increasingly confident literary professional.[2]

In addition to these familial considerations, fame itself must be understood as a complex and changing social form. Jane Austen was writing at a time when fame was undergoing immense change as a result of the emergence of celebrity culture. The market necessitated new strategies for managing fame recognition and the enhanced aura of the author, who had become a newly intriguing and spectacular figure. During the Romantic period, the literary institution transitioned from a patronage system (where authors were known to their readers) into a fully fledged market system (where authors' work was produced for an anonymous public). Paradoxically, the Romantic myth of the author as an inspired creator oblivious of financial interest coincided with the very moment when the author emerged both as the producer of a commodity and as a commodity herself.[3]

The emergence of the institution of literary property and the Romantic conception of authorship entailed new strategies of immortality, and new ways of managing fame. The practice of anonymity was one of these. Austen's first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), was signed with that mystical pseudonym of female authorship – "BY A LADY" – which is also a declaration of anonymity. This paradox – where the signature that blazons anonymity also confers authorship – suggests that the authorial anonym can be regarded as an initiation into public authorship as well as a retreat from it. Accordingly, fame, anonymity, publicity, and secrecy can be viewed as different points along a continuum, thereby complicating and nuancing an absolute distinction between fame and anonymity.

Far from repudiating fame, the practice of anonymity is a form of managing it: not authorial erasure, but an empowering authorial strategy. As Catherine Gallagher argues, anonymous signatures should not be mistaken for real women: they

> are not ignored, silenced, erased, or anonymous women. Instead, they are literal nobodies: authorial personae, printed books, scandalous allegories, intellectual property rights, literary reputations, incomes, debts, and fictional characters. They are the exchangeable tokens of modern authorship that allowed increasing numbers of women writers to thrive as the eighteenth century wore on.[4]

Where is Austen located among these changing forms of fame? She relied on a range of measures to conceal her identity as an author, preferring it to be known only within her family. But she was proud of her developing oeuvre and took steps to link her novels to one another. Kathryn Sutherland notes that "each new novel invok[es] the assistance of its predecessors. Such assistance is strictly inconsistent with absolute anonymity; on the contrary, her title-pages map a knowable fictional space or estate: 'MANSFIELD PARK: A NOVEL. … BY THE AUTHOR OF "SENSE AND SENSIBILITY," AND "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE."'"[5]

For Gérard Genette, the phrase "by a lady" is "a statement of identity precisely between two anonymities, explicitly putting at the service of a new book the success of a previous one and, above all, managing to constitute an authorial entity without having recourse to any name, authentic or fictive."[6] Austen's wish to maintain a degree of anonymity, and the fact that "in public she turned away from any allusion to the character of an authoress,"[7] does not make her any less professional about her writing or any less interested in seeking an appreciative audience for it.[8] Rather, it was simply that the particular "character of an authoress" Austen chose was that of the anonymous authoress.

Austen's desire to be a published writer – to take that extra step and turn her writing into a book to be sold and read – is evident in the efforts she took to be published and in her frustration over failed attempts. A striking example of both occurs in her "Advertisement, By the Authoress" to *Northanger Abbey*, which informs the reader about the circumstances of the novel's delayed publication, expressing a distinct irritation:

> This little work was finished in the year 1803, and intended for immediate publication. It was disposed of to a bookseller, it was even advertised, and why the business proceeded no farther, the author has never been able to learn. That any bookseller should think it worth while to purchase what he did not think it worth while to publish seems extraordinary. But with this, neither the author nor the public have any other concern than as some observation is necessary upon those parts of the work which thirteen years have made comparatively obsolete. The public are entreated to bear in mind that thirteen years have passed since it was finished, many more since it was begun, and that during that period, places, manners, books, and opinions have undergone considerable changes. (*NA*, 1)

Unloading her incredulity in this withering critique of the "bookseller" (Crosby & Co.) who purchased the original manuscript, Austen's appeal to the reader also functions – intriguingly – to mediate her transition from obscurity to fame.

Northanger Abbey was Austen's earliest drafted novel, yet by the time Austen wrote this preface and the novel made its belated entrance into the public domain, "the author" had already achieved no small measure of fame with three well-regarded novels, hence Austen's anxiousness over the delay which threatened the novel with instant obsolescence. That Austen would not live to see her first-written novel in print, and that it would appear posthumously with her last-completed novel (*Persuasion*), adds a further layer of irony to her eloquent outrage. In another untimely twist, the voice of the author so irked by the prospect of the novel's coming too late, and being changed beyond recognition from its "period," arrives as the voice of the author beyond the grave (all too soon). Prefacing the two novels in the first edition of the book itself is the "Biographical Notice of the Author" written by Henry – the text that publicly identifies "Jane Austen" as the author of her novels for the very first time.

If Austen spurned the more public forms of fame, she nevertheless *managed* her fame and recognition, like any other author. Just as "she turned away from any allusion to the character of an authoress," Austen also famously declined the opportunity to meet the famous French writer Germaine de Staël, who modeled a very different version of the "character of an authoress," courting public fame (*la gloire*) as though it were a duty: "demanding, in the name of the populace counting on your brilliance, the keenest attention to your own ideas."[9] Staël's wildly popular *Corinne, or Italy* (1807) was an autobiographical *roman à clef* that celebrated the new exalted Romantic fame in the figure of an *improvisatrice* applauded by her adoring crowds: "*Vive Corinne!*," "*vive le génie*, *vive la beauté*."

Parodically channeling such love of *la gloire*, Austen joked to her sister Cassandra in early 1796, "I write only for Fame, and without any view to pecuniary Emolument,"[10] her pointed distinction between fame (a high-minded, honorable form of social recognition) and money (a dirty form of mere trade) parodying the rhetorically inflated conception of fame that Staël would later articulate. This letter was written before any of Austen's (or Staël's) novels were published, but at a time when *le génie* of the young Jane Austen was definitely out of its bottle and finding its groove, working on the early drafts of her mature novels and having already crafted splendid parodies of sensibility. *Love and Freindship* (c. 1792), for example, whose heroine Laura has a

"sensibility too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Friends, my Acquaintance and particularly … my own" (*J*, 104), dissected the conventions of earlier epistolary novels like Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) that were still being reproduced in later novels such as Staël's *Delphine* (1802).

Staël and Austen shared a publisher, John Murray, as well as his editor, William Gifford, who wrote of Staël, the daughter of Jacques Necker, France's Minister of Finance, and Suzanne Curchot (Madame Necker), the celebrated salon hostess: "The family of Oedipus is not more haunted and goaded by the Furies than the Neckers, father, mother, and daughter, have always been by the demon of publication. Madame de Staël will therefore write and print without intermission."[11] Like father like daughter, perhaps, but it seems a ceaseless *mésalliance* with "the demon of publication" was far more menacing in the female of the species. Austen was clearly much less demanding of her publisher and editor.

The task of managing the social entailments of fame – being known as an author (or "authoress") – was especially complex for women writers. Austen was keen to preserve a certain amount of anonymity but was not implacably opposed to people knowing once the secret got out.

Henry gave the game away after *Pride and Prejudice* was published. Henry asked her if she would like to meet a Miss Burdett, and Austen called his bluff: "I should like to see Miss Burdett very well, but … I am rather frightened by hearing that she wishes to be introduced to *me*. If I *am* a wild Beast, I cannot help it."[12] Evidence suggests that Austen not only resigned herself to having her identity known but also enjoyed the open secret and took pleasure in the speculation that was a consequence of her novels coming into the world under the cloak of anonymity.

Bearing witness to this enjoyment are Austen's reports of growing interest in her novels among friends and acquaintances, none of whom knew for sure that she had authored them. In a letter warning Cassandra that some of their neighbors might already know, she is both alarmed and excited at the prospect: "you must be prepared for the Neighbourhood being perhaps already informed of there being such a Work in the World, & in the Chawton World!"[13]

In a letter to her brother Frank, who was in the navy, Austen acknowledges that she has flirted with exposure by naming the ships in *Mansfield Park* after his ships:

> I was previously aware of what I shd be laying myself open to – but the truth is that the Secret has spread so far as to be scarcely the Shadow of a secret now – & that I believe whenever the 3^{d} appears, I shall not even attempt to tell Lies about it. – I shall rather try to make all the Money than

> all the Mystery I can of it. – People shall pay for their Knowledge if I can make them. – Henry heard P. & P. warmly praised in Scotland … & what does he do in the warmth of his Brotherly vanity & Love, but immediately tell them who wrote it! – A Thing once set going in that way – one knows how it spreads! – and he, dear Creature, has set it going so much more than once.[14]

Once the dear creature had set her going, the wild beast clearly took pleasure in the recognition her novels were starting to receive, which would spread far wider than the Chawton world.

Notes

1 Henry Austen, "Biographical notice," in J.E. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 140. This notice is expanded in the 1833 Richard Bentley edition of *Sense and Sensibility*.
2 See Kathryn Sutherland, "Jane Austen's dealings with John Murray and his firm," *Review of English Studies*, 64(263), (February 2013), pp. 105–126.
3 See Raymond Williams, "The romantic artist," *Culture and Society,* 1780–1950 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1991).
4 Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace 1670–1820* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), p. xiii.
5 Kathryn Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 232.
6 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts*, trans. Jane E Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 45.
7 Henry Austen, "Biographical notice," p. 140.
8 See Jan Fergus, "The professional woman writer," *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 12.
9 Staël, "On the love of glory," *Major Writings of Germaine de Staël*, trans. Vivian Folkenflik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 157.
10 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 14–15 January 1796, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 3.
11 Quoted in Samuel Smiles, *A Publisher and his Friends*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1911), I: 314.
12 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 20 May 1813, *Letters*, p. 212.
13 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 4 February 1813, *Letters*, p. 203.
14 Jane Austen to Francis Austen, 23 September 1813, *Letters*, p. 231.

Myth 2 THERE IS NO SEX IN JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS

Virginia Woolf's famous quip – there are "25 elderly gentlemen living in the neighborhood of London who resent any slight upon [Jane Austen's] genius as if it were an insult offered to the chastity of their aunts" – says as much about Austen's stature as a genius in twentieth-century England as it does about a decided fixation upon her chastity.[1] The first step towards pondering this myth is acknowledging how much the reading public wants to believe it, because it is so patently counterfactual. Consider the frequency of pregnancy in the novels. Mr. Palmer in *Sense and Sensibility* despises his wife and cringes at her conversation and her motiveless laughter, yet she is pregnant with his child throughout much of *Sense and Sensibility* and the progress of her pregnancy has a lot to do with the comings and goings of Elinor and Marianne. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Collins is one of several gentlemen "in want of a wife," and after his marriage to Charlotte Lucas, and in due time (Austen is exceptionally accurate in the management of calendars), he announces that they are expecting a "young olive-branch" (*PP*, 403). In the first chapter of *Mansfield Park*, we learn that Mrs. Price is encumbered with an alcoholic husband and a "superfluity of children" (*MP*, 5) and the grand total of 10 children ties her with Mrs. Morland in *Northanger Abbey*. *Emma* narrates many stories concurrent with the heroine's, and one of these follows the life of Miss Taylor, who in the first chapter becomes Mrs. Weston and in the 53rd her "friends were all made happy by her safety" (*E*, 503) after she gives birth to a daughter, making the progress of her pregnancy one of the basic timelines developed by the novel.

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Manifestly, characters in Austen's novels have sex. So the myth that there is no sex in Jane Austen cannot pertain to sex *per se*. Nor can it really be about sex scenes, even though readers such as Lionel Stevenson have scoured the novels for kisses, only to discover that of the 16 mentioned, none occurs between lovers. Bodice ripping might be a staple of *contemporary* Regency fiction, but it is not featured in fiction written during the Regency period, Austen's included. Perhaps this myth pertains instead to something more like *sexiness*, to Austen's apparent refusal or inability to give a lot of narrative attention to characters in the throes of heterosexual passion. The *locus classicus* of this view is a letter Charlotte Brontë sent George Henry Lewes, who admired Austen greatly. Brontë complained that *Pride and Prejudice* contained "no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck," but only "a commonplace face; a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers."[2] Writing about *Emma* two years later, Brontë was more specific about the kind of experience that happens *outside* those carefully regulated boundaries of mannerly behavior: "the Passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy Sisterhood; even to the Feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant recognition … what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of Life and the sentient target of Death – this Miss Austen ignores."[3] For Brontë, there is no yearning, no throbbing, no bodily longing, no *eros* in Austen's novels, and though Brontë and many readers after her find this absence unforgivable, many readers, as we have seen, actually commend the same perceived lack of emotional and physical turbulence and celebrate it as an effect of Austen's propriety.

But is it true? Let's consider the opposition Brontë develops between fenced (in) gardens and the open country, between the bordered and the unbordered. While Brontë assumes that passion that can only happen in their absence, Austen's novels show that a lot of erotic experience happens within the "carefully fenced" borders Brontë scorns. *Pride and Prejudice* is unembarrassed about some basics of physical attraction. Having rambled three miles to Netherfield through muddy lanes in order to visit her sister, Elizabeth Bennet arrives with her face flushed from exertion, Darcy feels "admiration of the brilliancy which exercise had given to her complexion" (*PP*, 36). Elizabeth seems noticeably to possess the "bright vivid physiognomy" Brontë is looking for, and Darcy finds Elizabeth's bodily vigor attractive. Further, well before Colin Firth/Darcy bared his extra-textual derrière in the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), readers knew that the relation between

Darcy and Elizabeth was hot, and hot not despite the strongly felt presence of social rules but in no small part because of them. The early dialogues between them are striking, even thrilling, because they are marked by a welter of very strong emotions – resentment, pride, resistance, as well as attraction – that stay within the bounds of politeness, even as they also push against them. Suddenly asked to dance a reel by the very man who had pointedly and publicly disdained her, Elizabeth pauses before replying:

> "You wanted me, I know, to say 'Yes,' that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste; but I always delight in overthrowing those kinds of schemes, and cheating a person of their premeditated contempt. I have therefore made up my mind to tell you that I do not want to dance a reel at all – and now despise me if you dare."
>
> "Indeed I do not dare." (*PP*, 56)

Elizabeth's capacity to overcome her momentary confusion, to transform her resentment into wittily controlled banter, makes her provocation ("if you dare") more rather than less attractive, as Darcy gallantly submits ("Indeed I do not dare"), realizing that he is "bewitched" by her and in a state of "danger" as a result. The sexiness of such banter is intensified by the "limitations" imposed by polite converse. To be sure, the exchanges between Elizabeth and Darcy grow less polite, more intimate, and their composure less assured – they argue, they taunt, they insult each other, they expose each other's faults, pain, and weakness, and often while alone – but the pair never lose their status as the sort of lady and gentleman Brontë found so insipid. One would have to be willfully unimaginative – or insensate – not to recognize such exchanges as passionate, even vehement.

It seems wrongheaded, then, to debate whether there is or is not passion in Austen's novels. What is worth debating instead is whether or not Austen's novels valorize the containment over the release of that passion. As we have seen, *Pride and Prejudice* gives containment and self-command their erotic due, but other novels stage the debate far less conclusively. Although critics once upon a time argued that *Sense and Sensibility* sided emphatically with Elinor's polite reticence against Marianne's affective extravagance, readers now agree that Marianne's expansiveness makes her uniquely attractive in a world dominated by shallow, venal worldlings, and conversely, despite all her strenuous efforts of self-control, Elinor finds herself as desperately and as hopelessly in love with a man who is just as weak, though not so dishonorable, as Willoughby. When Anne Elliot in *Persuasion* finds herself