

JANE AUSTEN, in *Northanger Abbey*, relates how Catherine Morland, very much under the influence of Henry Tilney's fanciful descriptions, boldly examined the antique cabinet in her bedroom:

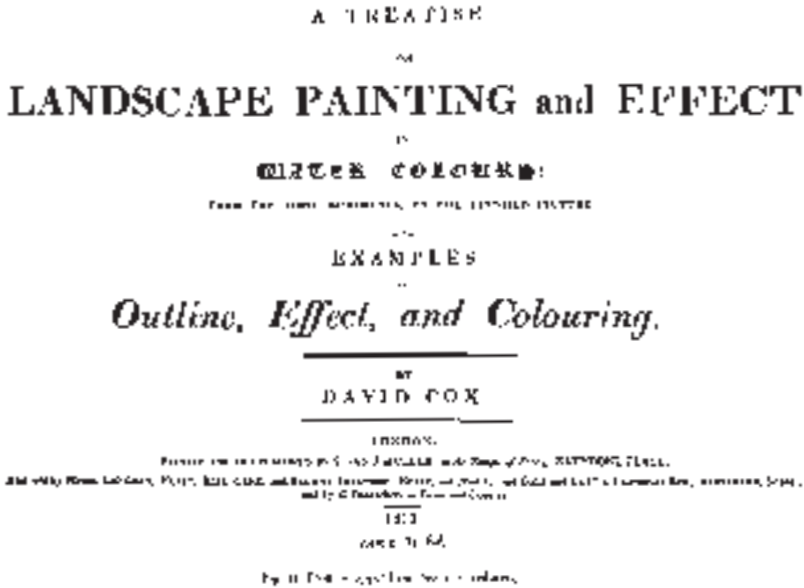
She took her candle and looked closely at the cabinet. It was not absolutely ebony and gold; but it was Japan, black and yellow Japan of the handsomest kind; and as she held her candle, the yellow had very much the effect of gold.
(168)

In the light of the golden effect that Jane Austen has continued to cast over literature, and in the context of the pervasive influence of Regency style, let us examine this new edition of *Persuasions*. What is new? What is not? Why have we made the changes that you see here?

I'd like to draw your attention to the title page of David Cox's treatise on *Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours*, which was published in 1813, the year that also boasts the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*. The twenty-five-word title of Cox's book intimates that the age demanded breadth and depth; the complexity of the typographical layout suggests the Regency era's focus on variety, energy, and symbolic complexity. The new cover of *Persuasions*, which melds Jane Austen's stylistically witty letter of Thursday, 4 February 1813, with the classical elements of more traditional typefaces, is designed to signify the triple pleasures of writing and reading and interpreting.

It is interesting to note that sans-serif typeface was "invented" during this period, and this font, which we have used for the writers' biographies, eliminated the fine lines that "finished" the main strokes of lettering. We chose to use this font to suggest that the cultural context of the Regency was "modern"—elegant, clean, responsive to new ideas and to new modes of production and taste.

We hope, though, that the changes you behold in *Persuasions* will reflect not only "whims of fashion," but also some of the striking features of the Regency: brilliance, wit, taste, and elegance. We have "wrapped" the title around the journal to hint at the playful and epigrammatic nature of the writing of this age. There is a certain pleasure that comes from contemplating the simplicity of the design; there is even more pleasure that comes from thinking about new ways to interpret Jane Austen's ideas—hence, the openness of the form.



David Cox, title page from Landscape Painting and Effect in Water Colours (1813).

Although this period was the heyday of blue-and-white, in the transfer-ware in particular, new colors came into fashion: straw, canary yellow, matte gold, and old gold figure in costume fabrics, furnishing goods, bookbinding leathers, and pottery glazes. Yellow morocco, in fact, was considered a fashionable binding for magazines; old gold was preferred over clear yellow because it signified tradition as well as harmony. It is fitting, therefore, to enlist the hue of yellow-gold to remind the public of the great brilliance that defines Jane Austen’s place in literary history.

The icons on the title pages of the articles are intended to reflect a convention of discreet ornamentation as well as Jane Austen’s own sense of fashionable elegance. The extra-wide margins have been designed for marginalia—for your responses to the points the writers raise in their essays. The articles included in this journal, selected for their variety, clarity, and fresh insights, have been organized into three categories: the first section is arranged around the theme of “Jane Austen and Other Writers,” including such luminaries as Fanny Trollope, Hannah More, Anne Tyler, and Alexander Pope; the second

section, “Miscellany,” is an *omnium gatherum* of articles on topics as diverse as the height of heroines and the adventures of members of the Austen family in North America; the third section includes a selection of the finest papers presented at the AGM in Quebec. We hope that *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* will delight and divert scholars and interested readers alike.

So, it is in the role of *Arbiter Elegantarium* that I propose these paradoxically bold yet subtle changes in *Persuasions*. As a life member of JASNA and an avid reader of the journal, I loved the universal appeal *fur Kenner und Liebhaber*. I hope that as you peruse your journal today, you recall Catherine’s own exploratory spirit as she grapples with the unfamiliar manuscript she has found in the cabinet: “Till she had made herself mistress of its contents...she could have neither repose nor comfort...” (170).

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Managing Editor Toni Gardner and I would like to thank Margaret Re, Assistant Professor of Visual Arts, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, who created the design for the new *Persuasions*. She listened patiently to our ideas about the melding of form and content, and she produced a visually striking journal that we think will appeal to you, the readers. For their unfailing guidance in matters both technical and conceptual, we would like to thank Joan Austen-Leigh, Margo Goia, Lee Ridgeway, and Ellen Blumberg—all JASNA veterans—as well as Calvin Custen, UMBC Visual Arts Computer Network Administrator, and Janet Rumbarger. Finally, Elsa Solender’s inspiration, as well as her unfailing amiability and perspicacity, is a truth universally acknowledged.