"He is a Rogue of Course, But a Civil One": John Murray, Jane Austen, and Lord Byron

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In the second decade of the nineteenth century Jane Austen and Lord Byron were published simultaneously in London by what was, in effect, the world's first modern publishing house, John Murray's, which issued four of Austen's six major novels between 1815 and 1817 and produced nearly all of Byron's works between 1812 and 1822.[1] My title, taken from Austen's wry comment to her sister, Cassandra, on 17 October 1815, illustrates her mixture of gratification and mistrust in her publisher, while Byron's much more extensive correspondence demonstrates an interaction with John Murray II that ranged from warm friendship and satisfaction to suspicion, anger, and hostility. The aim of this paper is to compare and contrast Austen's and Byron's experiences as "Murray authors," showing how Murray developed his relationships with these two very different clients: deploying his charm while in both cases being rather less than open in his financial dealings with them. It describes how issues of class affected both relationships, with Byron's rather precariously achieved aristocracy and Austen's hard-held gentility playing off against Murray's status as tradesman, professional, and aspiring gentleman; expert, adviser, and business partner; servant, colleague, and friend.

Neither Byron nor Austen was a "typical" Murray author, if such a thing existed. Byron was a unique—and uniquely profitable—publishing phenomenon, described by William Gifford, editor of the *Quarterly Review* and Murray's trusted reader and advisor, as "a wonderful creature" who should be "shew[n] . . . only on high days and holydays" (Cochran, "Byron–Murray 1820–1824"

105). But in 1815 Austen too was a highly unusual "creature" for the Murray stable: as a female author and, especially, as a novelist. As Jan Fergus mentions (44), by this period women in Great Britain were publishing nearly twice as many novels as men. John Murray II seems, however, to have been rather behind the curve in this respect, and it appears that, as David McClay and I first indicated in 2010, and as Kathryn Sutherland has since corroborated (109–10), *Emma* was the first-ever novel by an English woman to be published by him.[2]

Before 1815, Murray had published only a handful of works by female authors, and these were almost entirely non-fictional. They included Maria Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Cookery*, which rivalled Byron's work as a source of high earnings for its publisher (Nicholson 13), and Germaine de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* and its translation, *Germany*, published by Murray in 1813 and 1814 respectively (see also Sutherland 112–20). In 1815, the year in which he was preparing to publish *Emma*, Murray added more works by women authors to his list than in any of his previous twenty years as a publisher. These included Helen Maria Williams's *Narrative of the Events which Have Taken Place in France, from the Landing of Napoleon Bonaparte . . . till the Restoration of Louis XVIII*, Eleanor Porden's ten-canto poem, *The Veils; or The Triumph of Constancy*, and Barbarina Wilmot's tragedy *Ina*, which had received its first performance at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in April 1815.

We do not know how Austen's work first came to Murray's attention. There had been various problems with the publication of her previous novels, including the rejection of "First Impressions" by Thomas Cadell in 1797, Benjamin Crosby's failure to publish "Susan" in 1803, and the sale of the copyright of *Pride and Prejudice* to Thomas Egerton for only £110, which turned out to be far too small a sum for a novel that sold well (Austen-Leigh 105–06). Egerton had also refused to issue a second edition of *Mansfield Park*. Sutherland suggests that it was Jane's banker brother, Henry Austen, who recommended they should approach Murray (107–08), and it was certainly he who undertook some of the correspondence about *Emma* with Murray on his sister's behalf.

Henry Austen was undoubtedly familiar with the location of Murray's home and business premises from 1812 in London's Albemarle Street, having had his own banking business premises at the Albany, just along Piccadilly, from 1804 to 1807 (Caplan 78). Byron too was later based at the Albany (from March to December 1814) and, when Henry moved to 10 Henrietta Street in Covent Garden, he was close to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, where Byron was a member of the Management Committee from 1815 to 1816. I believe it is highly probable that Henry knew Byron by sight, if not in social terms (Byron

was easy to distinguish because of his limp, caused by what was apparently a club foot). Henry and Byron, who were both regular theater-goers, must sometimes have been at the opera-house or the theater at the same time, while Jane and Byron certainly saw several of the same London theater productions, although probably not on the same nights. In early 1814, for example, she and Byron were both expressing warm admiration for the acting of Edmund Kean, who made his debut at Drury Lane at the end of January that year. Byron first reported seeing Kean on 20 February (*Letters* 4:67), and Jane first saw the actor perform on 5 March—the same day that she reported to Cassandra that she had read Byron's poem *The Corsair*. On 15 September 1813 Jane and Henry Austen and their young nieces "revelled" in *Don Juan*—whom, as Byron remarks in the opening stanzas of his eponymous epic, "we all have seen . . . in the pantomime" (1:7; *Poetical Works* 5:9).

By 29 September 1815 the manuscript of *Emma* had been read by Gifford, who reported to Murray:

> Of Emma I have nothing but good to say. I was sure of the writer before you mentioned her. The m.s. though plainly written has yet some ^ **indeed, many little** ^ omissions, & an expression may now & then be mended in passing through the press. If you print it which I think you will do (though I can say nothing as to its price) I will readily undertake the revi:sion. (Sutherland 123)

This passage highlights the essentials of the role played by Gifford in Murray's enterprise, which are discussed further by Sutherland (120–26). It shows Gifford's wide knowledge of the literary scene, enabling him to recognize the authorship of Austen's MS before he has been told it; his willingness to act as a copy editor, adding punctuation and rectifying "omissions" in the text; and also his wider role as an arbiter of taste—as a "mender" of "expressions" in the preparation of works for publication. In addition, Gifford's note also demonstrates his general discernment as a critic and judge of literary excellence, and his willingness to encourage Murray to add a good new author to his stable, although not typical of the publisher's existing list.

These characteristics are also evident in Gifford's ability to appreciate the very different merits of Austen's and Byron's writing, and indeed in this respect Gifford was more open and catholic in his tastes than either Austen or Byron themselves, who cannot be said to have been enthusiastic about each other's work. Austen's views of Byron are manifested in her correspondence, where she equates reading *The Corsair* with mending her petticoat (5–8 March 1814), and in *Persuasion*, where Byron's Oriental tale *The Giaour* is the favorite

reading of the sentimental and ultimately inconstant Captain Benwick, who, although initially devastated by the death of his fiancée, is in fact soon converted to the alternative charms of Louisa Musgrove. (For a fuller discussion of this episode, see Ford 84–86.)

Nicholson's research on the background of Murray's letters to Byron shows that Byron owned copies of at least three of Austen's novels (*Emma*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Pride and Prejudice)*, including an early copy of *Emma* that was supplied by the publisher directly to the poet and his family (Nicholson 149–50).[3] Byron, however, declined to make any comment on—or perhaps even to read—Austen's work, even when specifically invited to do so by Murray. "Tell me if Mrs Leigh & your Lordship admire Emma?" Murray asked him on 28 December 1815 (Nicholson 149)—but no response is recorded. Byron likewise seems not to have commented when Murray told him on 9 September 1817 that he was preparing to publish "Two new Novels left by Miss Austen—the ingenious Author of Pride & Prejudice—who I am sorry to say died about 6 weeks ago" (Nicholson 246).

Nevertheless, the case has been made that Byron was influenced by *Northanger Abbey* in writing the Norman Abbey cantos of *Don Juan* and that he used aspects of *Persuasion*'s conversation about women's constancy between Anne Elliot and Captain Harville in composing Julia's letter: "Man's love is of his life a thing apart, / 'Tis woman's whole existence . . ." (1:1545–52; *Poetical Works* 5:71).[4]

Perhaps it was the fact that Lady Byron was a warm admirer of *Pride and Prejudice* that disinclined her husband to provide any approbation of Austen's work himself, since the couple would separate permanently only a few days after Murray wrote to ask for Byron's views on *Emma*. Two years earlier, in 1813, the then Annabella Milbanke had described the anonymously authored *Pride and Prejudice* to her mother as "a very superior work." "It depends," she said,

> not on any of the common resources of novel readers, no drownings, no conflagrations, nor runaway horses, no lap-dogs and parrots, nor chambermaids and milliners, nor rencontres and disguises. I really think it is the *most probable* fiction I have ever read. It is not a crying book, but the interest is very strong, especially for Mr. Darcy. The characters which are not amiable are diverting, and all of them are consistently supported. I wish much to know who is the author or *ess* as I am told. (Le Faye, *Family Record* 196).

It is interesting to see that Annabella, who soon after this fell in love with Byron, was also an admirer of the supposedly Byronic Mr. Darcy (see also Graham).

In Austen's "Plan of a Novel, according to hints from various quarters," "Mr. Gifford" appears in the margin of the manuscript beside the emendation of "only child" to "Daughter" ("of a Clergyman") and in company with the names of various other people who appear to be cited as the sources for the ironically presented, ludicrously impossible plot line of Austen's satire. As we have seen, Gifford certainly offered Murray his services to revise and edit Austen's manuscript for *Emma*, and it is possible, from the evidence of the "Plan of a Novel," that he may have proffered not entirely welcome advice to her about the composition of her novels—perhaps via Murray, as there appears to be no other evidence of a direct correspondence or conversation between author and editor.

Like Byron, however, Austen is likely to have had a healthy respect for Gifford's power and influence, both as Murray's advisor and as the editor of the *Quarterly Review*. Thanks to Nicholson's edition of the Murray–Byron correspondence, and Samuel Smiles's 1891 memoir of Murray, we now know a good deal more than Murray's authors ever did at the time about the machinations Murray and Gifford undertook in procuring good reviews for Murray's publications. Nicholson's notes (43–44) show, for example, how hard Gifford worked to arrange a favorable review in the *Quarterly* for Byron's *The Giaour* in 1813.[5] Murray and Gifford also exerted themselves to obtain Walter Scott as a highly prestigious reviewer for *Emma*—although, as Claire Tomalin puts it, Murray introduced his request to Scott with "a remark that consigns him to that circle of the Inferno reserved for disloyal publishers" (i.e., those who disparage their own authors' work) when he wrote, "Have you any fancy to dash off an article on *Emma*? It wants incident and romance does it not?" (Tomalin 252, quoting Smiles 1:288).

Gifford and Murray also knew how and when to deploy judicious compliments to soothe and influence their authors, although both Byron and Austen saw through such ruses to some extent. Murray used praise from the beginning to mollify Austen, as is demonstrated by her response to what appears to be the first letter she received from him (17–18 October 1815):

> Mr Murray's Letter is come; he is a Rogue of course, but a civil one. He offers £450 [for *Emma*]—but wants to have the Copyright of M P. & S&S included. It will end in my publishing for myself I dare say.—He sends more praise however than I expected. It is an amusing Letter. You shall see it.

We do not know exactly what "praise" Murray sent in this case. A letter dictated by Henry Austen (who was ill in bed) to Murray, probably on 20 or 21

October 1815, refers to "The Politeness & Perspicuity of your letter" and continues by saying that

> Your official opinion of the Merits of *Emma*, is very valuable & satisfactory.—Though I venture to differ occasionally from your Critique, yet I assure you the Quantum of your commendation rather exceeds than falls short of the Author's expectation & my own.

Murray's methods—that is to say, personalizing the contact with his authors, passing on praise, compliments, and carefully chosen comments on their work, lending or giving them copies of new publications, apologizing profusely when things went wrong—were all used with Byron just as much as with Austen, and all are succinctly itemized in a subsequent letter from Austen to her sister on 24 November 1815, on the day after she had written to Murray to say how she was "disappointed & vexed by the delays of the Printers":

> We sent the notes however, & I had a most civil one in reply from Mr M. He is so very polite indeed, that it is quite over-coming.—The printers have been waiting for Paper—the blame is thrown upon the Stationer—but he gives his word that I shall have no farther cause for dissatisfaction.—He has lent us *Miss William*s [Helen Maria Williams's *A Narrative of the Events which Have Lately Taken Place in France*] & *Scott* [Walter Scott's *Field of Waterloo*] & says that any book of his will always be at *my* service.—In short, I am soothed & complimented into tolerable comfort.

While Austen's tone indicates some continuing skepticism, such attentions must have come as a welcome change to her after the discourteousness of her previous publishers or would-be publishers.

William St. Clair has described how Murray "became the first publisher in a modern sense," by dint of "realising that he was essentially an entrepreneur who selected and put together packages of text, finance, and marketing" and "withdrew from bookselling altogether" (*Reading Nation* 170). Murray's personal cultivation of his authors was another aspect that differentiated him sharply from the booksellers and printers whom Austen, Byron, and other contemporary authors encountered as publishers, and this means of adding value to his transactions also helped to make Murray a pioneer in publishing terms. Most of the important London literary publishers followed Murray in deploying such methods during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, until new technologies and trade conditions in the last quarter of the twentieth century allowed the volume of publication to soar, and relationships between publishers and authors became largely depersonalized once more. Seeing Murray "at

work" on charming and cultivating Austen reflects the highly personal relationship that developed between the publisher and Byron, although in Byron's case on a much grander and more intense scale.

Murray's offer of the sum of £450 for the copyrights of *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Sense and Sensibility* was firmly rejected by the Austens: the draft dictated by Henry on 20 or 21 October 1815 continues: "The Terms you offer are so very inferior to what we had expected, that I am apprehensive of having made some great Error in my Arithmetical Calculation." This offer was, however, in retrospect, a very fair one. Fergus estimates that Jane would almost certainly have done better to accept it rather than to risk the chance of profits by publishing on commission (47), which is the option she chose instead, and Sutherland points out that in 1832 Cassandra Austen sold the copyrights of all six of Jane's major novels to Richard Bentley for his Standard Novels series for only £210 (115–16).

Fergus describes the "on commission" system as one "whereby the author was responsible for paying all the expenses of the publication while the publisher distributed the copies and took a commission on all sold" (42). She points out that "an author who published for herself . . . took all the profits, not just half, but in practice this meant only about 50 percent more money" (43). Sutherland adds that the publisher's commission was usually 10 percent, and that the understanding would have been that the author would bear any losses (108). In such a deal, Murray of course had an incentive to understate the income and overstate the costs of the publication, and it is certainly true that Austen paid much more for *Emma*'s "fine demy" paper at 37 shillings a ream than for that used for *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, which was charged at only 26 shillings a ream, and more also than for the second edition of *Mansfield Park*, which was charged at 35 shillings a ream (Gilson 68, 84, 59). It seems that Austen also had to pay 24 shillings for the cost of a special binding in "red morocco gilt" (Gilson 68) of the copy of the novel that was sent to the Prince Regent since Austen commented to Cassandra on 2 December 1815, "It strikes me that I have no business to give the P. R. a binding."

Nevertheless, John Murray's ledger entries for *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* show an initial profit to Austen of over £221 on *Emma* for 1,248 copies sold. However, since there was a loss on the second edition of *Mansfield Park* of over £182, the amount that was owing to her was only £38.18s.1d. (Le Faye, *Chronology* 549). On 21 February 1818, Murray issued a check for this amount to Austen, and she endorsed and cashed it. The novel eventually yielded £385 for Austen and her heirs, before it was remaindered in 1821.

Byron, too, was no match for Murray's canniness in matters financial, although he received nearly £20,000 from Murray over the ten years of their association (St. Clair 162), in contrast to a total of between £631 and £668 that Fergus believes Austen received in literary earnings during her entire lifetime (47). Nevertheless, in 1822, when Byron estimated the profits that Murray was making from his writings over the copyright period, he too felt exploited. St. Clair notes, for example, "The five hundred guineas (£525) [Byron] was receiving for each of his poems was no more than Murray paid to the Reverend Henry Milman for religious verse dramas which sold far less well" (162). "I am worth any 'forty on fair ground' of the wretched stilted pretenders and parsons of your advertisements," Byron wrote angrily to Murray on 23 September 1822 (*Letters* 9:213).

In the end, however, it was not so much Murray's parsimony that turned Byron against him, as his unwillingness to publish Byron's increasingly polemical and controversial works in the form and to the schedule that Byron expected. "As I take the risk upon myself—you will permit me to decide upon the time of publication which must be sooner than what you say," he told Murray about the publication of his translation of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore* on 17 May 1822:

> If I had called upon you for any specific terms—or pretended to any great expectations, you would then have a right to decide upon the time &c.—but as I have done nothing of the kind—and will even abide by the loss—if loss there be—you will permit me to arrange the publication according to my own will and pleasure. (*Letters* 9:159)

It was as a result of these strong feelings that, by the end of 1822, John Murray was no longer the publisher of Byron's work.

So far I have been discussing the similarities and parallels in Byron's and Austen's relationships with Murray, but I also want briefly to explore the areas of difference in this respect. Gender was of course one important differentiator between the two authors, as was the relative success of their work and the sales and profits realized from its publication. Another interesting aspect of contrast is social class, not only in relation to Byron's touchiness about his aristocracy and Austen's insistence on her gentility but also in terms of Murray's status, which was ambiguously poised between that of tradesman and professional.

All three protagonists were self-conscious about their social status, and this consciousness sometimes gave rise to tension or embarrassment in their correspondence. Byron was insecure about his rank (he had inherited his barony from an unknown great-uncle after two unexpected deaths, and had been

brought up in a distinctly lower-middle-class environment in Aberdeen), and this insecurity manifested itself, in particular, in his unwillingness to accept any payment from Murray for his verse in the early stages of their relationship.[6] Byron, indeed, constantly disparaged authors who wrote for a living: those with "always more or less of the author about them—the pen peeping from behind the ear—& the thumbs a little inky or so" (*Letters* 5:192). And, he asked, "Who would write, who had anything better to do?" (3:220–21). Because of his insecurity about his own status, Byron was suspicious of anything that implied what would be (for him) a step down in class to that of a professional writer.

Although Byron initially would not lower himself by accepting remuneration for his work, he nevertheless wanted the glory of the huge sums Murray was offering him, commenting of the one thousand guineas suggested for two of his Oriental tales, "I won't—it is too much, though I am strongly tempted, merely for the say of it" (*Letters* 3:212). He got around the problem by accepting Murray's money and then acting the patron by disbursing it to needier writers such as William Godwin. When, however, in December 1813 Byron performed a similar manoeuvre by giving the copyright of *The Corsair* to his relative Robert Dallas, it was Murray (concerned that it could be "insinuated" that he had got the two poems for nothing [Nicholson 82]) who used a reference to the social inequality of the relationship as a means of upbraiding his aristocratic client: "Indeed my Lord this is not worthy treatment of one whom you have suffered to absorb—the humble servant in the faithful friend," he protested (Nicholson 65). And in 1817, in a distinctly passive-aggressive mode, adding his own nuances of class distinction, Murray wrote to Byron:

> I sometimes feel a deep regret that in our pretty long intercourse I appear to have failed to shew, that a man in my situation may <be> possess the feelings & principles of a Gentleman—most certainly I do think that from personal attachment, I could venture as much in any shape for your service as any of those who have the good fortune to be ranked amongst your Lordships friends—& therefore do [*sic*] cut me up at a word as if I were your Taylor. (Nicholson 241–42)

Murray was still taking this stance after Byron's death, in 1824, during the heated discussions about the burning of Byron's memoirs, when he protested to Byron's friend the Irish poet Thomas Moore:

> here am I as a tradesman—I do not care a farthing about having your money, or whether I ever get it or not—but such regard have I for Lord Byron's honour and fame that I am willing and

> determined to destroy these MSS. . . . It is very hard that I as a tradesman should be willing to make a sacrifice that you as a gentleman will *not* consent to!! (17 May 1824; Hobhouse 50).

Elsewhere, it is only too easy to notice the number of "my Lords" and "your Lordships" Murray sprinkles through his letters to Byron (twelve times in the thirty-six lines of his first letter, for example), and the excessive servility with which the young aristocrat is treated by him (Nicholson 3–4).[7]

Later, when Byron had moved to Italy and abandoned many of the social scruples he had maintained while he was an active member of English society and of the House of Lords, he used his letters to Murray as an opportunity to express many of his most intimate reflections and as a conduit for showing off his amorous and other adventures. This behavior caused considerable social discomfiture to several of Byron's friends, including, particularly, Thomas Moore. Perhaps, as the son of a Dublin grocer (albeit a graduate of Trinity College Dublin), Moore had his own class anxieties, since he objected strongly to the fact that some of Byron's most frank letters had been written, as he put it, to "Murray, the bookseller—a person so out of his caste & to whom he writes formally, beginning 'Dear Sir'" (Moore 1:187, 225; qtd. in Nicholson 278). In fact Byron had been writing "Dear Murray"—or "Dear Moray" —rather than "Dear Sir" since 29 October 1819, although as the relationship cooled he reverted to addressing Murray merely as "Sir" (Cochran, "Byron–Murray 1816–1819" 2). After Byron's death, Moore and John Cam Hobhouse, Byron's executor, were reluctant to allow Murray's name to appear as a member of a committee to organize a monument for the poet. Murray "is, after all, a tradesman, he has hardly a right to be there," Moore commented (3:939, qtd. in O'Connell 169).

The nuances of Austen's social relations with Murray appear more subtle than Byron's, but they reflect the way in which the publication of a novel by a gentlewoman in this period could be seen as a violation of both sexual modesty and social caste (see Fergus 44). The threat to her sexual modesty had led Austen to begin correspondence with a previous publisher indirectly, through her brother's lawyer, and subsequently to present herself under a false name as a married woman, while much of her correspondence with Murray was, as I have mentioned, decorously conducted through her brother Henry.[8]

In terms of social caste and modesty, it is notable that Austen published all her novels anonymously: as "By a lady" or as "by the author of *Sense and Sensibility*" or "of *Pride and Prejudice*." Sutherland describes Austen's self-presentation as "a shrewd move for an ambitious author, reducing though not

obliterating the focus on her female perspective as a writer" (114). Austen became inured to the idea that her identity was becoming publicly known, commenting for example to Francis Austen on 25 September 1813 that "the truth is that the Secret has spread so far as to be scarcely the Shadow of a secret now—& that I beleive whenever the 3d [novel] appears, I shall not even attempt to tell Lies about it." Nevertheless, she would have been anxious to preserve her position as "a lady" in the context of her dealings with Murray, since her social status was in fact anything but secure. In *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth Bennet defends herself against the arrogance of Lady Catherine de Bourgh by pointing out that, although Darcy "'is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal'" (395); but actually this comparison serves to draw attention to the way in which the description of gentility could cover an enormously wide range of situations, from Darcy's near-aristocracy (his mother was the daughter of an earl) to the precariously low financial expectations of the Bennet daughters. Austen, an unmarried daughter of a clergyman who had turned to tutoring and farming to supplement his earnings, was even further down the pecking order than Elizabeth Bennet, making her denomination as "a lady" all the more important to her.

At a crucial stage in the negotiations for the publication of *Emma*, Henry Austen fell dangerously ill, and Jane was obliged to take over the correspondence with Murray herself. It is interesting in this context to note the difference between the draft of her letter to the publisher on 3 November 1815, preserved in Austen's papers, where she wrote, "I must *beg* [my italics] the favour of you to call on me here," and the letter she actually sent, which was kept in the Murray archives, where she amended the word "beg" to "request," making a subtle but important difference to the tone. Subsequently, however, she went on to exchange several businesslike but friendly letters with Murray, including one (11 December 1815) in which she assured him that "I am very sensible I assure you of the attention you have paid to my Convenience & amusement" while in her next letter (also 11 December 1815) she was referring to the publisher as "a friend."

The context for this correspondence was the suggestion, made through the Royal Librarian, the Reverend James Stanier Clarke, that Austen should dedicate *Emma* to the Prince Regent. Although this offer (in effect, a royal command) must have done much to raise Murray's assessment of his new author's social as well as literary capital, it was, again, a circumstance that served to illustrate the nuances of difference between Austen's and Murray's social positions.

Murray seems to have been fairly straightforwardly snobbish about his connections with the Prince, and Byron teased him about this in a letter of 1819 from Venice:

> I have a great respect for your good & gentlemanly qualities—& return your personal friendship towards me . . . although I think you a little spoilt by "villainous company" . . . together with your "I am just going to call at Carlton House[;] are you walking that way?" (*Letters* 6:123)

But whereas Murray would have regarded the Regent's endorsement of *Emma* as a welcome bonus, in both social and marketing terms, Austen had a real concern that her modesty might be tainted by the Regent's unsavory sexual and moral reputation. Less than three years earlier, in fact, she had described herself in no uncertain terms as someone who would support the Regent's estranged wife "because she *is* a Woman, & because I hate her Husband" (16 February 1813).

It was, however, in this context of royal etiquette that Austen had most cause to be grateful for Murray's knowledge of literary and social niceties, when the publisher was able to correct and steer her through the intricacies of the required placing and wording of the royal dedication. After an anxious letter to Stanier Clarke (15 November 1815) seeking to clarify whether it was "incumbent" upon her to inscribe the work to the Prince, and Stanier Clarke's reply (16 November 1815) that it was not "incumbent" but that she had "permission" to do so, Austen wrote to Murray on 11 December to direct him that "The Title page must be, Emma, Dedicated by Permission to H. R. H. The Prince Regent."

Murray, however, evidently replied by return of post to advise her that the dedication should be printed on a separate page, not on the title page, and perhaps to suggest a more elaborate or conventional wording, such as the one that was eventually printed in the book, namely: "To / His Royal Highness / The Prince Regent, / this work is, / by His Royal Highness's permission, / most respectfully / dedicated, / by His Royal Highness's / dutiful / and obedient / humble servant, / The Author." Austen responded to Murray (again on the same day), saying:

> As to my direction about the title-page, it was arising from my ignorance only, and from my never having noticed the proper place for a dedication. I thank you for putting me right. Any deviation from what is usually done in such cases is the last thing I should wish for. I feel happy in having a friend to save me from the effect of my own blunder.

Given also the 24 shillings that it seems Austen had to pay for a copy of the novel to be specially bound for presentation to the Prince, it is not surprising that she was less than entirely enthusiastic about the "honour" of dedicating her work to His Royal Highness.

Such minutiae seem a long way from the glamour of Byron's letters to Murray and might remind us of the contrast Austen herself drew—perhaps with some irony—between her own work and that of her nephew James Edward Austen, who was trying his hand at novel-writing:

> What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited Sketches, full of Variety & Glow?—How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much labour? (16–17 December 1816)

Nevertheless, the details of these interactions with Murray do illustrate some clear tendencies in the way in which the publisher cultivated and nurtured his authors; and, as the riches of the John Murray Archives in Edinburgh make it possible to fully study Murray's correspondence with other authors, a more rounded picture of this important aspect of Regency publishing will become available.

In conclusion I should like to return to Austen's description of Murray as a "Rogue" —albeit "a civil one." Before we take Austen's word for it, we should note that this portrayal of publishers as unscrupulous and greedy was, in fact, something of a cliché—at least among authors—in her time. Mary O'Connell has shown how Charles Lamb, for example, characterized them as a "rapacious, dishonest set" who despised authors, and how Maria Edgeworth, in her eulogy for the radical publisher Joseph Johnson, described (other) publishers in general as "vulgar souls [in] vulgar Trade," while the poet Thomas Campbell damned Murray with faint praise in a letter to Walter Scott as "a very excellent and gentlemanlike man—albeit a bookseller" (O'Connell 160–61).

When Isaac D'Israeli, who classed himself as a friend of Murray's, commented more moderately that publishers are "but commercial men. A trader can never be deemed a patron, for it would be romantic to purchase what is not saleable" (O'Connell 161), he put his finger on the key source of publishers' reputation for greed: namely, that the financing of the production of books had, by the early nineteenth century, moved from being in the hands of generally aristocratic and supposedly disinterested patrons, to the hands and control of tradesmen. This move had, of course, commodified the process of publishing and indeed writing, bringing about the "fatal revolution" predicted by Oliver Goldsmith in 1761, "whereby writing is converted to a mere mechanic trade; and

booksellers, instead of the great, become the patrons and paymasters of men of genius" (O'Connell 160).

Both Byron and Austen viewed this situation realistically, and with some irony. Byron frequently deployed the joke about an author's printed work ending up in undignified roles such as wrapping for bacon, or the lining for hats and trunks: "I am apt to consider the trunk-maker as the sexton of authorship," he remarked (*Letters* 8:11–12). E. J. Clery, analyzing Austen's speculative approach to publishing in this context, and in the light of Austen's forthcoming appearance on the £10 banknote, discusses how (without compromising her literary integrity) Austen struck "mercenary poses" in letters to her family (132): commenting to Francis Austen, "I have now therefore written myself into £250.—which only makes me long for more" (6 July 1813); while of *Mansfield Park* in the lending libraries, she noted to Fanny Knight, "People are more ready to borrow & praise, than to buy—which I cannot wonder at;—but tho' I like praise as well as anybody, I like what Edward calls *Pewter* too" (30 November 1814).

In practice, therefore, despite Austen's slightly squeamish gentility and femininity, Byron's anxious aristocracy, and Murray's self-conscious quasi-gentlemanliness, we might prefer to regard all three of them as competent and professional business-people: sometimes cautious and sometimes adventurous, often willing to take a gamble, and working (sometimes together and sometimes in competition) to make and market a commodity that they all, rightly, regarded as highly valuable, in material as well as in cultural terms.

NOTES

1. The first edition of *Mansfield Park* was published by Thomas Egerton (1814) and the second edition by John Murray (1816).

2. See e-mails to the author from David McClay, John Murray Archive Senior Curator at the National Library of Scotland, 8 July 2010: "I have had an extensive trawl through various sources to test your conclusion regarding *Emma* being the first Murray female novelist. . . . For JM II it does appear that the first female novelist he published was Jane Austen with *Emma*. . . . In addition to a number of library catalogues, I have had a cross-check through female correspondents in the archive during the period, as well as checking through the business ledgers and papers and none of this has produced any pre-Austen female novelists. My only hesitation in being 100% positive is the unlikely event of a female author writing anonymously or under pseudonym that I haven't been aware of." I presented our findings at the 36th International Byron Conference in Boston in July 2010: "'He is a Rogue of Course, but a Civil One': John Murray, Byron and Jane Austen."

3. Gilson records that a copy of *Emma* came up for sale in 1941 with the title page inscribed "Augusta Leigh—1815, the 1st copy, given by Mr. Murray" (69).

4. Peter W. Graham discussed "A Tale of Two Abbeys: Austen, Byron, and Ambiguities of the Gothic" in 2008 at a conference jointly mounted by the Byron Society of America and the Jane Austen Society of North America: *Austen & Byron: Together at Last.* Caroline Franklin suggests that Julia's letter in *Don Juan* is influenced by *Persuasion* and that "the poet is likely to have read the novel as it was published by Murray at the very beginning of 1818 and Byron received a large parcel of books and reviews from him that February in Venice" (Franklin 100). Austen was interested enough in Byron's poem "Napoleon's Farewell" to make a copy of it, probably from *The Examiner*, where it was first published in 1815, or from an edition of his poetry. Her manuscript, which differs considerably from Byron's original, is in the University of Southampton's Special Collections (see http://www.southampton.ac.uk/archives/cataloguedatabases/webguidemss8.html).

5. Thomas Medwin reported Byron's remark in 1822 that "Murray has long prevented 'The Quarterly' from abusing me" (170).

6. Mrs. Byron claimed that her income during this period was £150 a year (Boyes 65). William St. Clair sets the income for his "standard of gentility" for this period as 100 shillings a week (i.e., £260 a year) ("Impact" 4).

7. Peter Cochran points out that "with a view to lessening Murray's servility, Smiles (or 'Smiles' amanuenses' . . .), amends Murray's addresses to Byron, so that 'Your Lordship' always becomes 'you,' and '. . . your Lordship writes' always becomes 'you write'" (Rev. of Nicholson 1).

8. See Austen's letter to Crosby & Co., 5 April 1809, about *Susan*, and Le Faye's note (*Jane Austen's Letters* 400). The purported signatory of this letter was "M[rs] Ashton Dennis."

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