

from “The Reviser at Work: MS Chapter 10 to Chapters X–XI (1818)” [from *A Revolution Almost Beyond Expression: Jane Austen’s Persuasion*]

[Jocelyn Harris’s *Revolution Almost Beyond Expression: Jane Austen’s Persuasion* examines the overlapping political, historical, cultural, and intertextual contexts of Austen’s last completed novel. In the portion of the text excerpted here, Harris presents a detailed examination of Austen’s composition and revision process based on two manuscript chapters of *Persuasion*, tracing the novel’s progress from a “tame, flat manuscript draft” into Austen’s “most passionate” text.]

In 1817, Jane Austen died at the height of her powers, still “subject to those changes which often make the final period of a writer’s career the most interesting of all,” wrote Virginia Woolf.¹ If Austen’s creativity was still evolving as she wrote *Persuasion*, so was the world about her, for on June 18, 1815, Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo ended almost three decades of war with France. On August 7, 1815, he was exiled to St. Helena. The very next day, Austen embarked with the confidence of an established author upon “The Elliots,” her working title for *Persuasion*.² Eight months later in March 1816, Walter Scott’s enthusiastic review of *Emma* in Volume 14 of the *Quarterly Review* must have been encouraging, especially if she knew the identity of the “clever” man who wrote it.³ Neither her family’s financial woes

1 Woolf, “Jane Austen,” in *Collected Essays*, ed. with foreword by Leonard Woolf, 2 vols. (1925; repr., London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), 1:151. [Footnotes have been modified to include full references for the material reproduced here.]

2 The first French translation was also called *La famille Elliot, ou l’ancienne inclination* (David Gilson, *A Bibliography of Jane Austen* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982], 166–76).

3 Volume 14, no. 27 of the *Quarterly Review*, though dated October 1815 and January 1816, actually appeared in March 1816, with Scott’s review occupying pages 188–201. On April 1, 1816, Austen returned a borrowed copy of the *Quarterly* to her publisher John Murray, who could have told her the identity of the reviewer (Gilson, *Bibliography*, 69–70; Austen, April 1, 1816, *Jane Austen’s Letters*, collected and edited by Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 313). I agree with Peter Knox-Shaw that it is likely she knew who wrote it (*Jane Austen and the Enlightenment* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 224).

nor intimations of mortal illness could significantly hinder her,¹ and in two days short of a year, she was almost done—Cassandra Austen's note on the composition of her sister's works reads, "begun Augt 8th 1815 finished Augt 6th 1816."²

Only sixteen small, heavily worked pages of two manuscript chapters for *Persuasion* survive out of all Jane Austen's published novels. Dates on the MS—"July 8 [1816]" on the first page and "16 July. 1816" on the recto of page 14, later erased and changed to "July 18. 1816" on the verso—prove that she could work extremely fast. In fact, she must have copied and revised her original Chapters 10 and 11 for Volume 2 in only eight days after July 8, 1816. At first her script is regular, as though she writes a fair copy rather than a first draft, but the fact that after July 16, 1816 it becomes more rushed and cramped, most noticeably on a scrap patched over a rejected paragraph and on two separate sheets to be inserted at "X," suggests that she began to revise even as she copied. On July 18, 1816, she wrote on the last page, just as prematurely as she had done two days before, a triumphant "FINIS."

Neither version was to her satisfaction, however. Her nephew and biographer James Edward Austen-Leigh records that "her performance did not satisfy her. She thought it tame and flat, and was desirous of producing something better. This weighed upon her mind, the more so probably on account of the weak state of her health; so that one night she retired to rest in very low spirits. But such depression was little in accordance with her nature, and was soon shaken off. The next morning she awoke to more cheerful views and brighter inspirations; the sense of power revived; and imagination resumed its course."³ If she "finished" her novel on August 6, 1816, as Cassandra said she did, that means that within the nineteen days between July 18 and August 6, 1816, she radically rewrote Chapter 10 for the second volume, as well as composing an astonishingly rich scene at the White Hart for Chapter XI that pulls the whole novel together.⁴

1 Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life* (London: Viking, 1997), 254–57.

2 Cassandra's note, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, was probably written late in 1817. It is reproduced facing page 242 of *Minor Works* (Gilson, *Bibliography*, 82–84).

3 J.E. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, edited with introduction and notes by Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 125.

4 See Chapman's edition of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, 253–55. Unlike Chapman, I order the various versions by the sequence in which Austen wrote them. Page numbers 258–73 refer the reader to Chapman's transcription, based on Austen's last thoughts for her MS. I follow Austen in numbering the manuscript chapters in arabic and the 1818 text [continued]

Seven months later, however, publication still seemed a long way off. Perhaps she was still tinkering with the manuscript when on March 13, 1817, she told Fanny Knight, "I have a something ready for Publication, which may perhaps appear about a twelve-month hence."¹ By "a twelvemonth" she may have meant the vetting, negotiations, proofing, and advertising necessary to the publishing process, for ten days later, on March 23–25, she writes as though she is finished at last: "Do not be surprised at finding Uncle Henry acquainted with my having another ready for publication. I could not say No when he asked me, but he knows nothing more of it.— You will not like it, so you need not be impatient. You may *perhaps* like the Heroine, as she is almost too good for me."² *Persuasion* may indeed have been finished by January 27, 1817, the day that a burst of renewed vigor and gaiety prompted her to start writing "Sanditon,"³ but she often worked on more than one novel at once. On March 23–25, she finally admitted that her illness was becoming more debilitating. With one of *Persuasion*'s key words echoing in her mind, she wrote, "I must not depend upon being ever very blooming

in roman. Strikethroughs indicate Austen's erasures, while carets indicate insertions above the line, even if a caret is not actually inserted. Double carets indicate an insertion within an interlineation. Slashes indicate overwriting that changes one word into another. I have not reproduced points under superscripts in abbreviations such as Mr and Captn. See also Gilson's introduction to Arthur M. Axelrad, *Jane Austen Caught in the Act of Greatness: A Diplomatic Transcription and Analysis of the Two Manuscript Chapters of "Persuasion" and the Manuscript of "Sanditon"* (n.p.: 1stBooks, 2003), v–x. My study of the manuscript was complete before Sutherland's valuable commentary on the printing of *Persuasion* appeared in *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 148–68.

1 Austen, *Letters*, 333.

2 Austen, *Letters*, 335. When Austen writes of novels and heroines that "pictures of perfection as you know make me sick & wicked," she may recall Anna Laetitia Barbauld noting "a certain stiffness" spread over the admirable character of Sir Charles Grandison, arising in part "from the very circumstance of his being so perfect and so successful. Perfection of character, joined to distress, will interest; but prosperous perfection does not engage our sympathy" ("Life of Samuel Richardson, with Remarks on his Writing," in *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson ... to which are Prefixed, A Biographical Account of the Author, and Observations on his Writing*, 6 vols. [London, 1804; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1966], cxxix).

3 The manuscript of "Sanditon" is dated January 27 and March 18, 1817 (Gilson, *Bibliography*, 376).

again.”¹ Four months later, on July 18, she died before her last novel went to press. Henry Austen probably chose its title: *Persuasion*.² ...

By recording the different versions of her text as she herself wrote them, I attempt to trace how she went wrong and how she made it right for publication in 1818, in short, the whole process of her composition.

Austen’s hesitations and reworkings in Chapter 10 show her struggling to resolve her tale. Although she alters as she writes, she would omit from the 1818 text episodes she had already much revised. In one such discarded scene at the start of the manuscript, Anne ponders the implications of Mrs. Smith’s revelations about Mr. Elliot:

With all this knowledge of M^r E—— & with this power of
^authority to^ imparting it, Anne ~~quitted~~ ^left^ Westgate
Build^{gs}—her mind deeply busy in revolving what she had heard,
feeling, thinking, recalling & foreseeing everything, shocked by
~~what she had heard about Mr Elliot~~ ^at Mr Elliot^—sighing over
future Kellynch, ... ~~But the~~ The [T *overwritten on t*] Embarrass-
ment which must be felt from this ~~moment~~ ^hour^ in his pres-
ence!—How to behave to him?—how to get rid of him?—what
to do by any of the Party at home?—where to be blind? where to
be active?—It was altogether a confusion of Images & Doubts—a
perplexity, an ~~Embarrassment~~ ^agitation^ which she could not
see the end of it [.] (258)

In the text published in 1818, however, Anne moves, as befits a heroine representing the only point of real rationality in the novel, from agitated, confused “perplexity” to being firmly “unperplexed.” Her feelings are now controlled and her judgments unequivocal.

1 Austen, *Letters*, 335–36.

2 See Gilson, “Jane Austen’s Text: A Survey of Editions,” *Review of English Studies* 53, no. 209 (2002): 61–85. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, though dated 1818, were advertised and published together in December 1817. Vols. 1–2 were printed by C. Roworth and vols. 3–4 by T. Davison, with John Murray as publisher. Henry Austen prefaced the novels by a biographical notice of his sister. Initial sales were rapid, totalling 1,409 copies out of 1,750, and leaving only 321 on hand by the end of 1818. A further 39 copies were sold early in 1819, with the final 282 copies being remaindered at a low price. After 1818, there was no further printing of Jane Austen’s novels in Britain until the 1830s. For further details, see Gilson, *Bibliography*, 84, 86; Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen: A Literary Life* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991), 171.

This new decisiveness enhances Anne's evolving comparison of Mr. Elliot to Captain Wentworth: "Anne went home to think over all that she had heard. In one point, her feelings were relieved by this knowledge of Mr. Elliot. There was no longer any thing of tenderness due to him. He stood, as opposed to Captain Wentworth, in all his own unwelcome obtrusiveness; and the evil of his attentions last night, the irremediable mischief he might have done, was considered with sensations unqualified, unperplexed.—Pity for him was all over. But this was the only point of relief" (212). At this point in the manuscript, Austen erases a whole scene that she must have seen was disastrous. Anne is pained for "~~Lady Russell, & glancing with composed Complacency & Lenient Triumph upon the fact of her having been right & Lady R. herself wrong. the most discriminating of the two. greiving with complacency or triumphing with concern that Events should only now have shown her~~ *She had never been satisfied. Lady Russell's* [^]whose[^] confidence [^]in him[^] had been entire" (258). Here, Austen presumably deletes Anne's "composed Complacency & Lenient Triumph" because they are totally inappropriate toward a woman she reveres as a mother. Like the erased sentence, "*She had never been satisfied,*" they suggest resentments in Anne that Austen had tried earlier to dispel.

The printed version, by contrast, represents Anne more briefly scanning the consequences of her new knowledge. Instead of triumphing over Lady Russell, she expresses real sympathy for her godmother and even her family, whose potential distress she heightens by referring to the sword of Damocles: "In every other respect, in looking around her, or penetrating forward, she saw more to distrust and to apprehend. She was concerned for the disappointment and pain Lady Russell would be feeling, for the mortifications which must be hanging over her father and sister, and had all the distress of foreseeing many evils, without knowing how to avert any one of them.—She was most thankful for her own knowledge of him" (212). From here onward in Chapter X (1818), Austen replaces her manuscript draft with a whole new section in which a great deal of business prepares for the book's climactic scenes.

In these episodes, Anne's visit to Mrs. Smith makes her realize that "here was a reward indeed springing from it!" She resolves to consult with Lady Russell, even though she cannot open her mind fully to her. On reaching home, however, she finds that Mr. Elliot has paid them a visit and plans to return that evening. Elizabeth Elliot agrees with Mrs. Clay that she never saw anybody "spell" (meaning "hint") harder for an invitation, coyly pretending that he seeks only the company of Sir Walter. Mrs. Clay, "not daring, however, to turn her eyes

towards Anne,” speaks of them as being like father and son. Elizabeth hopes again that she herself is the real attraction: “I sent him away with smiles. When I found he was really going to his friends at Thornberry-park for the whole day tomorrow, I had compassion on him.” The suddenness of Mr. Elliot’s decision reveals his desperation to escape from Elizabeth, for Thornbury New Park lies twelve miles north of Bristol and fifteen miles west of Bath, a three- to four-hour journey from Bath in Austen’s time. He actually plans his absence not just for a whole day, but for “the greater part of two days,” then extends it “from Thursday to Saturday evening” (213–14).¹

Anne admires the “good acting” of Mrs. Clay, who must be apprehensive about the arrival of the person capable of interfering with “her prime object,” Sir Walter. It is “quite” painful for Anne, in the older sense of “very” painful, to have Mr. Elliot speak to her, for now she sees his insincerity and “odious” deference to her father. Her response is guarded and cool, and his efforts to please her fail. The family’s invitation for him to revisit Camden Place makes Anne anticipate the inclusion of “a deeper hypocrite” than Mrs. Clay, for her “selfishness was not so complicate nor so revolting as his.” Even marriage between Mrs. Clay and Sir Walter might be preferable.

The next day, Anne’s wish to see Lady Russell leads Austen to write two characteristic speeches for Elizabeth and Sir Walter, who criticize their friend at the same time as they lavish affection on her. Anne’s plan is foiled, however, by the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Musgrove, Henrietta, and Captain Harville. They have all come to stay at Bath’s White Hart hotel so that Henrietta can buy wedding clothes, thanks to Charles Hayter having been invited to “hold a living for a youth”² and therefore able to marry. The parents are happy enough, even though Mr. Musgrove has to fund two “daughters’ shares” at once because of Louisa’s recent attachment to Benwick. His “coming down” (now “coming up”) with the money “streightens him as to many things.” Given her own history, Anne’s comment is revealing when she praises the parents for seeming “so totally free from all those ambitious feelings which have led to so much misconduct and misery, both in young and old!” In a comic variation on the novel’s theme of alteration, she hears that her former rival is “altered: there is no running or jumping about, no laughing or dancing.” The

1 Thornberry-park has not previously been identified. More than twenty-five hundred acres at Thornbury Park were enclosed for deer by Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, who was executed at the Tower of London in 1521.

2 A patron could install a “caretaker” priest in a parish until a young man he wished to provide for came of age. See Irene Collins, *Jane Austen and the Clergy* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 26.

melancholic Benwick has altered too, enjoying a “famous set-to at rat-hunting” with Charles Musgrove (213–19).

Thus almost the whole cast comes together in Bath. Elizabeth justifies not asking them to dinner, which would betray a difference of style, and plans instead a “small, but most elegant” evening party. Anne postpones her visit to Lady Russell, and hastens to the “quick-changing, unsettled scene” at the White Hart, one of the busiest and noisiest coaching hotels in the town.¹ Charles Musgrove returns with Captains Harville and Wentworth, to their mutual surprise—an idea recycled from an unexpected encounter in Gay Street between Anne and Admiral Croft in the manuscript. Anne recalls that “Their last meeting had been most important in opening his feelings; she had derived from it a delightful conviction,” but she fears “from his looks, that the same unfortunate persuasion, which had hastened him away from the concert room, still governed.” Trying to reassure herself that “if there be constant attachment on each side, our hearts must understand each other ere long,” for they are “not boy and girl, to be captiously irritable, misled by every moment’s inadvertence, and wantonly playing with our own happiness,” she still worries that being in company with each other “could only be exposing them to inadvertencies [acts of heedlessness] and misconstructions of the most mischievous kind” (219–22).

When Mary spies Mrs. Clay deep in talk with Mr. Elliot under the colonnade, Anne’s quick reply that “He was to leave Bath at nine this morning, and does not come back till to-morrow” unfortunately attracts Wentworth’s attention. After the visitors have gone, Mary reminds Charles, who has secured a box for a play the next night, that they are committed to Camden Place to meet Lady Dalrymple, her daughter, and Mr. Elliot as their father’s heir, “the future representative of the family.” Charles cries out, “Don’t talk to me about heirs and representatives,” declaring that “I am not one of those who neglect the reigning power to bow to the rising sun.”² If I would not

1 Austen probably knew that the stables at the rear of the White Hart were a popular haunt of prostitutes. See Susannah Fullerton, *Jane Austen and Crime* (Sydney: Jane Austen Society of Australia, 2004), 101.

2 Compare proverbial usages based on “Most men worship the rising, not the setting sun”: see Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), S979. Austen may allude here to the Prince of Wales, once a frequent visitor to Bath. In 1811, after George III’s mental illness became totally debilitating, he was declared Prince Regent. Austen surely knew also about the tussles for social leadership of Bath after Nash had been “the titular King of the City.” See John Wood, [continued]

go for the sake of your father, I should think it scandalous to go for the sake of his heir.” This “careless expression was life to Anne,” who sees that Wentworth is “all attention” to these events, “looking and listening with his whole soul; and that the last words brought his enquiring eyes from Charles to herself.” Anne takes the opportunity to say decidedly that if it “depended only on my inclination, ma’am, the party at home ... would not be the smallest impediment. I have no pleasure in the sort of meeting” (222–24).

Anne’s declaration draws Wentworth to her side. His comment that “time makes many changes” prompts her to cry out, “I am not yet so much changed,” to which he replies, “as if it were the result of immediate feeling—‘It is a period, indeed! Eight years and a half is a period!’” Henrietta interrupts the interesting conversation, however. “Alarming sounds”¹ warn of the arrival of Sir Walter and Elizabeth, “whose entrance seemed to give a general chill,” but each of them acknowledges Captain Wentworth, with Elizabeth leaving him a card of invitation to her party. He responds, however, with a disdain heightened by Mary’s assumption that he gazes delightedly rather than consideringly at his card. As his cheeks glow and his mouth forms into a “momentary expression of contempt,” Anne turns away. She closes “the fatigues” of the day, a word picked up from the manuscript’s earlier version, by a “toilsome walk” to Camden Place, still uncertain as to whether Wentworth will come. She lets Mrs. Clay know, however, that she has been seen with Mr. Elliot. Her guilt apparent on her face, Mrs. Clay claims, “with a very tolerable imitation of nature,” that she was so surprised to see him that she forgot all about it. These rich new scenes prolong suspense, connect the present intricately with the past, and lay the groundwork for the episode at the White Hart Inn (225–28).

As the manuscript Chapter 10 reveals, however, Austen’s first, much feebler idea for bringing the lovers together was to have Admiral Croft, concerned for his lease of Kellynch, ask Wentworth to find out from Anne if she intends to live there herself with Mr. Elliot. Even though Gay Street is on the direct route back to Camden Place, Anne starts when she encounters Admiral Croft, “as if ^he were^ a person unlikely to be met there.” Pressing doggedly on with her hum-drum little tale, Austen makes various stylistic alterations:

A Description of Bath, 1765, 2nd ed. (London, 1765; repr., Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1969), 449.

1 Sounds of warning to attract attention. William Combe writes of “Fashion’s proud, imperious rap” on the door, in *The English Dance of Death ... from the Designs of Thomas Rowlandson, by the Author of “Dr Syntax,”* 2 vols. (London: R. Ackerman, March 1, 1816), 1:232.

“so far [^]much[^] engrossed,” and “~~as-to-start at~~ [^]that she started on[^] being addressed,” the more particular “[^]denied it[^]” for “said,” and the more dramatic “[^]calling out[^]” for “~~saying~~.” Eliminating a superfluous ampersand in “& in & rest,” Austen inserts a duplicitous claim about Mrs. Croft that “[^]she is all alone[^]” after the Admiral’s “Yes, yes, do go in,” then replaces Anne’s sense of being so little disposed “~~for any company but that of her own thoughts, that she was really sorry~~” with the less empty though still equally self-centered “[^]at this time to be in company of any sort, that it vexed her[^]” (258).

As Anne ineffectually protests, Austen crosses out “now” before “obliged to stop”; corrects “very so kind” to “[^]so[^] very kind”; and restores “said [^]cried[^]” to “said.” She alters her text as fast as she writes it: “~~She had~~ [^]The possibility of[^] Capt. W. ~~in her thoughts at this moment; & ever~~ [^]had occurred—and most fearfully anxious [^]was she[^] to be assured—either that he was within or that he was not; ~~she could not have told which herself~~ [^]but *which*, might have been a question[^] [.]” The Admiral urges Anne to enter the house, saying that Mrs. Croft is with “Nobody ~~by~~ but” her mantuamaker (dressmaker), and dismisses Anne’s suggestion that he allow her “~~merely~~” to leave her card and “[^]be so good as to[^] explain it afterwards to M^{rs} C.”

The Admiral persists: “She will be glad [^]very happy[^] to see you,” blundering on archly: “[^]Mind—[^] I will not swear that she has not something particular to say to you,” for “we begin to hear strange things of you ... But ~~I do not see~~ [^]you have not[^] much the Look of it ~~in your Countenance~~ [^]as Grave as a little Judge[^] ... Now, it is all right.” Anne blushes at the infantilizing cliché: “~~Anne~~ [^]She[^] was left to guess at the direction of his Suspicions;—the first [^]wild[^] idea had been of ~~some confession of the past~~ [^]disclosure[^] from his B^r in law—but she was ashamed the next moment—& felt ~~that it he must be in all probability~~ [^]how far more probable it was that he should[^] be meaning M^r E.” After exposing Anne’s thought processes as alarmingly chaotic, Austen repeats a hackneyed joke about pretending not to be at home to unwelcome visitors:¹ “the Man was evidently beginning to *deny* his mistress, when the sight of his Master stopped him.” Indeed, Austen betrays her own discomfort about the jest’s antiquity when she writes, “The Adm^l enjoyed the joke exceedingly. Anne thought his triumph over Stephen rather too long” (258–59).

1 See Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, 3 pts. ed. with introduction and notes by Jocelyn Harris (London: Oxford University Press, 1972; repr., World’s Classics, 1986; Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Print, 2001), 2:388.

Admiral Croft announces more determinedly that he “will” go up to show her in than “~~shall~~,” which merely signifies the future. In an authorial strategem transparently designed to remove him from the scene, he announces that he is heading to the Post Office, a building never mentioned before in *Persuasion*. With a dismaying lack of percipience, he remarks that in the Gay Street lodgings, she will find “nobody but Frederick.” Anne is understandably taken aback: “Such a person to be passed over as a Nobody to *her*!” She finds an equally astonished Wentworth “~~in the pretence of reading, & prepared to be surprised only~~ ^by the fire pretending to read & prepared for no greater surprise than^ the Admiral’s hasty return.”

This new busybody Admiral is too much on the alert to leave “~~them~~ any troublesome pauses,” repeating what he had said before “^about his wife & everybody^ & ~~he would go upstairs & give his wife notice.~~” Anne sits down, stands up, and sits down again like an actor in a farce, while Austen, in an extraordinary departure from her usual authorial decisiveness, debates with herself about how to resolve her scene: “and if she did not return to the charge with unconquerable Perseverance, ~~or determined spirit~~ ^or did not with a more passive Determination^ walk quietly out of the room—(as certainly she might have done) may she not be pardoned?—If she *had* no horror of a few minutes Tête a Tête with Capt. W——, may she not be pardoned for not wishing to give him the idea that she *had*?” Admiral Croft takes his leave, “^but on reaching the door, said,^ ‘Frederick, a word with *you*, if you please.’” Blocking out her characters’ movements like a very playwright, Austen writes: “~~when he ^had^ reached the door Capt. W. went to him, & tho’ they did both pass on to the Landing place & the Admiral beleived himself to be speaking low, she ^and instantly, before they were well out of the room, the Adm^l continued—‘As I am going to^ leave you together, it is fit but fair I should give you something to talk of’~~” (259–60). Upon these unconvincing grounds, the Admiral speaks with a loudness obviously invented so that Anne can “~~hear~~ ^distinguish^” what is said, in spite of the very firmly closed door, “as ^for^” he speaks “without ^any^ management of voice, tho’ she c^d hear his companion trying ~~in an undertone~~ to check him.” Hearing her own name and Kellynch repeatedly, “~~It agitated her very much~~ ^she was very much distressed^.” Anne does not know “what to do, or what to expect—and among other agonies felt the ~~danger~~ ^possibility^ of Capt. W——’s not returning into the room ^at all^.”

The two men seem to be talking of the Admiral’s lease, a word that Austen first deletes then restores above the line. Anne hears the Admiral say “^something of^” it being signed “^or not signed^,”

which is a not “very agitating” subject to her, “^but then followed^” his hatred of being at an uncertainty. Wentworth seems to be remonstrating, “^wanting to be excused—wanting to put something off. ‘Phoo, Phoo—answered the Admiral^, ~~but~~ [next word erased and illegible] now is the Time. If *you* will not speak, I will stop & ~~do it~~ ^speak^ myself.’ ~~was the Adm’s reply~~ ^answer^.”

In another little flurry of rewriting and correcting, Austen sorts out ““Very well, Sir,’ ^followed^ with some impatience followed from his companion, opening ^who openeing^ the door.” Finally, she discards the possibility of Anne’s being able to see Admiral Croft in order to emphasize the loudness of his voice: “met her eye ear ^with replied the Admiral,^ in all the strength ^power^ of the Adml’s ^his natural^ voice.” He “^hastily^” leaves, “& the door was closed, and the moment arrived in which Anne was alone with Capt. W——” (260–61). Wentworth stands “irresolute & embarrassed; ^and^ for about the space of 5 seconds, she repented what she had done.—censured it as unwise, blushed over it as indelicate.” But such an indelicacy has formed no part of her makeup before. Anne longs to speak of the weather or the concert, “^& sought^ but she could only secure ^but could only compass the^ releif in of taking a Newspaper in her hand.” Austen may have lifted this device from Mary Robinson’s *The False Friend*, where the brave and handsome sailor Edward Ashgrove takes up a newspaper to cover his confusion in the company of the woman he loves. Though Gertrude promised to marry Edward when she thought he was dying, he knows that she still loves another.¹ If so, Austen alters her source, for Wentworth only *fears* that Anne will marry Mr. Elliot.

“The anxious, the distressing pause was soon over however,” and he explains “in the ^a^ voice of a Man who *would* speak whether he could or no, ^effort & constraint,^” his difficult mission of finding out if Anne will indeed settle with Mr. Elliot at Kellynch: “You must have heard too much ^already^ Madam already to be in any doubt of my having promised the Adml Croft to speak to you on some particular subject—& this conviction determines me to do so ^it^—however repugnant to my feelings—to all my sense of propriety.”

Insisting that he speaks “^only^ for another,” Wentworth defends Admiral Croft against being thought impertinent. His intentions are the kindest and best, he says, “^and^ Yyou will perceive that he is actuated by none other, in the application which I am now with—with very peculiar feelings—obliged to make.” Wentworth proceeds “with a very forced alacrity,” stopping to recover breath, “breathing

1 Mary Robinson, *The False Friend: A Domestic Story*, new ed. 4 vols. (London: T. M. Longman and O. Rees, 1799), 3:195–98.

& speaking quick,” and saying that he is “really ashamed” of “the awkwardness of *giving* Information of this sort to one of the Parties.” He allows that the possibility of Anne living at Kellynch the Admiral “[^]knew[^] could not be correct—But it occurred to him that it might be the *wish* of the Parties” (Austen writes more particularly of “the [^]his[^] Lease [^]of Kellynch[^],” and changes “in” to “under” similar circumstances). Wentworth’s complaint, “That *I* should be the person required to commissioned on this subject is extraordinary!—and beleive me Madam, it is no less painful,” seems to betray Austen’s unease about resolving her first plot (261–63).

In Wentworth’s request for the Admiral to “[^]say Pronounce only the words, *he may*[^] address a Line” to Sir Walter, Austen probably crossed out “say” because she was about to write the chiming word, “*may*.” As Anne declares that there is no truth in any report that she will marry Mr. Elliot, Wentworth looks at her with “all the ~~brill~~ ^{hiancy} [^]Power[^] & Keenness, which she beleived no other eyes than his, ~~could command~~ [^]possessed[^].” By midcentury, brilliancy would be dangerously equated with showiness and shallowness, as Austen anticipates when Lady Russell links the epithet “brilliant” with “dangerous,” “headstrong,” and “imprudence” (27). Wentworth stands by a chair, “~~feeling~~ [^]enjoying[^] the ~~comfort~~ [^]relief[^] of leaning on it—[^]or[^] of playing with it,” then sits down, “[^]&[^] looked, with an expression which had something more than penetration in it, something softer.” Anne also says nothing: “Her Countenance did not discourage.—It was a silent, but a very powerful Dialogue;—on his side, Supplication, on her’s acceptance.” Wentworth takes her hand, and, ““Anne, my own dear Anne!”—bursting forth in the fullness of exquisite feeling—and all ~~was~~ Suspense & Indecision were over” (263). But in the published text of 1818, Austen’s incomparably superior scene at the White Hart Inn would allow her lovers far more space to speak.

Although this tentative and uncertain episode in Chapter 10 would vanish almost entirely in 1818, Austen thriftily redeploys some of its elements in the printed Chapter XI. For instance, whereas the manuscript portrays Anne as inarticulate, without agency, it is Wentworth who writes in his letter of 1818, “I am every instant hearing something which overpowers me. You sink your voice, but I can distinguish the tones of that voice, when they would be lost on others.” And instead of Anne speaking “a word or two, but they were un-intelligible,” in Chapter XI she knows that even if some mischance occurs, “it would be in her power to send an intelligible sentence by Captain Harville” (237–39). That word “sentence” means not just the grammatical unit, but Samuel Johnson’s “condemnation pronounced by the judge; doom,” a sense that heightens Anne’s power over Captain

Wentworth's destiny. Similarly, and even more significantly, Anne's eavesdropping, so uncomfortably close to her listening to conversation from behind the hedgerow,¹ transforms into Wentworth's eager striving to catch what Anne and Captain Harville are saying (234). Wentworth hears a declaration of love in Anne's defence of women's constancy as well as men's, for like Desdemona to Othello, she is half the wooer.² Thus by endowing Anne with a voice, Austen focuses attention primarily on her.

In the 1818 text, then, Anne's eloquence contrasts vividly with her silence in the manuscript. When Wentworth meets Anne in Union Street, it is he who "said nothing—only looked," while Anne "could command herself enough to receive that look, and not repulsively" (239–40), meaning in a repelling manner. Perhaps Austen recalled *Clarissa* here, for that compulsive neologist Samuel Richardson seems to have invented the word for a scene where the heroine, discomposed by abduction from her father's house to a St. Albans inn, shows "uneasiness" before the curious servants: "She cast a conscious glance, as she alighted," and "repulsively, as I may say, quitted my assisting hand, and hurried into the house."³ In a typical challenge to her mentor, Austen makes Charles Musgrove incurious and Anne glad rather than disgusted by her suitor's advances. Those readers who were familiar with Richardson, like Cassandra Austen, would understand that Anne acts in pointed denial of *Clarissa's* revulsion from Lovelace when she signals to Wentworth her willingness to walk with him and accepts the offer of his arm. Also, instead of occurring at an early stage of the relationship, as with *Clarissa* and Lovelace, Austen's scene occurs in the 1818 text only *after* Anne speaks out to refute all the old, misogynistic arguments about women's inconstancy, *after* she offers herself implicitly as an example of a faithful woman.

Whereas in the manuscript, Wentworth stumbles awkwardly through somebody else's commission, in 1818 he speaks directly for himself. His passionate letter proclaims him a Romantic at the same time that it betrays his jealousy and pride; his characterization becomes

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- 1 For a possible resolution of the vexed issue of hedgerows and Northamptonshire in *Mansfield Park*, see Harris, *Jane Austen's Art of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; repr., 2003), 130, 247 n.2.
 - 2 For an account of the way that Austen allows her women characters to speak in spite of custom and societal constraints, see Harris, "Silent Women, Shrews, and Bluestockings," in *The Talk in Jane Austen*, ed. Bruce Stovel and Lynn Wenlos Gregg (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002), 3–22.
 - 3 Richardson, *Clarissa: or, The History of a Young Lady*, facsimile of 3rd edition, ed. Florian Stuber and Margaret Anne Doody, 8 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1990–96), 3:50.

richer, more attractive, and incomparably more complex. In a further example of thrift, Austen transmutes Wentworth's manuscript sentence, "A very few words in reply from you will be sufficient," together with its drab echo, "A very few words however will put an end to the awkwardness & distress we may *both* be feeling" (262–63), into his far more extravagantly dramatic postscript of 1818: "A word, a look will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening, or never" (238). The phrase "your father's house" is a particularly nice touch, for it signals his intention to ask for Anne's hand in marriage.

Throughout the manuscript, Anne's "perplexity" and "agitation which she could not see the end of" places her disastrously within the convention of not just the silenced but the hysterical woman, distraught to the point of paralysis, as when she or Austen wonders, "How to behave to him?—how to get rid of him—what to do by any of the Party at home?—where to be blind? where to be active?" But by 1818, as I shall show, Anne becomes not only a woman of feeling, but also a reasonable creature, more rational often than Captain Wentworth. Even worse, the note of calculation in this otherwise clear-sighted, truth-loving woman is as disconcerting as it is recurrent: "No time for recollection!—for planning behaviour, or regulating manners!" She longs to be able to speak of the weather or the concert, but all spontaneity having vanished in the presence of the man she loves, she can only compass the relief of taking a newspaper in her hand. Her feelings dominate her; she is "very much distressed" when the admiral and the captain speak together, for "She knew not what to do, or what to expect" (259–61).

Nor is it consistent for Anne to be "vexed" by Admiral Croft (258)—in 1818, they will take a friendly walk together in clear anticipation of comradeship to come. And whereas at the end of Chapter 10, Anne is "almost bewildered, almost too happy in ~~reflecting on it~~ ^looking back.^—It was necessary to sit up half the Night & lie awake the ~~rest~~ remainder to comprehend with composure her present state, & pay for the overplus of Bliss, by Headache & Fatigue" (268), Anne is no such fragile flower in 1818. The published Chapter XI foregrounds her happiness, not her fatigue: "Such a letter was not to be soon recovered from. Half an hour's solitude and reflection might have tranquillized her; but the ten minutes only, which now passed before she was interrupted, with all the restraints of her situation, could do nothing towards tranquillity. Every moment rather brought fresh agitation. It was an overpowering happiness. And before she was beyond the first stage of full sensation, Charles, Mary, and Henrietta all came in." Instead of Anne's own weakness being "distracting" to her, in the old sense of making her mad, her distress now derives

from the hell that is other people, a hell all too dreadfully familiar to her. Her officious relations decide that she is very ill and insist that she take a chair, which means that she will miss Wentworth on her “quiet, solitary progress up the town (and she felt almost certain of meeting him)” (238). This alteration from a fluke encounter into Anne’s deliberate plan of action radically heightens her agency. Further improvements occur when Mrs. Musgrove assumes that Anne has fallen like Louisa, and Charles hands her over to Wentworth so that he can resume his way to the gunsmith’s. Thus their selfish acting in character releases Anne from her claustrophobic family and allows the lovers to speak.

In the published Chapter XI, Austen retains much of the lovers’ explanatory conversation from the manuscript, but where at first she wrote only that “There was time ~~was~~ ^for^ all this to ~~be said~~—pass—& with such Interruptions only as enhanced the charm of ~~conversation~~ ^the communication^” (268), in 1818 they escape altogether to the “comparatively quiet and retired gravel-walk” (240). Now Anne and Wentworth pace slowly up from Union Street to Gay Street, through Queen Square, and up this leafy incline toward Royal Crescent. From there they probably veer right to the Circus, past the Assembly Rooms and Belmont, and finally up to the Elliot lodgings in Camden Place. This leisurely and expansive journey replaces the unseemly spectacle conveyed by the manuscript: “Bath c^d scarcely contain any ~~more~~ ^other two^ Beings ~~more~~ ^at once so^ rationally and so rapturously happy as during that even^s occupied the Sopha of ~~of~~ M^{rs} Croft’s Drawing room in Gay St.” (268). Here, perhaps, her own juvenile jest about Sophia and Laura fainting “alternately on a sofa”¹ came unwelcome to her mind. Whatever, the “Sopha” went.

In this first version, the lovers have little time to enjoy their private happiness. Austen would essentially keep the lines, “They were reunited. They were restored to all that had been lost. They were carried back to the past, with only an increase of attachment & confidence,” but omit all her original continuation: “& only such a flutter of present Delight as made them little fit for the interruption of M^{rs} Croft, when she joined them not long afterwards”:

She probably, in the observations of the next ten minutes, saw something to suspect—& tho’ it was ^hardly^ possible for a woman of her description to wish the Mantuamaker had imprisoned her longer, she might ^be^ very likely wishing for some excuse to run about the house, some storm to break the windows above, or some ^a^ summons to the Admiral’s Shoemaker

1 Austen, *Minor Works*, 86.

below.—Fortune favoured them all however in another way—in a gentle, steady rain—just happily established ^set in^ as the Admiral returned & Anne rose to go.—She was earnestly invited to stay dinner;¹—& ^a note was dispatched to Camden Place—and^ she staid; she staid till 10 at night. And during that time, more than one interval was secured to them by Mrs Croft the Husband & wife, either by the wife’s contrivance, or by simply going on in their usual way, were frequently out of the room together—gone up stairs to hear a noise, or gone down stairs to settle their accounts, or gone upon the Landing place to trim the Lamp.—And these precious moments were turned to so good an account that many of ^all^ the most anxious feelings of the past were gone through. (263–64)

Here Austen seems merely to be jotting down preliminary notes. She makes the Crofts look foolish as well as intrusive at this important moment when she implies unkindly that Mrs. Croft is unfashionable as well as incapable of escaping from a dressmaker, while the Admiral looks both fussy and managed by his wife. Far better for the lovers to pace the gravel walk, where they can be “heedless of every group around them, seeing neither sauntering politicians,² bustling house-keepers, flirting girls, nor nursery-maids and children” (241). Like Addison in *Spectator* 131, they can be most truly alone in a crowd.

That “gentle, steady rain,” through which “Fortune favoured them all” by keeping Anne in Gay Street, may have other connotations yet. On Saturday March 5, 1814, Austen saw Edmund Kean, the sensation of the moment, playing in *The Merchant of Venice*.³ Perhaps she remembered Portia’s courtroom speech about the quality of mercy dropping like “the gentle rain from heaven,” when “mercy seasons justice.”⁴ If so, the first draft’s gentle rain that sets in “happily” (264), meaning fortunately as well as creative of happiness, might represent the mercy over justice that Anne and Wentworth now freely extend to each other. That abandoned sentence may therefore represent a real loss. ...

1 “Stay dinner” means “stay for dinner,” on the analogy of “stay the night.”

2 Not a member of Parliament, but someone keenly interested in politics. See Christopher Anstey on the coffeehouse, where “The wits and the great politicians repair,” in *The New Bath Guide: or, Memoirs of the B-N-R-D Family*, new ed. (London: J. Wright, 1801), 51.

3 Austen, March 2–3 and March 5–8, 1814, *Letters*, 256–58. See also Penny Gay, *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 12, 17–19, 171 n.33, 174 n.52.

4 *Merchant of Venice*, 4.1.179–97.

What Wentworth calls in the manuscript “the attempts of Anger & Pique,” that is, his “preceeding *attempts* to attach himself to Louisa Musgrove,” would become in 1818 the less petulant “attempts of angry pride.” In a little flurry of editing, Austen writes that “he had not understood the perfect excellence of ~~tha~~ the Mind, with which Louisa’s could so ill bear a comparison, or the perfect, the unrivalled hold it possessed over his ^{^him^} his own.” For 1818, too, she ironed out the awkward sentence, “From that period to the present had his penance been the most severe” (265) into the simpler version, “From that period his penance had become severe” (242).

The improvement is dazzling when Austen converts Wentworth’s indirect into direct speech, confirming Graham Hough’s observation that her preferred mode of narration is the dramatic.¹ The manuscript reads: “He found that he was considered by his friend Harville, as an engaged Man.² The Harvilles entertained not a doubt of a mutual attachment between him & Louisa—and though this to *a degree*, was contradicted ~~to them~~ ^{^instantly^}—it ^{^yet^} made him feel that perhaps by *her* family, by everybody, by *herself* ^{^even^}, the same idea might be held—and that he was not *free* in honour—though, if such were to be the conclusion, too free alas! in Heart” (265). How much more arresting and convincing is the 1818 text, where Wentworth is allowed to speak for himself: “I found,’ said he, ‘that I was considered by Harville an engaged man! That neither Harville nor his wife entertained a doubt of our mutual attachment. I was startled and shocked. To a degree, I could contradict this instantly; but, when I began to reflect that others might have felt the same—her own family, nay, perhaps herself, I was no longer a [*thus in 1818*] my own disposal. I was hers in honour if she wished it’” (242). Now the Captain need no longer explain that Harville is a friend, nor does he lump Mrs. Harville in with her husband. He also proffers new information that he was startled and shocked by the Harvilles’ conviction of his attachment to Louisa—and who are we to disagree?—claiming that he himself “could contradict this instantly” instead of the more questionable “was contradicted instantly.”

Finally, the confused clause “that he was not *free* in honour—though, if such were to be the conclusion, too free alas! in Heart” becomes the terser, more elegant statement, “I was no longer a[t]

1 Graham Hough, “Narrative and Dialogue in Jane Austen,” *Critical Quarterly* 12 (1970): 201–30.

2 Compare Lord Nelson’s letter: “My brother takes it for granted that I am a married man,” in James Stanier Clarke and John M’Arthur, *The Life and Services of Admiral Lord Nelson*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809), 2:118.

my own disposal. I was hers in honour if she wished it." In short, his account becomes more dramatic and self-blaming, though also more self-extenuating. In the manuscript, Austen then retrieves "justly" from the erasure a few lines back: "He had never thought ~~before of what his, as he ought, His leaving Lyme had been the consequence of never~~ ^justly [seriously *in 1818*] on this subject before—he had not^ sufficiently considered that his excessive Intimacy at Upper-cross must have it's danger of ill consequence in many ways, and that while trying whether he *c^d* attach himself to either of the Girls, he might be exciting unpleasant reports, if not, raising unrequited regard!" (265). ...

[B]y comparison with the published novel of 1818, Jane Austen's manuscript drafts look surprisingly uncertain. In her first version, Admiral Croft seems crass, loud, and unobservant, Mrs. Croft is domineering and careless of her appearance, Anne appears emotionally frail, inarticulate, and even calculating, and Wentworth looks clumsy as he carries out another man's errand. Anne bobs up and down, the Crofts rush about foolishly, and the lovers are never left alone. Even when safely ensconced on the "Sopha," they are constantly interrupted. Finally, the late introduction of three new characters of a mantuamaker, the servant Stephen, and a shoemaker, together with a whole new location of the Post Office, would be fatal flaws in anybody's narrative, even Austen's. ...

Woolf ... finds "extreme satisfaction" in what she calls Austen's "more abstract art," which "so varies the emotions and proportions [of] the parts that it is possible to enjoy it, as one enjoys poetry, for itself, and not as a link which carried the story this way and that."¹ Again, though, that level of abstraction and poetic repetition occurs only in the text of 1818, where the debate at the White Hart links up all the principal themes of the novel: the constancy of men and women, the gendering of reason and feeling, and the need for women to act and speak. In short, the subtexts of her finale unify the novel far beyond the level of story. Thus when Henry James called Austen's novels "instinctive and charming" and advised readers to look elsewhere for "signal examples of what composition, distribution, arrangement can do, of how they intensify the life of a work of art,"² he made a particularly untruthful as well as ungrateful contribution to the myth of her limitation. ...

(2007)

1 Woolf, "Jane Austen," *Collected Essays*, 1:148–51.

2 James, "Gustave Flaubert" (1902), in *The House of Fiction: Essays on the Novel*, ed. with introduction by Leon Edel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962), 207.