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Because Such Fingers Need To Knit: Reunion and Ecstasy in Jane Austen's Persuasion

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Because Such Fingers Need To Knit:

Reunion and Ecstasy in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

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Preface

> There could not be an objection. There could be only a most proper alacrity, a most obliging compliance for public view; and smiles reined in and spirits dancing in private rapture. In half a minute, Charles was at the bottom of Union-street again, and the other two proceeding together; and swoon words enough had passed between them to decide their direction towards the comparatively quiet and retired gravel-walk, where the power of conversation would make the present hour a blessing indeed; and prepare for it all the immortality which the happiest recollections of their own future lives could bestow. There they exchanged again those feelings and those promises which had once before seemed to secure ever thing, but which had been followed by so many, many years of division and estrangement. There they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their re-union, than when it had been first projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment; more equal to act, more justified in acting.
>
> —Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1818)

Jane Austen's *Persuasion* builds to this moment shared by Anne Elliot and Captain Fredrick Wentworth. A moment of rapture and love, the re-union of Anne and Wentworth is extraordinary. Austen's novels canonically end with happy marriages, but *Persuasion* not only ends with a happy marriage, but with perfect harmony. *Persuasion* is Austen's novel least interested in convention. This project endeavors to attest that this moment is *the moment* when Anne and Wentworth are outside of themselves, wrapped in perfect transcendence.

Jane Austen is often read as a secular writer, in whose works readers search only for romance and the execution of the marriage plot. She is sometimes considered a materialist whose novels are concerned with income, entail, estates, and the social strata. This project offers a look at the rarely studied Austen who is concerned with "other worldly" matters: the state of one's soul and spiritual basis for the union represented by the sacrament of marriage. A novelist well versed in the Anglican tradition, Austen reflects her religion in the themes of her final novel *Persuasion.*

This project expresses the influence of devotional verse and learned sermons stretching back to John Donne to offer a new reading of Jane Austen's novel. Concerned with the fragility of life, mortality, and the state of the body, Austen meditates on the Anglican relationship of body and soul. She draws upon the theology of the Church of England and Samuel Johnson to expand and advance an idea of the tension of body and soul through a novel of love regained. Using John Donne's "The Ecstasy," this project draws parallels between Donne's verse and Austen's narrative. Asking the question of what it means to be a soul with limited access to a body or a body severed from a soul, this project draws a distinction between love and heartache. *Persuasion* focuses on Anne Elliot's change from a no body to a woman of "poise" following a similar pattern of Donne's poem. Ultimately, *Persuasion* is a novel of salvaged love.

Introduction

The concept of a duality between body and soul is not only a philosophical problem, but also a religious one. Writers strive to investigate this duality to capture, prove, or disprove it. Thinkers within the Anglican tradition have long grappled with the body and the soul duality through art, poetry, prose, or science. Drawing upon the doctrines of Anglicanism and the *Book of Common Prayer,* these priests, writers, and thinkers have postulated and interpreted human duality variously through sermons given to congregations, theological texts, and art.

The relation between body and soul is central to Christianity in several, and Anglicanism in particular, as evidenced by texts that ground the faith. Used in the Anglican Church service, *The Book of Common Prayer* was originally published in 1549 as a product of the English Reformation and the Church of England's break with Rome. It contains a number of prayer books dictated by the Anglican Communion for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, the Litany, and the Holy Communion. *The Book of Common Prayer* is meant to be read every day as well as at mass. At the root of the text, Jesus Christ is referred to not only as a man, but also as the combined body and soul of Christ. In accordance with the Nicene Creed, or a profession of faith used within the Anglican tradition, the body and soul are separate.

> I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord. Which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence shall he come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost. The holy Catholic Church. The communion of saints. And the life everlasting. Amen.

> *And after that, these prayers following as well at Evening Prayer as at Morning Prayer, all devoutly kneeling.*
>
> *The minister first pronouncing with a loud voice.*
>
> The Lord be with you.
>
> *Answer.* And with thy spirit.
>
> *The minister.* Let us pray. (*The Book of Common Prayer* 58).

Within the profession of faith, dualities populate the language and images. God is referred to as "God the Father" who made "heaven and earth." Each name appears in twos: Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, Holy Ghost, and Pontius Pilate, God the Father. These sets of often-paradoxical dualities are textually relevant to understanding the duality of body and soul. As directed by *The Book of Common Prayer,* after the person finishes praying, the minister pronounces, "with a loud voice...The Lord be with you" and the person is expected to reply, "And with thy spirit." Here, body and soul are referred to as different entities not only within the Creed, but also in the prayer and blessing that follows the most fundamental profession of faith for Anglicans. As earth and heaven are separate, so is man within himself. Man strives to reach heaven with his soul and leave behind his earthly form, the body. The body is only the vessel whereby the soul interacts with other souls.

The Nicene Creed is more than just a prayer; it is a way of thinking. A foundational statement of faith, the Nicene Creed is key to my understanding of this body/soul relationship. The repetition of a prayer instills in each believer a basic understanding of Christian faith. As church historian and theologian John Booty observes:

> Although the Nicene Creed is a statement of faith issued by a general council of the Church and thus accepted as authoritative for Anglicanism, its significance as a doctrinal

> foundation among Anglicans is probably far more the result of its liturgical use than of a preoccupation with the authority of a council. This is but one example of the way in which corporate prayer has shaped belief through the impact of the Book of Common Prayer, not only in shaping Anglican piety but theology as well (575-576).

Though the prayer is widespread and repeated constantly (causing some to argue, that it may diminish its meaning over time) it is undeniable that the Nicene Creed has seeped into the collective Anglican unconscious. The dualities within Anglicanism have gone on to anchor theological, philosophical, and artistic thinking since the founding of the Church of England by Henry VIII in 1534.

Anglican tradition is predicated on a tension between body and soul. The definition of a new English Church in 1534 and a separation from Rome and the Catholic Church came at a time of royal unrest. Henry VIII spent most of his reign challenging religion, first by opposing Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, earning him a title "Defender of the Faith" from Pope Leo X in 1521. But Henry VIII did not stay in good standing with Rome. Demanding a divorce from Catherine of Aragon from Pope Clement VII, and then being refused, Henry VII found another way to break away from tradition. Excommunicated from the Catholic Church for his marriage to Anne Boleyn in 1533, Henry VIII broke with Rome all together in the next year through the Act of Supremacy. The Anglican Church is founded upon dualities: English nationalism and concerns of the state (as well as the personal power of the monarch) came to oppose the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Much of what I will talk about in the following sections in terms of body and soul is applicable in general to Christianity, but it is a distinct perspective within the Anglican tradition on which this paper focuses.

Richard Hooker (1554-1600), Robert South (1634-1716), and John Donne (1572-1631) were all extremely influential Anglican writers, all three on the forefront in creating a body of texts supporting the Church of England. Through sermons preached to congregations and subsequently written down and collected into anthologies, their specific interpretation of Anglican doctrine and Biblical texts reached a multitude of audiences in England. With ideas about how to lead a righteous life, as well as how to improve one's faith, these Anglican divines managed to reach much of England through their writings. In glorious sermons, they also offered their interpretations of the separation of body and soul within the Anglican man.

The interplay between body and soul for Richard Hooker is a dynamic exchange: a transaction between God and follower. Every single member of the Anglican Church must contribute something to God. Richard Hooker was an Anglican priest who emphasized reason, tolerance, and the value of tradition. He is often grouped with Thomas Cranmer and Matthew Parker as a founder of Anglican theology. Hooker influenced later theological as well as philosophical thinkers; John Locke, for instance, quotes Richard Hooker multiple times in the *Second Treatise of Civil Government.* Hooker's conception of the body/soul relationship is predicated on the belief that, to serve God, a pious person must be able to give God something of worth or value. This transaction has to take place for faith and religion to make ecclesiastical sense:

> If ye desire yet further to know how necessary and needful it is that we edify and build up ourselves in Faith, mark the words of the blessed Apostle, Without Faith it is impossible to please God. If I offer to God all the sheep and oxen that are in the World, if all the temples that were builded since the days of Adam till this hour, were of my foundation; if I break my very heart with calling upon God, and wear out my tongue with preaching; if I

> sacrifice my body and soul unto him, and have no Faith, all this availeth nothing. Without Faith it is impossible to please God. Our Lord and Saviour therefore being asked in the sixth of St. John's Gospel, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? maketh answer, *This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he had sent*....no building of ourselves in anything can be available or profitable unto us, except we be edified and built in Faith..." (566)

Hooker insists that with faith, we invest in God, and He expects something in return. Hooker argues that man is unable to give God "all the sheep and oxen that are in the World" or "all the temples that were builded since the days of Adam till this hour." The only thing we can give him is our belief, and with that, our soul. Man's body is the vessel in which the soul is transcribed and transmuted to become a faith-bearing being. Pleasing God is the main objective of man and this cannot be reached *just* through spreading his word and bringing others to the religion. To give one's soul to God, through absolute faith and belief, is the only transaction that Hooker postulates that matters. Through the dynamic transaction of body and soul, Hooker infers that the two are indeed separate. The soul can be offered up to God through absolute faith. The soul, when the body has died, does not die along with the body. Instead, the soul is transferred to God.

Robert South was an Anglican minister who wrote and published six complete volumes of his collected sermons in 1692. He was known for his fevered and animated preaching and a wit bordering on sarcasm. He conceived an idea of wholeness of person through the senses. By capturing the attention of his congregation he was an absolute advocate of the doctrine of passive obedience, supporting the religious and political supremacy of the Crown. He was also very vocal in English government. Through his writings and the sermons he preached on a number of subjects, including the duality of body and soul, South shaped the Anglican imagination:

> For, as in the Body, when the principal Parts, as the *Heart* and *Liver,* do their Offices, and all the inferior, smaller Vessels act orderly and duly, there arises a sweet Enjoyment upon the Whole, which we call *Health:* So in the Soul, when the supreme Faculties of the Will and Understanding move regularly, the inferior Passions and Affections following, there arises a Serenity and Complacency upon the whole Soul, infinitely beyond the greatest bodily Pleasures, the highest Quintessence and Elixir of worldly Delights. There is in this Case a kind of Fragrancy, and spiritual Perfume upon the Conscience; much like what Isaac spoke of his Son's Garments; *That the Scent of them was like the Smell of a Field which the Lord had blessed.* Such a Freshness and Flavour is there upon the Soul, when daily watered with the Actions of a virtuous Life. Whatsoever is pure, is also pleasant (South 69).

South not only observes the separation of body and soul in their distinctness, but he also indicates that a whole and virtuous life with God is only achieved through the harmony of the body with the soul. A "Serenity" and "Complacency upon the whole Soul" is the "highest Quintessence and the Elixir of worldly Delights." The body is a "vessel" for the soul, and the harmony of the two forms the "whole Soul." South indicates that the harmony of the two is "Health" and one must reach an understanding of ones own body, soul, and health to achieve a "pure" and "pleasant" life with God. He also grounds his ideas of the whole soul and health in Biblical text. "Serenity" and "Quintessence and Elixir of worldly Delights" ties this harmony to the human senses. A "spiritual Perfume" is released "upon the Conscience" in the same way that "Isaac spoke of his Son's Garments; that the Scene of them was like the smell of a field which the Lord had blessed." The combination of the soul, and the body, or health, and consciousness, are all unified. The senses are the way that Isaac communicated with God. Using the sense of

smell, Isaac's soul perceived clothing through his body and was able to understand a message sent by God. The duality of body and soul, and through the *health* and state of the "whole soul ['s]" consciousness, is how South's man comes to embrace spirituality within God's world.

John Donne extends concepts found in Hooker and South, giving voice to the fullest expression of body and soul. More widely read than either South or Hooker, John Donne was not only a theologian, but also a poet. Living a life and creating work that contained a fundamental duality, John Donne is the most important theological thinker to whom I will return in this essay. Dealing with ideas of carnal love, attention to materiality, and the duality of language Donne engages with themes similar to the body soul relation in a way that grows out of Hooker and South's concerns. T.S. Eliot wrote of Donne in his essay "The Metaphysical Poets":

> The difference is not a simple difference of degree between poets. It is something which had happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility… We may express the difference by the following theory: The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic, as their predecessors were; no less nor more than Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinicelli, or Cino. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden. Each of these men performed

> certain poetic functions so magnificently well that the magnitude of the effect concealed the absence of others. The language went on and in some respects improved; the best verse of Collins, Gray, Johnson, and even Goldsmith satisfies some of our fastidious demands better than that of Donne or Marvell or King (Eliot 427).

The language of the metaphysical poets, specifically John Donne, is a sensory experience according to Eliot. Donne differs from poets preceding him: "A thought to Donne was an experience, it modified his sensibility." His language is an "experience" to the reader—through the modification of "his sensibility" of the world; he transmits his feeling to his reader. Donne's poetry seeps into the senses of the reader; his words are instantly experienced like "the odour of a rose." Eliot expounds that Donne "possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience" through his poems. The emotion that Donne infuses into the language of his poetry immediately eludes the reader to an "experience" unlike any other. Through his modified sensibility of language, Donne combines experiences with emotion through language.

Donne, like St. Augustine, was not a religious man in the first half of his life. His poetry embodies a rich experience of both carnal desires and spiritual longing. He was a representative mind of his period, whose ideas connected with the collective unconscious Anglican thought. Logan Pearsall Smith inferred in his 1919 essay on a collection of Donne's sermons "one might use [Donne's] sermons for illustrating the history of human thought and by selecting typical pages from them give a picture, not only of the theological conceptions of time, but of the philosophy then current, and the main ideas that were accepted by the cultivated man of that period" (xxiii). Donne's conception of time will be visited later in this project, but for now it is crucial to recognize that Donne's popularity is evident. He was read not only popular by 'cultured men of that period' but was able to communicate his ideas and interpretations so

effectively that "Donne [was] the most famous preacher of the time" (xxxviii). Not only was he listened to, but also he was widely read—both his poetry and his sermons after his death.

Spirits and souls appear widely throughout Donne's work. He ruminates on death, memory, suffering, true religion, redemption, and immortality. Mainly, however, man is Donne's subject, postulating and inferring religious ramifications of behaviors of the body and the soul. In a most enlightening, and short, sermon "10. Donne and the Worm," Donne wonders what his soul would ask of the worms that are disposing of his dead body:

> If my soule could aske one of those *Wormes* which my dead body shall produce, Will you change with me? that worme would say, No; for you are like to live eternally in torment; for my part, I can live no longer, then the putrid moisture of your body will give me leave, and therefore I will not change; nay, would the *Devill* himselfe change with a damned soule? I cannot tell (10).

Imagining an out-of-body experience, in which his soul has left his body for good, Donne creates not only a conversation but also a testament to the soul's separation from the body in man. Asking the worm, "will you change with me?" i.e. will your soul join God, too, the worm replies that it will not, that it has no soul or pact with God. Donne will "live eternally" while the worm "can live no longer, then the putrid moisture of [his] body will give me leave, and therefore I will not change." Donne describes a transformation within this sermon, primarily of the soul when the body no longer can serve as a vessel. The mention of the "*Devill"* draws upon a series of dualities: good and evil, wrong and right, life and death. The worm, the character that is alive in this sermon, is only alive due to the dead body which once housed Donne's soul. Once the soul leaves the body, the body is inanimate and without life. Through this death, however the body also imparts life to the soulless worm; the worm here represents death, destruction, and

decomposition. Like the Devil, the worm is a life that feeds off of the death of others. This sermon is composed of dualities and ultimately dramatizes Donne's main contention that the soul is a separate entity from the body even as it dwells upon their uncomfortable connection.

When King James I died, when his own soul separated from his body, John Donne preached a specific sermon for him. Donne was invited to Denmark House before the body of the dead king was removed for burial. In Donne's sermon, he speaks of the Trinity and God's love. He reminds his listeners of the mercy the Holy Spirit will have on the late king, and he speaks of the bodies of kings specifically and how they are a direct link between God and the people. The idea of two bodies of the king emerged is relevant here: "Whereas the king's natural, mortal body would pass away with his death, he was also thought to have an enduring, supernatural one that could not be destroyed, even by assassination, for it represented the mystical dignity and justice of the body politic" (Philpott). Donne preaches of "God's presence" in all things, and God's plan (Donne 284). Comparing King James to King Solomon, in both cases the crown represents a marriage to God. In death the king does not lose this connection to God, even if he does indeed lose connection to the people: "*He is crowned in the day of his Marriage;* for though it be a day of *Divorce* of us from him, and of *Divorce* of his body from his soul, yet neither of these Divorces breake the Marriage; His *soule* is married to him that made it, and his body and soul shale meet again, and all we, both then in that Glory where we shall acknowledge, that there is no way to this *Marriage,* but this *Divorce,* nor to *Life,* but by *Death"* (291). Death brings about the divorce of the body and the soul. In the marriage of the two, contract binds the soul and body together in union. But death, Donne's divorce, breaks that contract. The body and the soul are separated into different spheres of existence through death. Donne's sermon is predicated on the idea that the body and the soul will meet again, will be joined eventually on the Day of

Judgment. The path to *Life*, God's life, is through the separation of the two, however, and through death. Death is a schism that allows the soul and the body to be severed into the separate entities that they are, one joining God and the other remaining on earth to decay into matter. In the case of James I, Donne's sermon reminds his listeners that not all is lost with the king's death. His death is a gateway to another life: "His *soule* is married to Him that made it," this *Him* being God.

John Donne's attitude towards the relationship of body and soul is evident not only in his sermons but in his poetry. Through his position as an Anglican minister, Donne, knowingly or unknowingly, communicated a powerful theological philosophy that extended ideas of body and soul also explored in his poetry. The duality of body and soul was a given amongst Anglican thinkers of his time and continued to permeate collective unconscious. The ideas of Donne's sermons cross over into his poetry, and the poetry informs his sermons. Art and God are inseparable for John Donne. Though John Donne's sermons are mostly undated and we are unable to pin down an exact time frame for each, we do know that he wrote poetry his entire life. Ideas are interchangeable between his sermons and his poetry. The body is the primary social tool for man, shaping how each character relates to others. The soul is the intelligence and spirit of a person. As the instrument for experiencing time and interacting with the world, the body exists within dualities, as we see in Donne's poem "The Ecstasy." The soul, in "The Ecstasy," is the purest form of man but is also reliant on the body to interact with the world.

The Oxford English Dictionary has a multitude of entries for *ecstasy, n.* and *ecstasy, v.* but a limited selection pertain to John Donne's time. As a noun, *an ecstasy* that would fit John Donne's development of his term, ecstasy is defined as:

> 3. Used by mystical writers as the technical name for the state of rapture in which the body was supposed to become incapable of sensation, while the soul was engaged in the contemplation of divine things. Now hist. or allusive ("Ecstasy, n").

Though this is obviously applicable to Donne, but an earlier example of "ecstasy" is equally germane: "1652 J. Smith Select Disc. (1660) iv. vi. 100 In such sober kind of Ecstacies did Plotinus find his own Soul separated from his Body" ("Ecstasy, n."). A third entry for *ecstasy, n.* aids to the understanding of John Donne's conception of his term ecstasy:

> a. An exalted state of feeling which engrosses the mind to the exclusion of thought; rapture, transport. Now chiefly, Intense or rapturous delight: the expressions ecstasy of woe, ecstasy of sorrow, ecstasy of despair, etc., still occur, but are usually felt as transferred. Phrase, to be in ecstasy, to dissolve in ecstasy (trans. and intr.), be thrown into ecstasies, etc. ("Ecstasy, n.").

The earliest entry for this "state of feeling which engrosses the mind" is 1526, the use emerging in Donne's early life: "1526 W. Bonde Pylgrimage of Perfection iii. sig. IIIiv, After they come downe agayne to themselfe frome suche excessiue eleuacion or extasy" ("Ecstasy, n."). The use of the term *ecstasy* as we understand it through Donne's poetry focuses on an interplay between feeling and non-feeling, a separation of soul and body, rapture that excludes rational thought, and finally "a state of feeling which engrosses the mind."

There is a traceable transformation of beings in Donne's poem, and a traceable transformation within the poem itself. Beginning with two incomplete persons at the start of the poem, the reader is confronted by two balanced and whole persons at the end of the poem. Where the soul is able to operate and intermingle with another soul through an act higher than sexual intercourse, two souls become as one for an instance, and then separate once more into

two while retaining a sense of wholeness. The body houses the individual souls, "the intelligence[s]," and is an important intermediary between the two. The body is the vessel—but a crucial one.

In this project, I will use Donne's "The Ecstasy" as a model for the productive interplay between these seemingly opposed or incompatible entities. The body and the soul, in later English literature, very much rooted within the Anglican tradition. I will follow closely the transformations of beings in Donne's poem that progresses five major stages in "The Ecstasy."

1. Two Bodies
2. Joined Bodies
3. Souls Gone Out
4. Subtle Knot
5. Changed Bodies.

Some critics might ask what such a transformation says about the duality of body and soul. I answer that Donne's "ecstatic" transformation introduces a poweful idea of soul and body that transcends death, one that has not been touched by the Anglican priests mentioned so far in this paper: love. Love is a driving force behind literature, poetry, and indeed the written word. It is through love that soul and body are transformed in John Donne's *The Ecstasy.* And why does love matter? It is through love that John Donne paints the duality of body and soul, and the flexibility and mutability of the two, in his poetry. By extension, later writers and thinkers—including Jane Austen—will continue to animate this dialogue of body and soul but in ways less obvious than Donne's explicitly religious approach.

WHERE, like a pillow on a bed,
A pregnant bank swell'd up, to rest
The violet's reclining head,
  Sat we two, one another's best.

Our hands were firmly cemented
  By a fast balm, which thence did spring ;
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
  Our eyes upon one double string.

So to engraft our hands, as yet
  Was all the means to make us one ;
And pictures in our eyes to get
  Was all our propagation.

As, 'twixt two equal armies, Fate
  Suspends uncertain victory,
Our souls—which to advance their state,
  Were gone out—hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
  We like sepulchral statues lay ;
All day, the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day.

If any, so by love refined,
  That he soul's language understood,
And by good love were grown all mind,
  Within convenient distance stood,

He—though he knew not which soul spake,
  Because both meant, both spake the same—
Might thence a new concoction take,
  And part far purer than he came.

This ecstasy doth unperplex
  (We said) and tell us what we love ;
We see by this, it was not sex ;
  We see, we saw not, what did move :

But as all several souls contain
  Mixture of things they know not what,
Love these mix'd souls doth mix again,
  And makes both one, each this, and that.

A single violet transplant,
  The strength, the colour, and the size—
All which before was poor and scant—
  Redoubles still, and multiplies.

When love with one another so
  Interanimates two souls,
That abler soul, which thence doth flow,
  Defects of loneliness controls.

We then, who are this new soul, know,
  Of what we are composed, and made,
For th' atomies of which we grow
  Are souls, whom no change can invade.

But, O alas ! so long, so far,
Our bodies why do we forbear?
They are ours, though not we ; we are
  Th' intelligences, they the spheres.

We owe them thanks, because they thus
  Did us, to us, at first convey,
Yielded their senses' force to us,
  Nor are dross to us, but allay.

On man heaven's influence works not so,
  But that it first imprints the air ;
For soul into the soul may flow,
Though it to body first repair.

As our blood labours to beget
  Spirits, as like souls as it can ;
Because such fingers need to knit
  That subtle knot, which makes us man ;

So must pure lovers' souls descend
  To affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
  Else a great prince in prison lies.

To our bodies turn we then, that so
Weak men on love reveal'd may look ;
Love's mysteries in souls do grow,
  But yet the body is his book.

And if some lover, such as we,
  Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still mark us, he shall see
  Small change when we're to bodies gone.

“The Ecstasy” by John Donne

The poem begins with two separate bodies “like a pillow on a bed.” A deep and profound “bank” between the two bodies “swell’d up, to rest/ The violet’s reclining head.” The violet, whether it is a bank made up of flowers or not, is the symbol for faith or faithfulness. The violet is strength and regeneration; the flower supports “we two, one another’s best.” A silent swell—two bodies rest inanimate like pillows amongst violets. The first stanza is the first stage of Donne’s transformation. It depicts two people, with separate bodies and separate souls. They are not “we” but “we two” in the poem.

Stanzas two and three enact Donne’s second stage of transformation: joined bodies. Here, “our hands were firmly cemented/By a fast balm, which thence did spring.” This balm, most likely sweat or by extension any bodily fluid, serves as a fast and distinct connection of the two people as their bodies become one. Here, their fluids combine. This combination leads to “our eye-beams twisted, and did thread/Our eyes upon one double string.” Eyes become, to pardon the cliché, windows for the soul. Through the “eye-beams twisted” the bodies become intertwined. Eyes, sweat, and thus “engraft our hands, as yet/Was all the means to make us one.” One-ness is the goal, separation is the obstacle.

The third stage of transformation enters in stanza four and five: souls gone out. Souls seep out of the joined bodies, the “Two equal armies” that are the physical vessels. Donne references his sermon for James I: “Fate/Suspends uncertain victory, / Our souls—which to advance their state/ Were gone out.” He refers to his earlier idea of how Death is the one way to separate the body and the soul. The two people in the poem risk “Fate;” the suspension of their souls will be an “uncertain victory.” The one true separator is Death; their time together will be extremely limited. Thus the seeping souls are running on borrowed time, Donne warns. As the souls go out of the bodies “we like sepulchral statues lay” they are empty and able to say

"nothing, all the day." Unable to communicate through language, the souls harbor the intellect, and thus, the ability socially to interact. The souls have completely gone out, no remnants are left.

The fourth stage of transformation in "The Ecstasy," Subtle Knot, is significantly longer. While the other stages are only two stanzas long, the Subtle Knot stage is twelve stanzas long. In these twelve stanzas, Donne parses out what makes a soul a soul and how love can influence the duality of the body and the soul. Love is a catalyst in *The Ecstasy.* It is the driving force that encourages souls to intermingle. The quest is lasting oneness, a combination of two to make a one, a we to make an us. Love is a language understood by souls, "So by love refined/That the soul's language understood." Donne questions whether any man, a combination of body and soul, can be so "refined" in love that he can understand the immutable language of the soul without the body. Love, between two souls, serves as a way for the souls to become one. Though Donne preached that Death can separate the body and the soul, he explains here that love can combine souls. For "He", who could be God, an onlooker, or the combination of the two, looks upon the two souls, could not tell which "Soul spake, / Because both meant both spake the same-." This combination of souls, through the love between the two whole people, is far more than sex. It transcends the want for physical union. For union, an urge to get as close to another human being as possible through physical copulation, this urge for a union is pushed even further. The union of souls reaches an "ecstasy"--for through the two, now one, souls know not the "Mixture of things they know not what, / Love these mix'd souls doth mix again, / And makes both one." The urge to combine, for union, and for a copulation far more "pure" than carnal results in a new soul; an abler soul. At the same time the poem laments the need for a body.

The body is a physical hindrance to the communication between two souls, for "they are ours, though they are not we; we are/The intelligence, they the sphere." Here the emphasis is placed on the "we" rather than the "sphere." Where "we" is not the individual soul that is contained in a single body, rather the "we" is the new entity that is created through the union of two souls. There is a bitterness of approach; an inability to inhabit the same body that causes the new entity woe.

In stanza fourteen, the tone shifts and the individual souls give thanks to their bodies by yielding "their forces, sense, to us/Nor are dross to us, but allay". It is because of the physical bodies that the two souls have met and are able to join to become a new entity. It is in the combination of the soul and body that interaction with the world is possible, through "forces" and "sense." How the body interacts with the world through action ("forces"), and perceives the world through the physical five senses do not hinder the souls, but strengthen them ("allay"). The two souls, reluctantly, break away from each other and rejoin their bodies "Because such fingers need to knit/That subtle knot which makes us man". Between these two stanzas, Donne shifts his attitude toward the body to emphasize a transformation of soul. Where the soul is able to operate and intermingle with another soul through an act more pure than sexual intercourse, two souls become one in Donne's poem. It is the body, however, that houses the individual souls, with "the intelligence," an important intermediary between the two. Between these two stanzas, Donne shifts his attitude toward the body. It is through the physical action, the "fingers need to knit", that the spectral "subtle knot" that "makes us man" comes into being. In this combination of soul and body, the *whole man* is created.

The fifth stage of transformation, Changed Bodies, demonstrates how the new soul created finds its way back into the respective body from whence it came. The last stage is

succinct, Donne takes into account the effect the dross of souls has on the resulting persons and how this change is made possible by the force of *love.* Love acted as a catalyst for the souls to go out and mingle, and love acts as a catalyst for the souls to return to their corporeal form: "Love's mysteries in souls do grow,/But yet the body is his book." The alliteration of "body" and "book" emphasizes the ability to read, understand, and communicate the language of the soul. A sort of translator, love serves as a sign to both souls that "Small change when we're to bodies gone." When the body has been disposed of by worms, the souls have officially gone out through Death, the new dross of souls will return and the transformation will happen again.

John Donne's "The Ecstasy" is a masterpiece, touching and illuminating, of the Anglican religious tradition and of English poetry. It explores a duality of body and soul that ties directly with Donne's sermons. This clear and distinct link begins to elucidate how art is informed by religion. I argue that Donne's poetic form in *The Ecstasy,* the development of ideas within that poem as within his work in general, offers a major pattern of transformation that is applicable as well to Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion.* Though these two writers are rarely approached together, this paper endeavors to establish commonalities between Donne and Austen. Through the materialistic form of the novel, Austen is able to engage with an Anglican understanding of the problem of body and soul as formally communicated through John Donne's "The Ecstasy." Austen's novelistic form is able to explore Anglican ideas of body and soul, accommodating an absolute binary while also allowing for a journey or a process of transformation akin to what is seen in Donne's "The Ecstasy."

Austen scholar John Wiltshire notes in *Jane Austen and The Body:* "Donne's famous lines from *The Second Anniversary* are quoted by Henry Austen in the biographical notice of his sister which prefaced the posthumous publication of *Northanger Abbey* [and *Persuasion*]" (77).

Using Donne to describe Jane Austen's appearance: "Henry Austen was not entirely original in his description of Jane's high coloring, for he borrowed his simile from… the celebrated Dr. Donne" (Tucker 9). Certainly her brother included Donne in the posthumous biographical notice, suggesting that well-educated members of her social milieu read Donne at this time. Given my research, I have found no direct allusion to Donne in Austen's private writings. Even so, we know she was a lover of poetry: "Her favourite moral writers were Johnson in prose, and Cowper in verse" (Henry Austen 195). William Cowper, like John Donne, was a poet and a devout Christian. He was a "poet of nature, sensibility, and rural ideals" to whom Austen refers throughout her letters (Jones 222). Like Cowper, Austen also died from a mysterious illness, but did not "brood on [her] own sinfulness and fear being cast out of God's mercy" as he did (Tomalin 134). She loved Cowper so much that she included his lines in *Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Sandition,* and twice in *Mansfield Park.* She draws upon Cowper for the characterization of Fanny Price: "Her eagerness, her impatience, her longings to be with them, were such as to bring a line or two of Copwer's "Tirocinium" for ever before her.—'With what intense desire he wants his home,' was continually on her tongue as the truest description of yearning which she could not suppose any school-boy's bosom to feel more keenly" (Austen 385).

It is my contention that Jane Austen, the daughter of an Anglican clergyman, was significantly influenced by not only by John Donne's art, but also by the theological ideas contained within his writings. She was a great reader, educated at home by her father and brother and well versed in the sermons of Hooker, South, and Donne[1]. Immediately connected to clergy within her own family, not only was her father a clergyman but as was her grandfather, her

[1] Jane Austen "was thoroughly religious and devout; fearful of giving offence to God…on serious subjects she was well instructed, both by reading and meditation, and her opinions accorded strictly with those of our Established Church" (Henry Austen, 195). In other words, she was, at least according to her family, immersed in the Anglican literature important to her religion.

uncle, two of her brothers, two nephews, and her sister's fiancé[2]. There is no question of Austen's attachment to her family and the influence they had on her writing[3]. She would read her Juvenilia at family gatherings and dedicated pieces to her nieces and nephews. Austen wrote short personal prayers and mentions attending church is extensively in asides within her letters. Though some modern critics argue against Austen's piety, as observed Laura Mooneyham White in her book *Jane Austen's Anglicanism,* she was indeed a religious woman. Modern critics and biographers focus on the testimony of her family as a presentation of the implausibility of Austen's religiosity. They dismiss Austen's family's claims as conventional piety; that her family wrote the religious testimonies after her death to 'clean up her character.' The main argument is Jane Austen wrote cruel words about others, thus could not have been a deeply religious person. White, like the assertion in this project, notes that though Jane Austen had a sharp tongue (and pen), she still was a devout Anglican:

> Austen's propensity for thinking and writing amusing malice she herself recognized as her chief besetting sin. Her letters to Cassandra were the chief vehicle of her sometimes savage candor…she knew how to control her tongue and her pen outside of her relationship with her sister. Austen knew she fell again and again into the enjoyable sin of thinking uncharitably of others; her own prayers make plain how seriously she took this fault. There is no reason, however, to disbelieve the family's insistence that Austen was kind and loving in her behavior to others…Those who find it hard to take Austen's Christianity seriously seem to insist on moral perfection from believers, a position far from that taken traditionally by the Church, which presumes that all believers will commit sin after sin throughout their lives…The assumption that Austen could not

[2] As well as several cousins.

[3] Particularly Austen's lasting attachment to her sister Cassandra.

> possibly have been a true Christian because her novels and letters demonstrate she was capable of thinking very unkind things—that because she was mean she could not have been pious—lies at the heart of confusion (43).

Laura Mooneyham White places Austen in a human context—viewing the person first before the artist. Austen was not above slighting others, but that did not make her an unchristian woman. This project is not arguing for Donne as a direct influence on Austen. Rather, I see Donne's poem as a particular important expression of a concern that would be shared by all serious thinkers who inherited the seventeenth century language and liturgy of the Church of England, continuing to respond to and make it their own. Donne and Austen share a similar way of thinking and participate a shared project of writing the body and the soul.

In what follows, I investigate through Austen's fiction ideas central to the Anglican imagination of that the soul and the body as two separate entities, that one is dependent on another, and that the two exist in equilibrium only in "God's time." Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818) is the literary example on which this paper centers, showing how what appears to be a secular novel of love lost and then regained is in fact a meditation on the soul in conversation with religious debates within English culture that stretch back to the sixteenth century in English culture.

Jane Austen

Jane Austen was born December 16th, 1775 in Steventon, Hampshire, England. She was the seventh child out of eight and the second daughter of the Rev. George Austen and his wife Cassandra. He was the local rector in Steventon, and had a fairly respectable income that was supplemented by tutoring pupils who came to live with him. Jane Austen went to boarding school with her sister Cassandra, but her brothers and her tutor father supervised most of her education. She was an avid reader, but she "was not highly accomplished according to the present standard" (Austen Leigh 83). She could play the pianoforte a little, but she could not draw and she did not preoccupy herself with the other types of "accomplishments" that women were expected to acquire. Very much like Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen engaged her time with an occupation that suited her: writing.

Austen began writing at a very young age, putting on readings for her family. In her juvenilia (most notably *Leslie Castle*, *Love and Friendship, and Jack and Alice*) Austen began to explore not only the craft of the novel, but began to construct her own observations on life. Austen's novels demonstrate the perfection of free indirect discourse and 'the marriage plot,' while also offering readers some perspective on views Austen took on society and religion. She avoided the merely conventional, creating a new path for women novelists.

In her early work, Austen demonstrates an awareness of contemporary issues; ultimately, it has been suggested, she is more concerned with the craft of the novel than ideology. Implicit in much of her work, I wish to propose, are the ideas associated with Anglicanism discussed at the opening of this essay. *Mansfield Park*, one of her more controversial novels, is the most visibly concerned with religious life. Within the plot of Fanny Price, her relationship with the Bertrams and her struggle with the Crawfords, Austen advances something close to a religious philosophy.

Through her technically mature prose, Austen was able to express religious views as evolving within the Anglican tradition.

Religion to Jane Austen had a deeper meaning than organization or doctrine. In a letter to her sister Cassandra, Austen refers to her novel *Mansfield Park,* stating, "Now I will try to write of something else, and it shall be a complex change of subject--ordination" (ed. Chapman 298). A much debated theme, ordination is a term that is extremely important to Austen. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *ordination* as:

> The action of ordaining.
>
> 1. a. Arrangement in orders or classes; classification. Cf. order n. 11. Obs.
>
> b. The action of ordering, arranging, or placing in ranks or order; the condition of being ordered or arranged; an arrangement. Now rare.
>
> 2. a. Chiefly of God, a god, fate, etc.: the action or fact of ordaining or decreeing. Now rare.
>
> †b. The action or fact of being destined (to an end or purpose); designated or ordained function; purpose, design, or disposition. Obs.
>
> 3. a. The action of ordaining, or conferring holy orders; appointment or admission to the ministry of the Christian Church (or, in extended use, to the priesthood of another religion); an instance of this. Now the usual sense ("Ordination").

"Ordination" to Austen, ordination in Mansfield Park is much more than simply assuming a religious office. Ordination, as I interpret Austen's usage, is a process of becoming something very different through one's relationship to God. The Anglican priest takes holy orders as consecration. Ordination is applicable to Edmund, obviously, but also to the estate and to the person of Fanny. The reordering of the social hierarchy as the characters in *Mansfield Park* know

it, entails also a reordering of an estate, and a reordering of Fanny Price as a socially and romantically desirable woman. Through out the novel, Fanny Price is in this scene "improved." In his essay "*Mansfield Park* and Estate Improvements: Jane Austen's Grounds of Being," Alistair Duckworth notes that both ordination and improvements are central motifs to the text:

> Jane Austen deliberately uses a motif of estate improvements to define an attitude towards social change that is found elsewhere in her fiction. As the title of the novel suggests, an estate is not to be considered merely as a piece of landed property but as a metonym of an entire cultural inheritance. Improvements, likewise, go beyond an aesthetic meaning to suggest the nature and quality of an individuals response to the social, ethical, and religious values he inherit (25).

The most religiously informed novel within the Austen canon, *Mansfield Park* was her attempt to explore not only religion and its wider meaning and physical presence in society, but also its spiritual role. She did not always look kindly upon ministers of the church in her novels. Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice* is introduced as "not a sensible man, and the deficiency of Nature had been but little assisted by education of society; the greatest part of his life having been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father..." (Austen 71). Mr. Elton in *Emma* turns out to be selfish and conceited. Edward Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, though eventually Elinor's love interest, causes Elinor pain and once was engaged to Lucy Steele, showing a weakness of character. Henry Tilney, though the love interest in *Northanger Abbey,* is secretive and sarcastic in regards to his father. Even Edmund Bertram, Fanny Price's love interest and foster-brother[4], falls in love with Mary Crawford before he realizes his love for Fanny. Each clergyman changes in Jane Austen when it comes to love. Mr. Collins marries Charlotte Lucas

[4] A topic for another project.

and earns good standing with the reader. Henry Tilney finally fully returns Catherine Morland's love. Edmund Bertram is redeemed. Edward Ferrars escapes Lucy Steele and his obtrusive family. Mr. Elton starts as a potential love interest, and ends a hypocrite. The change that is associated with religious men in Austen's fiction is predicated upon their love for the heroine and if it is wanted or unwanted, and eventually returned. Love is an improvement to the characters of Austen's ministers (except for Mr. Elton, but no reader likes him anyway). Improvement is also key to the plot of *Mansfield Park* in relation to religion.

The questions of reform, change, and advancement of the Anglican tradition were all being debated within Jane Austen's society. *Mansfield Park* is Austen's answer to those debates. Religion is mentioned three times in all of Jane Austen and two are in *Mansfield Park.* Jane Austen 's novels suggest that religion necessarily informs a full life. By contrasting extreme characters within the novel such as Fanny Price and Mary Crawford, and Edmund's eventual choice between the two, Austen offers commentary on the role of religion. Fanny, the very meek, very quiet character in *Mansfield Park* is the embodiment of tradition and constancy. She is an accomplished woman who does not have social status due to her birth, but is able to enter in society thanks to her relations. Mary Crawford, on the other hand, is the embodiment of liberalism and fashionable society, for whom religion has no meaning and tradition is null. Though Mary is of good breeding, she is unable to woo Edmund. Edmund, the model of balance, must choose between Fanny and Mary. Inconstant to the woman that he loves, he is constant in his view of his religion and his place within the church.

The first mention of religion in *Mansfield Park* is a conversation, appropriately, on the condition of the clergyman. Mary Crawford, Edmund's romantic interest, tells Edmund that she is surprised that he wishes to be clergyman and she asks him why he is a man of the church:

"What is to be done to the church?" She claims that men of distinction cannot be found in the church and a "clergyman is nothing" to society. After a trip into the woods amongst the "larch and laurel, and beech cut down," Mary Crawford begins to question Edmund:

> "So you are to be a clergyman, Mr. Bertram. This is rather a surprise to me."
>
> "Why should it surprise you? You must suppose me designed for some profession, and might perceive that I am neither a lawyer, nor a soldier, nor a sailor."
>
> "Very true…But why are you to be a clergyman? I thought *that* was always the lot of the youngest, where there were many to choose before him."
>
> "Do you think the church itself never chosen, then?"
>
> "*Never* is a black word. But yes, in the *never* of conversation which means *not very often,* I do think it. For what is to be done with the church? Men love to distinguish themselves, and in either of the other lines distinction may be gained, but not in the church. A clergyman is nothing." (81).

Mary Crawford believes that men in the church should be concerned only with a rise in terms of position and power. It is unimaginable for a person to go into the clergy for any other reason, for "men love to distinguish themselves" and there are so many other ways a man can find distinguish himself in society (in her opinion). The Church and the clergy have no theological or moral resonance with Mary Crawford—she only sees hierarchy as a tool for social mobility. Edmund takes offense at this, and mocks Mary's use of language.

> The nothing of conversation has its gradations, I hope, as well as the never. A clergyman cannot be high in state or fashion. He must not head mobs, or set the tone in dress. But I cannot call that situation nothing, which has the charge of all that is of the first importance to mankind, individually or collectively considered, temporally and

> eternally—which has the guardianship of religion and morals, and consequently of the manners which result from their influence. No one here can call the office nothing. If the man who holds it is so, it is by the neglect of his duty, by foregoing its just importance, and stepping out of his place to appear what he ought not to appear (Austen 82).

Edmund's reply expounds upon so much more than his position as a clergyman. His position is a defense and logical explanation of the position of religion in society and culture. He does not speak in absolutes, he does not make a grand statements. Edmund, or rather Jane Austen, claims the position of gradation. The gradation of position. A waxing and waning of the relative influence of religion, but the constancy of position. Though religion goes in and out of style, the clergyman is always there. This gradation is applicable not only to the position of a clergyman but to religion itself. Religion "must not head mobs" or, hopefully, "set the tone in dress," Edmund mocks Mary's diction and her attitude. He ridicules her obtuse accusation and frivolous estimation of what is important in society. To her "fashion" and the "mob" are the markers of culture. This is in opposition to the constancy for which Edmund argues.

In this more serious vein, Austen argues that religion is not nothing, it is quite the opposite. It is a constant presence in social life. Edmund argues to Mary that "I cannot call that situation nothing, which has the charge of all that is of the first importance to mankind, individually or collectively considered, temporally and eternally." This statement illuminates something of Austen's view on the place of religion in society. Religion is not a fad. It is not a passing fancy like dress. Anglicanism, to Austen, is an ever-present set of moral ideals. In society "the manners which result from their influence" are to be engrained in the proper Anglican, like Edmund. Unlike Fanny Price, Edmund is not the embodiment of tradition nor is he like Mary a force of mobility and secularization. Instead, Edmund is the happy medium that

indulges in liberalism, but at his very core he is constant and based in tradition. Edmund is not afraid to question tradition, but he is constant to the religion and faith he believes in. Fanny improves him, but does not change him. Edmund is the same character before Mary and after Fanny, just as Austen sees religion as more less beyond reform.

Jane Austen extends her religious views in her final novel, *Persuasion,* although this is much less obvious than in *Mansfield Park. Persuasion* was the final and logical juncture between Austen's ideas about religion and literary form. *Persuasion* is not overtly concerned with the clergy. Unlike *Mansfield Park's* undercurrent of social commentary and opinionated exchange amongst characters, *Persuasion's* religious is subdued. There is no obvious presence of religion, the church, or the clergy in *Persuasion*, but as I hope to demonstrate, in the duality of body and soul central to the Anglican tradition is also central to the novel.

Before looking closely at *Persuasion's* rewriting of the body and soul divide, we must look at one more ethical and moral presence in Austen's writing. Samuel Johnson was a major influence for Jane Austen. He was not a religious thinker like John Donne, Richard Hooker, or Robert South. Instead, Samuel Johnson was an essayist and philosophical thinker to whom Jane Austen turned time and again: "amongst her favorite writers, Johnson in prose and Crabbe in verse. It was the native good taste of herself and those with whom she lived, saved her from the snare into which a sister novelist had fallen, of imitating the grandiloquent style of Johnson" (Austen Leigh 84). She constantly refers to him as "my dear Dr. Johnson" in her letters to Cassandra. As her favorite thinker, she would have regularly consulted to his *Dictionary of the English Language* as well as his other writings (Le Faye 146). As we will see from Johnson's entries, Richard Hooker's influence was immense in Austen's day. Acknowledging the impact of

Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* on Austen, I will draw on his diction and definitions to illustrate Austen's own lexicon regarding body and soul throughout this essay.

Investigating two seemingly different writers, Donne and Austen, I will ague that they share a common goal of defining body and soul in relation to love. If Donne shapes the Anglican tradition into which Austen was born, Johnson (also a devout Anglican) was the most important man of letters in the eighteenth century directly influencing Austen's apprenticeship to the craft of literature. Johnson, Donne, and the Anglican tradition are imperative to my research because not only do they serve to substantiate my claims about Jane Austen as a novelist engaging with religious questions, but they also serve as a way to contextualize her novels in the greater framework of thinking that would have influenced her writing. Through the mixture of Donne's language and Johnson's interpretation of moral philosophy this paper aims to trace Jane Austen's interpretation of the body soul relationship within her last novel, *Persuasion.*

First, let's start with the term "soul", the main driving force within "The Ecstasy" and referenced many times in Hooker, South, and Donne's sermons. Noted four times in *Persuasion*, soul is defined by Samuel Johnson thus:

> Soul: The immaterial and immortal spirit of man. Hooker. Intellectual principle. Milton. Vital principle. Milton. Spirit; essence; quintessence; principle part. Milton. Interior power. Shak. A familiar appellation expressing the qualities of mind. Shak. Human being. Addison. Active power. Dryden. Spirit; fire; grandeur of mind. Young. Intelligent being in general. Milton. (859).

Drawing upon examples within literature before, Johnson collects the many meanings of soul. For our purposes, we will take Hooker's definition: "the immaterial and immortal spirit of man" as well as two of Milton's definitions: "Spirit; essence; quintessence; principal part" and

"intelligent being in general" work to define Jane Austen's perspective in *Persuasion*. Combining the distillation of an "immaterial and immortal spirit" as well as the diction of Donne I will work with this definition:

> Soul: The immaterial and immortal spirit of man; the spirit, essence, quintessence, principal part; an intelligent being.

After soul, "body" will also feature importantly in the following sections. Last seen as "sepulchral statues" in "The Ecstasy", "body" is defined by Johnson in several ways:

> Body: The material substance of an animal. /Sam xxxi. Matter: opposed to spirit. A person. Hooker. Reality. Colossii. A collective mass. Hooker. The main army. Clarendon. A corporation. Swift. The main part; the bulk. Raleigh. A substance. Boyle. [in geometry] Any solid figure. A pandect; a general collection. Strength; as, wine of a good body (145).

Because this paper is not concern with geometry, the military, corporations, wine (that's Northanger Abbey[5]), or alchemy we shall not consider those parts of Johnson's extensive definition. So, through the combination of Donne and Jonson, we shall define Austen's interpretation of body thus:

> Body: Matter: opposed to spirit. A person. A collective mass.

This paper now defines body and soul separately. Though each definition contain mention of the other[6], I now endeavor to find a term that defines a fully balanced combination of both body and soul. "Whole" is a term in Johnson that could fulfill the need: "all; total; containing all. Shak. Complete; not defective. Waller. Uninjured; unimpaired. [hails, M. Goth.] Well of any hurt or sickness," but it does not included rhetoric that fully captures the body soul relation (1018).

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[5] "There is not the hundredth part of the wine consumed in this kingdom that there ought to be. Our foggy climate wants help" Austen

[6] Soul: "man" Body: "opposed to spirit"

"Complete" and "full" also do not capture the embodiment of body and soul. "Balanced" could also be a fine descriptor, but Johnson's definition does not match Donne's account of the balance. Instead, Johnson's "poize" serves as a fitting classification[7] for a full definition of a person with balanced body and soul.

> Poize: Weigh; force of anything tending to the centre. Sir T. Elyot. Balance; equipoise; equilibrium. Bently. A regulating power. Dryden. (704).

A person, for the purpose of this paper, who is perceived to have a complete soul and body will be referred to a "poized" person or, fitting with the modern English spelling, a "poised" person.

> Poised Person: balance; equipoise; equilibrium; a regulating power; complete body and soul.

"The Ecstasy" is predicated on the idea that love serves as a catalyst for two souls to combine. Austen's novels are predicated, as has often been observed, on the marriage of the heroine who finds love. Samuel Johnson defines love thus:

> Love: the passion between the sexes. Spenser. Kindness, goodwill, friendship. Shak. Courtship. Shak. Tenderness; paternal care. Tilldam. Liking; inclination to. Fenton. Object beloved. Spenser. Lewdness. Shak. Unreasonable liking. B.P. Taylor. Fondness; concord. Shak. Picturesque representation of love. Dryden. A word of endearment. Dryden. Due reverence to God. St. John. A kind of thin silk stuff. Boyle (571).

An emotion experienced by characters is difficult to define; but an emotion that has the ability to separate or join characters within literature is a concept that has resonance with the theological concerns already outlined in seventeenth century Anglicanism. Johnson provides a wide array of interpretations of love. From the most basic carnal instincts "the passion between the sexes" to

[7] (as well as a nice alliterative device...)

an insurmountably ambiguous definition "a kind of thin silk stuff." Austen's love, as defined by Johnson, parallels Donne's term for love. Composed of an emotion that forces a passion towards ecstasy, Austen and Donne's love are concurrent. For the purposes of the love felt between Anne Elliot and Captain Frederick Wentworth and its distinct power over them, this paper endeavors to define love as:

> Love: the passion between the sexes. Courtship. Fondness; concord; Due reverence to God. [8]

The main word in this definition that connects to Jane Austen's use of love is "concord." A harmony and unity, a calmness, peace and understanding are all required for true love in *Persuasion*[9]. Harmony and balance particularly will be important to my reading of Austen.

John Donne's explanation of two souls knitting together to become "That subtle knot, which makes us man" is close to Johnson's terminology of "concord." Following the word "Love" in his dictionary comes a peculiar combination that can only be a particular amalgamation of Donne and Johnson.

> Loveknot [love and knot]: a complicated figure, by which affection interchanged is figured.

Johnson's "loveknot" immediately brings to mind "The Ecstasy's" "subtle knot"; it's definition is particularly telling. The combination of Johnson's love and Donne's knot creates the concept of a loveknot. Where the emotion and driving force in *Persuasion* and the knitting of souls combine, an "affection interchanged is figured." The loveknot is a mutual exchange and

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[8] Love in Persuasion is absolutely not "Tenderness; paternal care" when it comes to the Elliot family.

[9] This paper omits some of the obvious definitions in Johnson's collection that could be applicable in Persuasion to refine and narrow down the emotion of love felt by Anne and Captain Wentworth. Thus, " Kindness, goodwill, friendship. Shak. Courtship. Shak. Tenderness; paternal care. Tilldam. Liking; inclination to. Fenton. Object beloved. Spenser. Lewdness. Shak. Unreasonable liking" were omitted.

connection of two souls that "is figured" and composed into "a complicated figure." Emotion yields love; love meets two souls and shapes a loveknot. Love initiates an amalgamation of two souls, similar to the catalyst in "The Ecstasy." Johnson's definition of loveknot will serve for this paper as a foundation for my reading of Austen.

If love is not the catalyst within *Persuasion* as it is in "The Ecstasy," then what is? It is not death, for Anne and Captain Wentworth are not specters. So if the catalyst in *Persuasion* is not love and not death, "ecstasy" must be the motivation for Anne and Wentworth's strong connection by the end of the novel. Johnson defines ecstasy as:

> Ecstasy: any passion by which the thoughts are absorbed, and in which the mind is for a time lost. Shak. Excessive joy; rapture. Shak. Enthusiasm; excessive elevation and absorption of the mind. Milton. excessive grief or anxiety. Shak. Madness; distraction. Shakespeare.

Ecstasy serves two purposes in *Persuasion* and Johnson's definition: it represents a duality of joy and grief. This duality, only appropriate for the troubled body/soul relationship, serves as the catalyst within *Persuasion.* Intense emotion, whether it be anxiety or rapture, characterizes Anne and Wentworth's relationship. For the purpose of these chapters, then I define ecstasy as:

> Ecstasy: excessive grief or anxiety; madness; distraction; excessive joy; rapture.

Differing from the poem *The Ecstasy*, ecstasy in *Persuasion* is not the combination of souls, it is the catalyst which serves to enable a synthesis or unification of body and soul through love. The duality of an ecstasy, joy and grief, are defined in this paper as an *ecstasy of love* and an *ecstasy of heartbreak.* An ecstasy of love is the move to unite two souls through rapturous union. An ecstasy of heartbreak is when an ecstasy of love goes sour[10] and rapturous love turns into

[10] For example: a broken engagement.

"excessive grief or anxiety; madness; distraction." After an ecstasy the soul has two options in returning to the body: return as a new form, as a "small change," or return to the body unchanged and unwelcomed. The person results as a seemingly a poised person or an non-poised person to themselves after experiencing ecstasy, as we shall see.

In the moment of an ecstasy of heartbreak, the non-poised person makes a choice: body or soul. The non-poised person chooses whether to experience what I will call Social Time or God's Time as he or she interacts with persons around them. For clarification, when the soul goes out during an ecstasy and does not fully return, the soul does not float in the spectral space waiting. It does go back into the body as an intelligence, but not fully. Such a person is not poised in a perfect balance of body and soul that gives him or her the ability to perceive time and the world. A non-poised person remains trapped in the moment in which the soul does not fully return into the body; the soul cannot fit back into the body until it has mixed with another soul and transformed into something new. Borrowing Donne's language, to describe Anne and Wentworth, "For soul into the soul may flow,/ Though it to body first repair" (16).

Taking Samuel Johnson's language concerning soul, body, love, loveknot, and ecstasy, along with John Donne's poetic diction and underlying ideas as a foundation, this paper aims to define Jane Austen's *Persuasion* as dealing with much more than a failed engagement. I will pose a question: how do non-poised persons participate in society when they perceive the world around them to be posied[11]? What happens when ecstasy is unsuccessful and a loveknot is not created?

Persuasion is new in tone and narrative style for Austen. Continuing from *Mansfield Park*, Austen subtly brings her Anglican ideas into the plot of the novel without explicitly

[11] Or simply go on living?

referencing religion. Even so, the duality of body and soul are at the core of *Persuasion*. Following in the tradition of John Donne's "The Ecstasy," *Persuasion* is a novel of transformation. Two characters in love have souls that "go out." *Persuasion,* I will argue, follows a similar five-step process as *The Ecstasy*. Austen builds upon her idea of improvement established in *Mansfield Park* by subjecting the characters of Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth a painful series of transformations. Instead of improving oneself through ordination, *Persuasion* illustrates a soul's choice to improve oneself for another, to be able to recognize and unite with another "poised person." Unlike Edmund Bertram's choice to marry Fanny, it happens that Anne and Wentworth no longer have a choice. *Persuasion* persuades us as readers that once a soul has experienced ecstasy, whether that is a rapture or grief, it is almost impossible to move on with life. *Persuasion* stresses through the relationship of Anne and Wentworth that when love has reached the magnitude of ecstasy then two souls are bound, a loveknot must be created. The novel explores the question of what happens when a loveknot is not the result of an ecstasy and how two poised persons interact within society as non-poised persons. What happens when two souls go out, as in John Donne's poem, but do not continue to the next step of union? What is the process when a negative ecstasy leaves two souls hanging outside, leaving their bodies unbalanced and non-poised? *Persuasion* is a novel of transformation; it follows Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth as they continue from joined bodies (through an engagement that has been broken) to changed bodies in the context of English Society and the hierarchy of social order.

Poised Person

Following Donne's precedent in "The Ecstasy," I will argue that a "poised person" in *Persuasion* is formed through a duality of body and soul. This duality, when enacted within a poised person, enables him or her to interact in society and time of others around him or her. Society is defined by Samuel Johnson as "union of many in one general interest...numbers united in one interest; community...company; converse...partnership; union on equal terms" (854). Linking "community" and "union on equal terms" is the conception and perception of time within his language. Time is also constructed in terms of duality. Like the body and soul, when both are poised and balanced they are not noticeably linked. The soul is unaware of its link to the body until it is detached from the body. Time in *Persuasion* is disrupted due to Anne and Wentworth's non-poised persons—due to their ecstasy of heartbreak. One of Johnson's definitions of time that is applicable to my reading maintains that it depends upon "particular quality of some part of duration;" falling, broadly speaking into what I will term "Social Time" and "God's Time" (950). When a body chooses to experience the world through "temporal subjectivity", they live in Social Time. Conversely, when a soul chooses to experience the world through "spiritual subjectivity", they live in God's Time. Both kinds of time may exist within each other, the poised person unaware of their presence until there is a disruption. When disruption or ecstasy occurs, both forms of time are felt to be exlusive by the non-poised person. The non-poised person perceives others in society as poised and is acutely aware of the passage of both Social Time and God's Time through his or her experience of the world, in a way that highlights his or her dislocation or unease in either.

Social Time is defined according to years within *Persuasion* and is experienced by the poised person as ordinary and unremarkable. The age of a person[12] and the number of their accomplishments[13], especially for a woman, is equal to the social acceptance of a person. Anne Elliot's person is judged by her age and the choices she has made at a different time in her life. Anne looks back at the past with a crippling nostalgia: "at seven-and-twenty, [she] thought very differently from what she had been made to think at nineteen" and wishes she could *change* the past (Austen 29). Being "seven-and-twenty" and still unmarried, Anne experienced an "early loss of bloom and spirits" because she is not able to fulfill the expectations of society in the years allotted to her (28). Austen's Social Time, measured in years, is different from God's Time, which is measured according to very different distinctions among past, present, and future in *Persuasion.*

God's Time is unnoticeable to the poised person within *Persuasion;* the past passes without notice, the present happens, and the future is unknown. God's Time is not linear like Social Time. When a person is aware of God's Time her or she is able to inhabit multiple places in time at the same moment. A non-poised person is able fully to experience the past and think about the future *or* they are only able to experience the present. The unbound soul that has not fully returned to the body after an ecstasy of heartbreak interacts with Social Time through the lens of God's Time. This means that the subject is unable to fully perceive the social world around him or her, the social world being a community of apparently[14] poised people. A non-poised person is too distracted by the moments of the past and imagining the future to exist comfortably in society. The way that a non-poised person perceives the social world is through imagination, thought, and memory. The empty body with a partial soul connected to it after an

[12] Especially Anne Elliot's older age.
[13] Marriage being the accomplishment.
[14] Seeming poise (or equipoise) is in the eye of the beholder.

ecstasy of heartbreak is only able to interact with Social Time, and has no conception of God's Time. Thus, the body can only interact with the social community through action and reaction. The body is only able to experience the world in immediacy: the present.

Captain Frederick Wentworth, Anne's opposite in her ecstasy of heartbreak, is a primary character who experiences the world through the present. In his non-poised person he experiences the world as Social Time through his career choice. Having been a man of action at sea for eight years , he arrives at Uppercross ready to find a wife.

> Yes, here I am, Sophia, quite ready to make a foolish match. Any body between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking. A little beauty, and a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy, and I am a lost man. Should not this be enough for a sailor, who has had no society among women to make him nice?" ... "A strong mind, with sweetness of manner," made the first and the last of the description. "This is the woman I want," said he (42).

Wentworth interprets society and women in present language, where he is "quite ready to make a foolish match." Concerned with his happiness in the present, Wentworth would rather act foolishly in love than anticipate the ramifications of the future. His diction describes the effect of flirting from a woman, where "a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy" would make him "a lost man" that is indicative of his present state. Wentworth is already lost within his duality of person, for his body out acts his soul. But he is also being self-consciously ironic. Making jokes about his present condition, and establishing his want of the present, Wentworth has made up his mind about the kind of woman that he "wants." To want is to live in the present, to want for present needs and not to dwell on what *could* happen in the future. Anne perceives his comment that what is right in front of Wentworth suffices his want, so much so that he is

ready to make “a foolish match.” She sees Wentworth’s soul lost in the action of his body, of his living in the present and disregard for the future and not taking cues from his memory. Though his soul is wrapped up with his intelligence, the needs of his body have taken precedence over the dialogue of soul and body.

The contrast to such a decision, the non-poised person who chooses God’s Time is able to experience the world in both past and future terms. Anne is the main character who inhabits the past and the future through her thoughts and memories. In anticipation of the renting of her family’s Estate, Kellynch, Anne predicts that she will be shuffled around in the society of family members. Her status as a single, older woman does not give her a choice in the matter, and she prepares herself for having always to be in the society of others.

> ...she acknowledged it to be very fitting, that every little social commonwealth should dictate its own matters of discourse; and hoped, ere long, to become a not unworthy member of the one she was now transplanted into.--With the prospect of spending at least two months at Uppercross, it was highly incumbent on her to clothe her imagination, her memory, and all her ideas in as much of Uppercross as possible (29).

In Anne’s thoughts about being stuck, being “transplanted into” the society at Uppercross and making the most of her experience there, she admits to “clothe[ing]” her “imagination” in the society of Uppercross or others. Anne cannot contain herself in thinking of what could happen, what may happen, what should happen when she inhabits Uppercross. In this passage Anne mentally checks herself from delving too far into the future and past. To remember as much about Uppercross so that she can project those ideas onto her imagination of the future, “it was highly incumbent on [Anne] to clothe her imagination, her memory, and all her ideas in as much of Uppercross as possible.” Alluding to her lack of presence in the present, her inability to deal

with moving out of her home, Anne's mind jumps to Uppercross and even further ahead to the "two months" she will be there. Anne communicates within herself, experiencing the complicated social world through God's Time, to remember as much about Uppercross as possible to make the next two months endurable.

The difference between Wentworth and Anne's interaction with their respective worlds is their *perception* of and *interactions* within the social world. Wentworth, as a non-poised person, uses his body for action to change his circumstances.[15] Anne cannot affect anyone but herself; she perceives everyone as whole while she is confined within God's Time by her perception and interaction with the world of the novel. Anne is static within her society while Wentworth is fluid, "sometimes we are deceived with her as to the meaning of speech or a gesture" because she is unable to register meaning herself (Mori 57). The poised person, comprised of soul and body, is something of an ideal hard to realize by the characters in *Persuasion* leaving painfully non-poised persons to muddle their way through the same social situations.

Think of Society as a hierarchy. Characters interact through communication. Society, as noted before in Johnson's definition[16], is a forum for persons to build relationships with other persons: the relationship of poised persons to other poised persons is ideal. Next is the person's relationship to society and how that person utilizes his/her poise in the society to connect to another person and his or her relative (or perceived) poise. Next, the relationship of the person to itself emerges. It is how the person experiences emotion, memory, and time that is pivotal to the experience of the physical world (not to be mistaken with the physical aspect of the body). At the base of this hierarchy is the nucleus of society: the duality of body and soul. Actions are able to be communicated through speech, and vise versa. Dialogue exists to aid the *poised person* as he

[15] In this case, his marital status.

[16] "Union of many in one general interest...numbers united in one interest; community...company; converse...partnership; union on equal terms" (854).

or she operates in Society. Interaction with society is predicated on the existence of a link between body and soul. If there is a break in any of the connections that build the hierarchy, a person is unable to interact with the world fully. An ecstasy of heartbreak or death, as Donne puts forth, can break the connection of body and soul.

When Anne's father decides to rent his estate, Kellynch, to the Crofts, a naval family, Lady Russell (Anne's mother surrogate) worries that "Anne had been too little from home, too little seen. Her spirits were not high. A larger society would improve them. She wanted her to be more known" (7). Lady Russell insists that a *different society* would improve Anne from her current state of "haggard[ness]" and singleness (5). The connections to new people would "improve" Anne indicating to Anne that she is might still be a desirable match in her older age. But Anne, not disillusioned by Lady Russell, has accepted her "nothingness."

> ...in the art of knowing our own nothingness beyond our own circle, was become necessary for her;--for certainly, coming as she did, with a heart full of the subject which had been completely occupying both houses in Kellynch for many weeks, she had expected rather more curiosity and sympathy than she found in the separate, but very similar remark of Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove--"So, Miss Anne, Sir Walter and your sister are gone; and what part of Bath do you think they will settle in?" (28).

Anne is accustomed to "the art of knowing our own nothingness beyond our own circle" and being able to adapt to a society in which she plays only a small part. Anne does not interact within her society, but shuffles through in a fixed fashion that reveals her detachment from other persons. Because Anne does not experience Social Time through her body, she is unable to feel the excitement in the Musgrove's remark on Bath. Anne does not understand the lack of

"curiosity and sympathy" in her interaction. Unable to interact with the world fully, Anne feels ill at ease in a society of people who seem able to integrate their body and their soul.

The soul and body are reflected not only in the characters of *Persuasion* but through the narrative as well. "The very medium of narrative in its spatial and temporal capacities to represent mental life" according to critic Emily Rohrbach (738). *Persuasion* is the reemergence of Jane Austen's style. Noted by David A. Miller in his book *Jane Austen, or, The Secret of Style:* "If Emma refuses to mourn what is given up in Austen Style, *Persuasion* envisions getting back, somehow or other, cost what it may. And that cost would ultimately encompass the sacrifice of the very ethos of Austen Style, which, as a connoisseurship-based criticism long ago observed, is already faltering here in a narration whose abrupt mood swings weaken its usual confidence, even as its frequent shifts of diction thin out the discursive consistency that was the linguistic badge of such confidence" (75). Jane Austen communicates the dichotomy of soul and body through narrative technique. Dwelling not only on the past, "Persuasion mediates on the capacity of the present to contain the potentialities of the future" (Rohrbach 742). When Anne is reintroduced into Captain Wentworth's society for the first time in eight years, the syntactical structure of the narrative shifts with the rush of emotions she feels. She is unable to experience the moment in the present (either in terms of tense or time).

> And it was soon over. In two minutes after Charles's preparation, the others appeared; they were in the drawing-room. Her eye half met Captain Wentworth's, a bow, a curtsey passed; she heard his voice--he talked to Mary, said all that was right; said something to the Miss Musgroves, enough to mark an easy footing: the room seemed full--full of persons and voices--but a few minutes ended it. Charles shewed himself at the window, all was ready, their visitor had bowed and was gone; the Miss Musgroves were gone too,

> suddenly resolving to walk to the end of the village with the sportsmen: the room was cleared, and Anne might finish her breakfast as she could (40).

Quite literally this passage contains one gesture: a half-look. A look from Captain Wentworth to Anne Elliot, that in real time would only take a second, but in Jane Austen's narrative fills four (complexly structured) sentences. Instead of distilling the moment into a sentence such as: "His eyes met Anne's," Jane Austen proceeds to describe his "bow", "his voice", who he was talking to (Mary), what he said, how the "room seemed full," what the room seemed full of ("persons and voices"), and so on. It is not until we hear of Charles' movement to the window and Captain Wentworth's exit that the narrative returns to Anne, who "might finish her breakfast as she could." The narrative in the passage evokes Anne's consciousness; a subjectivity collecting the details of what has happened in the immediate past. Anne's awareness in the narrative is founded in memory.

The capacity to experience present and future is reflected in the interplay of body and soul. To embody both present and future is to live in the *current moment,* something Anne fails to do. Time is linear if both God's Time and Social Time are connected through the poised connection of the soul and body--but if there is a disruption time becomes disjointed. Only one can be experienced: God's Time or Social Time. The poised are able to interact with the world utilizing both the soul and the body to communicate and move through time without issue: this is something Anne Elliot cannot do. Samuel Burchell comments in his essay "Jane Austen: The Theme of Isolation:" "Jane Austen's characters learn to find the inner strength necessary for living a life in mutual understanding with other people" (147). Burchell's "mutual understanding with other people," in terms of this paper, depends upon experiencing and perceiving time within society. The relationships between people are created "through self-examination, through a clear

understanding of misrepresented facts...they finally cross the awful chasm that exists between people" (148). This chasm represents experience; clear understanding arrives via perception through narrative structure and Anne's consciousness and comments in the novel.

The disruption of the equilibrium within Anne Elliot's soul and body leads to her inability to interact with the social world and fully participate in the social hierarchy. Anne has been broken through an ecstasy of heartbreak: for her "mutual understanding" was severed by her broken engagement eight years previous with Frederick Wentworth. She rushed "rapidly and deeply [fell] in love" and immediately severed it, on the persuasion of Lady Russell. Anne's ecstasy of love quickly turned into an ecstasy of heartbreak, breaking her from her soul leading to her displacement in the present world. Though she is a character of speech and thought "her words are weightless, and physically speaking she always has to "give way"--that is, accept perpetual displacement" (Tanner 209). This "giving way" to others in her society implies a lack and loss of power.

Because Anne cannot interact fully and appropriately with poised persons, others make decisions for her--they do not listen to her "words." An expression of the soul, the "word" is the only way Anne can interact in the world, yet, she is still forces to "give way" to others around her. Through the narrative Anne functions as "an expression of temporal concern" (743 Rorbach). As critic Massimilano Mori observes in their book *Jane Austen's Narrative Techniques:* "The narrator's dominance is only 'semantic' and not 'quantitative'—in a sense that though the events are always commented on, the reader's response is always guided, most of the novel is occupied by dialogue and reflector narrative" (57). Another critic, Susan Sniader Lanser, comments on Anne's narration in her book *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice:* "*Persuasion,* however, attempts a new practice…the gradual authorization through a

nonironic, nondistanced free indirect discourse, of Anne Elliot as a wholly realizable focalizing conscious" (77). Anne lives by "shifting immediately from anticipation to retrospection, narration of significant present actions often seem to have slipped between a break in sentences and have been lost" (746 Rorbach). Anne not only loses the experience of connection to others, but the experience of poise within her own body. Her inability to communicate is not imposed by the society she lives in, but rather can be traced to her ecstasy of heartbreak and her loss of love; Anne Elliot is isolated within herself. The body of *Persuasion's* narrative holds out the promise of poise, however, and follows Anne's transformation through a similar progression to that which we traced in John Donne's *The Ecstasy.* Free indirect discourse offers as a way to peer into Anne's soul through her broken and non-poised body and to reflect eventually on Anne's transformation into a poised person through an ecstasy of love.

Non-poised & No Bodies

The experience of space and time is disjointed in *Persuasion.* The breakdown of poise leads to the breakdown of time. Anne is unable to communicate with the world around her. In her essential condition, Anne is unable to harness the action of her body to interact in the social world of her family. This disassociation of the body from the world is reflected in disassociated time. There is a gap between Anne and the characters that make up her society. Anne is a no-body; she is a soul hanging onto the shell of a body that is barely able to serve her as a vessel because of heartbreak. She perceives others, like the Musgroves, to posses what she herself lacks. Anne enjoys their company but there is still a disconnect between her experience or perception and their actions: "perception [in *Persusion*] proves not to be a given" (Handler 81).

> Anne always contemplated [the Musgroves] as some of the happiest creatures of her acquaintance; but still she would not have given up her own more elegant and cultivated mind for all their enjoyments; and envied them nothing but that seemingly perfect good understanding and agreement together, that good-humoured mutual affection, of which she had known so little herself with either of her sisters (28).

Through Anne's connection with the Musgroves, a family that is anything but disjointed and broken, her own breakdown of body is evident. Though Anne considers them "some of the happiest creatures of her acquaintance" she does not consider them as worthy of her society. Anne turns up her mental nose, so to speak, at the Musgroves' society. Not because they are of a lower class, but rather because they are not as "elegant" or "cultivated" as Anne's "mind" is. She does, however, envy the fact that the Musgroves all understand each other. There is no breakdown in the concord between members of their family, they are all in "understanding and agreement together" with a "good-humoured mutual affection." This understanding, this

mutuality, is lacking in Anne's life, not only in her personal body but also in the relationship with her family. Austen notes that Anne "had known so little" of this "understanding" and "agreement" "with either of her sisters," Elizabeth and Mary. The breakdown of poise and balanced understanding for Anne exists within both her person and her familial relationships.

Jane Austen's narrative technique reflects Anne's no-body. Anne does not experience the linearity and alignment of Social Time, rather Anne only experiences God's Time. She is not a poised person, rather, she has a broken body: a no-body, thus is only able to experience time in jumps, or disjunction between memory and imagination. Focused only on experiencing the world through her soul, the "complexities of narrative temporally structuring the discourse of Anne's consciousness" to reflect the absence of a body in her social relationships (743 Rohrbach). Of course, literally, Anne does move through the world with a body, she is not a specter of a soul floating in the ether of *Persuasion.* Critic Stephanie Markovits characterizes Anne's involvement in the narrative: "Anne's own past experience has led her to a level of self-awareness and self-control that characterizes her happiness" (790). But Anne does not utilize her body, through emotion and gesture, to communicate with those around her. Because Anne's thoughts are unable to focus on the present, her "thoughts repeatedly take shape of imagining the present as a memory from the perspective of a future self" (Rohrbach 745). The unification of her soul and body are lacking, and the narrative "construction clearly signals the loss of a unified subject position in temporal terms...how the past is playing itself out in the present, the issue here is how the present will body into an imagined future—Anne is a decidedly prospective imagination" (745 Rohrbach). Anne is alienated from her own experiences through her own intelligence, the very tool whereby she should understand her place in the world.

Anne's subjectivity is shaped by her missing poise. It is her attempt to experience the world and live with limited use of her body; *spiritual subjectivity* is the attempt of a non-poised person to experience a tangible world without access to Social Time. Some may say that there is an absence of connection between Anne Elliot's soul and body all together. Though this could be taken into account, I would say to those that it is not the absence of connection but rather a broken connection. An ecstasy of heartbreak does induce the soul to go out of the body, but the soul does not return at last—it just does not fit the way that it did before. The body has prepared itself for something new, and waits for the combination of souls before it will fully let the soul back and allow for poise. It is the choice of action versus thought in a situation that Anne struggles with.

Anne Elliot is a broken person, and though she retains her physical presence, she has lost communication with the social functions of her body. To function in Society and to only experience God's Time with little or no perception of Social Time, to only utilize your soul in social situations, is to experience the world of *Persuasion* through *spiritual subjectivity.* Johnson defines the *spiritual* in his dictionary as:

> Spiritual: distinct from matter; immaterial...incorporeal...mental; intellectual...relative only to the mind...not temporal (866).

Unable to inhabit the present moment, the immediate and the current, Anne is only able to think of the world that she inhabits in the past or future tense. In her family "she was only Anne" living on the outskirts of social interactions (5). 'She *was"* Anne, a character: not "is" Anne; Anne does not live in the immediacy of the novel for she is preoccupied with interpreting the society around her that requires a poised person, or a soul and body in unison. She is a spiritual

person, one who has limited connection with her body, who is inhabiting a society that requires both temporal and spiritual experiences to form poise.

Anne does not understand how to interact with the world. When her nephew decides to climb on her back while she is nursing her other sick nephew, Anne is literally unable to communicate with her body.

> Once she did contrive to push him away, but the boy had the greater pleasure in getting upon her back again directly...In another moment, however, she found herself in the state of being released from him; someone was taking him from her, though he had bent down her head so much, that his little sturdy hands were unfastened from around her neck, and he was resolutely borne away, before she knew that Captain Wentworth had done it. Her sensations on the discovery made her perfectly speechless. She could not even thank him. She could only hang over little Charles, with most disordered feelings. His kindness in stepping forward to her relief--the manner--the silence in which it had passed--the little particulars of the circumstance--with the conviction soon forced on her by the noise he was studiously making with the child, that he meant to avoid hearing her thanks, and rather sought to testify that her conversation was the last of his wants, produced such a confusion of varying, but very painful agitation, as she could not recover from, till enabled by the entrance of Mary and the Miss Musgroves to make over her little patient to their cares, and leave the room. She could not stay... But neither Charles Hayter's feelings, nor any body's feelings, could interest her, till she had a little better arranged her own. She was ashamed of herself, quite ashamed of being so nervous, so overcome by such a trifle; but so it was; and it required a long application of solitude and reflection to her (54).

It is through this very long passage that Anne processes the action of Captain Wentworth. She is unable to contemplate or even reason about the actions of his body. As a woman of the soul with a disconnect from her body, Anne is unable even to communicate to the rough-housing boy, when, in vain, she "spoke to him--ordered, intreated, and insisted" for him to get off her. Failing, "she did contrive to push him away, but the boy had the greater pleasure in getting upon her back again directly." In this instance with Anne's nephew, she utilizes the power of speech and words of the soul to communicate; but without the combined power of action and speech through poise, the boy does not listen. She fails at using her body to push him off, for when she "contriv[ed] to push him away:" she was unsuccessful. The situation is conveyed in the past tense, the event has become an immediate memory. The narrative reflects the incident as happening in real time. Because she can only think about how the situation has affected her in the immediate past and how the situation will affect her in the future, Anne's agency is broken giving her limited tools to communicate and interact with the world as reflected with her lack of authority with her nephew. The narrative structure of a no-body is created around explanations, over analyzing, and dislocated tense--all seen in this passage. Though Anne is a caregiver, she is still ignored. Anne is unable to act in the present.

Anne is taken aback by Wentworth's action. She spends copious time detailing exactly upon how he pulled her off, explaining her "disordered feelings." Anne dwells on Wentworth's "kindness in stepping forward to her relief", his "manner", the "silence in which it has passed", and mainly just the "particulars of the circumstance." In real time, Wentworth saw that Anne was in need and pulled a rambunctious little boy off of her back. For Anne, his action means so much more for her memory and her imagination, so much so that "she was ashamed of herself, quite ashamed of being so nervous, so overcome by such a trifle." Anne's shame is not produced by

her immediate reaction to the situation, but rather it is created later through her thoughts on the matter.

Anne over-analyses and over thinks so much that she is ashamed of herself. This shame is a marker that though Anne is non-poised and constantly fails to use her body in social situations that at one point in her life her soul and body had the potential truly to be poised. Because Anne is aware that she once used her body, but now fails to use it, she is ashamed to fall back on her impotent soul in a social situation. Her poise is broken. Through her immediate jump to memory and her imaginings of what could happen in the future that require her "a long application of solitude and reflection on her" and have a moment to process the huge amount of information her soul has created about the menial event of Wentworth coming to her aid.

Captain Fredrick Wentworth is also a broken person, though it is not as readily evident in *Persuasion.* He has lost connection with his soul, but that is not to say that he is a shell of a character walking around England. Like Anne, he has lost communication with the social functions of the soul and the perception of time through the soul. To function in Society and to only experience Social Time with limited perception of God's Time, to only utilize your body in social situations, is to experience the world through *temporal subjectivity.* Samuel Johnson defines *temporal* in his dictionary as:

Temporal: measured by time; not external...secular; not ecclesiastical...not spiritual (917).

A physical being attempting to inhabit a society that requires poise, Wentworth does not filter experiences through the union of God's Time[17], rather he takes what happens when it happens, and then does not dwell on the past or imagine the future. He lives in the present tense with

[17] Or even God's Time at all. He has no or limited perception of past and future.

limited access to the past or the future. Unlike Anne, Austen does not reveal to the reader his inner thoughts. It seems, rather, that he takes the interactions while they come and focuses on what is important to him *now:* finding a wife, being off the boat, and seeing friends and family. The only true access the reader has to Wentworth's thoughts are through his letter declaring his love for Anne at the end of the novel. At the start of the novel, the only access we have is to his direct dialogue (which is little) and what other characters say what he said. This structure itself is indicative of Wentworth's temporal subjectivity and Anne's spiritual subjectivity. They both are unable fully to communicate with each other at the beginning of *Persuasion.*

As we have seen, at the start of the novel Anne is a nobody. The presence and reintroduction of Wentworth into her society sense a cursing sense of awareness through Anne. Not only does she become increasingly aware of her non-poise, she mistakenly contrasts her own inner state with Wentworth's seeming poise. Wentworth's presence makes Anne aware of her detachment from Social Time. He seems able to interact in a social context, adapted to Social Time. What Anne is unable to perceive is that Wentworth is non-poised, just as she is. His detachment from God's Time, the only paradigm that Anne is able to interact within, makes him unable to communicate with her. Though Anne interprets his actions as a slight, as a mark against her character, she is unable to perceive that he is just as frustrated as she is. He is unable to experience the world spiritually, and can only interpret people temporally. When Anne sees Wentworth for the first time in eight years, the reader is unable to judge Wentworth's actions/thoughts/reaction/ speech directly. This is the narrative embodiment of Anne's experience. After meeting at the cottage, a side-glance and a hello, Anne and Wentworth are reintroduced.

> Eight years, almost eight years had passed, since all had been given up. How absurd to be resuming the agitation which such an interval had banished into distance and indistinctness! What might not eight years do? Events of every description, changes, alienations, removals,--all, all must be comprised in it; and oblivion of the past--how natural, how certain too! It included nearly a third part of her own life...Alas! with all her reasoning, she found, that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing. Now, how were his sentiments to be read? Was this like wishing to avoid her? And the next moment she was hating herself for the folly which asked the question (40).

Anne experiences their interaction through God's Time in this passage. She envisions the future—what he will say to her, how he will feel, how she will feel, what he will think. Anne tries to imagine "how were his sentiments to be read? Was this like wishing to avoid her?" and remembers the "oblivion of the past--how natural, how certain too!" with an easiness. Even as the present situation creeps upon her, she is only able to register the present in the past: "And the next moment she was hating herself for the folly which asked the question." This folly and shame cripples her with distorted self-awareness. She knows she is incorrectly registering the events taking place around her and with her. This is the first time in the novel that Anne feels shame in a social situation and does not attribute it at her humiliating family or her past actions. Anne feels that she is indulging in folly, that she is not doing something right. She is able to remember how it *was* to be with Wentworth before their ecstasy of heartbreak. She remembers how the "oblivion of the past" was so "natural" in actions and reactions, "how certain" she was in her relationship with Wentworth. She reasons with herself to say that her "retentive feelings", or her feelings from the past, have gone. But what Anne Elliot is unable to recognize in herself, and others, is her feelings exist now in the present. How does she feel about Wentworth *now*? In

the moment, what does she *feel*? What *emotion* is sparked? Though it is not the same as it was in the past, not the moment of ecstasy in love, there is an emotion. In this moment, Anne Elliot feels emotion and does not know how to navigate the situation.

Emotion is the bridge between body and soul. A feeling is the physical manifestation of the spirit's reaction to an outward presence. Whether is be fear, happiness, love, or grief, emotion opens a conversation between the body and the soul. Emotion also serves as a catalyst for ecstasy. Love, the ruling emotion in the Jane Austen canon, is the catalyst for ecstasy. Ecstasy of love, when fulfilled results in poise. Captain Wentworth's seemingly poised body makes Anne aware of her own decidedly non-poised body. She has a physical reaction to feelings generated by her soul by his presence. I argue that Wentworth also has a spiritual reaction to Anne. He sees her seemingly poised soul and is made aware of his own non-poised soul. As readers, we are only able to read Wentworth's reaction through Anne's report and second hand information, but I argue that he does experience emotion for Anne, a physical reaction. This reaction is read through his response to Mary's question about Anne's appearance. He says to mixed company that Anne was "so altered he should not have known [her] again" (41). This recognition of change, of a changed body in Anne, speaks to his emotion. Though it is a tame and repressed reaction, drowned in the grapevine of gossip, it is nonetheless present in the text. He finds Anne "altered" so much so that he does not know, or could have "known," her anymore. Two seemingly poised bodies to each other, but two non-poised bodies to everyone else, Anne and Wentworth are in an opposite, but similar, predicament of soul and body disunited.

Changed Bodies

As established in earlier chapters, Anne Elliot and Captain Frederick Wentworth are two non-poised characters navigating society with limited attachment to their body and soul, respectively. However, *Persuasion* is a novel that is about much more than that. *Persuasion* is a narrative of transformation. Austen illuminates not only how non-poised bodies function in society, but she also elucidates how non-poise is able to become poise through ecstasy. *Persuasion* is about two people who fell out of love, hard, and how they make themselves whole to be together and in love once again.

The novel starts with detachment. Anne Elliot is as a nobody, literally and figuratively. Unable to dwell in Social Time whilst involving herself in the social world, she chooses to experience her life through what I am calling God's Time alone. With the introduction of Captain Wentworth, Anne (and Wentworth) experience emotion and her spiritual subjectivity is disrupted. When she tries consciously to interact in the realm of Wentworth's society, his presence and his figure, she is newly aware of her own impairment.

Persuasion focuses on Anne's transformation from being a nobody to a poised person. Just as John Donne's poem *The Ecstasy* has five steps, *Persuasion* follows a similar pattern. Through each stage Anne grows as a character and she is faced not only with experiencing emotion, but also she has to enter Social Time as well as God's Time due to Wentworth's presence. I have named these stages "The Wentworth Effect" or "The Five Stages of Frederick." In each stage Anne consciously rebuilds her experience of duality, the juncture of God's Time (soul) and Social Time (body), once more to attempt to experience the world fully. She is in a state of change and self discovery, to find out her true feelings towards Wentworth and her ability to act upon them.

The Ecstasy's five stages, I reiterate, are:

1. Two Bodies
2. Joined Bodies
3. Souls Gone Out
4. Subtle Knot
5. Changed Bodies

Persuasion's steps follow a similar trajectory, but for fear of confusion, I have renamed them as:

1. Pre-Russell
2. Reintroduction and Estrangement
3. The Louisa Experience
4. Bath Time
5. Persuaded

Following the arc of John Donne's "The Ecstasy," within *Persuasion* we can see Austen's Anglican reading of soul and body and her fundamental idea of love as a reiteration of the stages of Donne's poem. When two souls fall so deeply in love and are torn from that relationship those two souls are broken. The only way to heal is to fall back into love; true love is forever, whether two souls want that forever or not.

Pre Russell & Post Russell

The first stage in *Persuasion* is a stage that happens, properly speaking, before the novel even begins. The *Pre-Russell* stage is the time when Young Anne is in love with Wentworth. She was young, in love with a man far below her in rank, but she is uninfluenced by outside forces and decides to become engaged. This stage is referenced in the novel as Anne remembers herself in contrast with who she is now. Similar to the *Two Bodies* step in "The Ecstasy", this is the moment where Anne and Wentworth were fully poised people in the midst of an ecstasy of love. Anne and Wentworth's ecstasy, however, is disrupted and it turns into an ecstasy of heartache due to Lady Russell's influence over their relationship. She counsels Anne to break her engagement because Wentworth is not "worthy" of her social rank. Before we can understand why Anne would listen to Lady Russell over her own heart, we have to understand Anne's relationship and loyalty to her family.

Though Anne Elliot is the main character of *Persuasion* she is not introduced until far into the first chapter of the novel. She is introduced within a hierarchy, not as an individual. This lack of individuality in the text emphasizes her family's influence and affluence. Within the structure of the Elliot family, Sir Walter is the head of the clan. Each of his daughters is introduced through his opinion of them in the novel. Anne is lowest in his estimation, and considered the least important. She is not the eldest, yet, she is still criticized for not being married and loosing out of her youth. Anne retains no individuality; she is not only introduced within the context of a group, but as the least important within that group:

> That Lady Russell, of steady age and character, and extremely well provided for, should have no thought of a second marriage, needs no apology to the public, which is rather apt to be unreasonably discontented when a woman *does* marry again, than when she does

> *not*; but Sir Walter's continuing in singleness requires explanation.–Be it known then, that Sir Walter, like a good father, (having met with one or two private disappointments in very unreasonable applications) prided himself on remaining single for his dear daughters' sake. For one daughter, his eldest, he would really have given up any thing, which he had not been very much tempted to do. Elizabeth had succeeded, at sixteen, to all that was possible, of her mother's rights and consequence; and being very handsome, and very like himself, her influence had always been great, and they had gone on together most happily. His two other children were of very inferior value. Mary had acquired a little artificial importance, by becoming Mrs. Charles Musgrove; but Anne, with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding, was nobody with either father or sister; her word had no weight, her convenience was always to give way;–she was only Anne (5).

Sir Walter's vanity and lack of character shines through the text. He introduces his "most valued" daughter not by her name, but what *he* would do for her: "he would really have given up anything, which he had not been very much tempted to do." All is presented in terms of his being and his opinion. In this one sentence his disposition shifts from loving to vanity. Though he values his eldest daughter the most, he still would not be inclined to do anything for her that would disposes him in anyway. This vanity is expressed through Sir Walter's classification of his daughters according to numbers. To him, his daughters are numeric figures who are ranked and ordered in terms of his own favor. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, "had succeeded to be like her mother" as much as she could "to all that was possible". She is aligned with Sir Walter along the lines of beauty and vanity, having gained "her mother's rights and consequence" in Sir Walter's eyes. Once Lady Elliot's body was taken out of the family structure, Sir Walter

scrambles for a woman to replace her, and finds it within his eldest daughter. Elizabeth does not inhabit the "rights and consequence" of Lady Elliot in the Elliot's society, rather, in her father's favor. For these "rights and consequence" are only of importance to Sir Walter and, in turn, the Elliot clan. The youngest of Sir Walter's children, to him, "were of very inferior value". Mary is given no importance with her father, only an "artificial importance" due to her marriage to Charles Musgrove. Mary's value is assigned through association with her husband, and Elizabeth's value is determined by their father. Associations with men within society accumulate value and importance, no matter how artificial. It is Anne, our main protagonist and heroine within *Persuasion* who is aligned with no man, and importantly to no one within her family. Anne Elliot "was nobody with either father or sister, her word had no weight, her convenience was always to give way--she was only Anne." If Anne is a nobody to both her self-important father and sister, she is also a nobody to herself. It is Anne's "convenience" to "always...give way" to others. She does not place importance on herself, and others do not find it in her. Anne relies on a man, her father, to give her being value, her words "weight". Because her mother, Lady Elliot, has passed away, there is no one with a sense of poise to give Anne importance or recognize her worth. In Anne's family, a microcosm of a society, she is unimportant and that translates into her role in outside society as well.

There is a preface to Anne's nothingness that is worth noting in content and structure. This preface to Anne's character is attached to Mary's introduction through a semi-colon. Structurally, Anne is an afterthought, a sentence that can be added to another: "by becoming Mrs. Charles Musgrove; but Anne, with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character". The "but Anne" suggests that she is an afterthought and a different thought from her sisters. She is divided from her sisters because her father does not have any opinion of her, and she has "no

weight" to her family. Her personality is not decided by her father, and is, in turn, considered better within the world *Persuasion.* Her father and sister, because they do not value her, are considered by Austen's discerning narrator people with *no* real understanding: "but Anne, with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding". The emphasis and word choice of "real understand[ing]" alludes that there is an unreal understanding, a *false understanding.* Anne's family is unable to value her, even though they are convinced they are able to make decisions for her.

But how does this all tie back to Lady Russell's influence on Anne's decision to marry or not marry Frederick (not yet Captain) Wentworth? Anne's family structure is lacking in a *female* and *motherly* presence. Anne has to look to outside sources for a motherly advice. One might ask, why doesn't Anne look to her father, the patriarch of the family for help in the matter? Why does Lady Russell matter? Though the above passage illustrates a slight sketch of Sir Walter's insurmountably vain character through the description of his daughters, it also suggests that Anne does not live in an environment that is considerably favorable to women this could be a reason Anne turns to Lady Russell for support. The source of Lady Russell's influence, however, does not lie with Sir Walter's inability to be a father, but in Anne's mother's judge of character.

Because her mother has passed away, Anne is without a mother, but for a moment Lady Elliot is included in the novel as a woman of poise. Not only a poised person, Austen remarks on Lady Elliot through her judgment of Sir Walter.

> His good looks and his rank had one fair claim on his attachment; since to them he must have owed a wife of very superior character to any thing deserved by his own. Lady Elliot had been an excellent woman, sensible and amiable; whose judgment and conduct, if they might be pardoned the youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot, had never

> required indulgence afterwards.–She had humoured, or softened, or concealed his failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years; and though not the very happiest being in the world herself, had found enough in her duties, her friends, and her children, to attach her to life, and make it no matter of indifference to her when she was called on to quit them.–Three girls, the two eldest sixteen and fourteen, was an awful legacy for a mother to bequeath; an awful charge rather, to confide to the authority and guidance of a conceited, silly father. She had, however, one very intimate friend, a sensible, deserving woman, who had been brought, by strong attachment to herself, to settle close by her, in the village of Kellynch; and on her kindness and advice, Lady Elliot mainly relied for the best help and maintenance of the good principles and instruction which she had been anxiously giving her daughters (4).

Anne Elliot's mother is a character Austen highly regards as a woman of balance and character. Though Lady Elliot may have married out of an infatuation, Austen forgives her folly in favor of "judgment and conduct, if they might be pardoned the youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot." Disassociating Lady Elliot from Sir Elliot, Austen constructs a judgment of character through tone and diction. Marking Lady Elliot as "sensible", "amiable", "respectable", "deserving", with "kindness" and "advice, she is a departure from the "conceited, silly father" Anne must endure. What marks a poised person in *Persuasion* is one's ability to make the most out of one's situation. Sacrifice is important and worthy to Jane Austen. For Sir Walter, Lady Elliot had the ability to humor, "soften", and "conceal" "his failings and promote "his real respectability for seventeen years; and though not the very happiest being in the world herself". The ability to help those with an unfavorable character to a more favorable state of being, while disregarding the need for ones own happiness, is the mark of poise. Austen places value on

being a poised person in *Persuasion.* Those whose characters favor vanity and narcissism are described as "silly" and "conceited"(Sir Walter), and the charge to help those within Society is considered "an awful charge" to Austen. It is something someone has to do, and a person with poise and strong character is given high esteem in *Persuasion.* Those poised people who sacrifice for others, are named "deserving" and "sensible", and usually enjoy one another's society. Lady Russell, an "intimate friend, a sensible, deserving woman, who had been brought, by strong attachment to herself, to settle close by her, in the village of Kellynch", is the close friend of Lady Elliot who is also a character with poise within *Persuasion.* She is described with Austen's tone of high regard as a woman who is "sensible" and "deserving". Because Lady Elliot is established as a woman of good judgment, her relationship with Lady Russell is powerful to Anne. Because her mother believed and listened to Lady Russell, Anne feels like she can turn to her as well.

Lady Russell and Anne's relationship is solid enough to make it not unimaginable that Anne would follow her advice and sabotage herself and her happiness by turning her ecstasy of love into an ecstasy of heartache. Though *Persuasion,* Anne here looks back at her younger self and regrets her decision, the heartache taking a toll on her person, yet she makes no move to repair herself. Though position, "attachment and regrets had, for a long time, clouded every enjoyment of youth; and an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect." Anne is content living as a youthful woman wallowing in heartache (28). It is not until Captain Wentworth's introduction to Uppercross that Anne is able to recognize her heartache and inability to experience the world fully, making her able to move on from the *Pre Russell & Post Russell* stage of the novel to the next step in her transformation

Reintroduction & Estrangement

The provocation of this stage in *Persuasion* is the introduction of Captain Wentworth into Anne Elliot's society at Uppercross. Similar to the *Joined Bodies* stage in *The Ecstasy, Reintroduction and Estrangement* is the realization that Anne and Wentworth are not the joined bodies that they were once before their ecstasy of heartache. This reintroduction and ultimate estrangement between the two ex-lovers results in emotion and recognition of their change in each other. On Anne's first meeting of Captain Wentworth, she is a bundle of nerves and a rush of emotions. She attempts to blend into the cottage, to go unseen. After hearing of his presence at the big house in Uppercross, Anne and her sister Mary become aware of Charles' intention to bring Captain Wentworth to the cottage.

> Mary, very much gratified by this attention, was delighted to receive him, while a thousand feelings rushed on Anne, of which this was the most consoling, that it would soon be over. And it was soon over. In two minutes after Charles's preparation, the others appeared; they were in the drawing-room. Her eye half met Captain Wentworth's, a bow, a curtsey passed; she heard his voice; he talked to Mary, said all that was right; said something to the Miss Musgroves, enough to mark an easy footing; the room seemed full, full of persons and voices, but a few minutes ended it. Charles shewed himself at the window, all was ready, their visitor had bowed and was gone, the Miss Musgroves were gone too, suddenly resolving to walk to the end of the village with the sportsmen: the room was cleared, and Anne might finish her breakfast as she could. (40-41)

Anne is taken by surprise by Wentworth's action to insert himself into the society of the Cottage, though it was not by his decision he deals with the social situation in a poised way, even though he is not a poised person. Here he is governed by the sisters of Charles Musgrove, two young

women fresh from school and looking for a husband. As Charles delivers the news to Anne and Mary, Mary is "gratified by this attention" from Wentworth, that he would even think to tell her husband to warn of his arrival. This gratification is found in Wentworth's attention to her person in Social Time. While Mary is "gratified", Anne is mortified. "A thousand feelings rushed on Anne" so that she can only think of the future time, when the event of their meeting "would soon be over". The narrative jumps from Anne's imagining of the future, to the immediate past of the situation. The narrative gives the account of the event not while it is happening, but as it was in the past. The tense of the narrator's prose switches from "it would soon be over" to "it was soon over" in a matter of one period.

Anne's later recollection of the event is also disjointed. Wentworth's reintroduction is punctuated by short phrases and the motions of her body and his body: "her eye half met Captain Wentworth's, a bow, a curtsey passed; she heard his voice; he talked to Mary, said all that was right; said something to the Miss Musgroves, enough to mark an easy footing; the room seemed full, full of persons and voices, but a few minutes ended it". Anne is not only feeling the "thousand emotions" brought on by Wentworth's presence, but in this moment she is analyzing how he interacts within society. She is organizing and categorizing the actions of his body. Anne is trying to understand the moments of the "bow" and the half met eye, to decipher what they mean. She interprets his talking to the Miss Musgroves, and the length of his speech, to "mark as easy footing", revealing how they relate temporally as well as spiritually in her society. With the stimuli of many people, and of Wentworth's presence in the room, Anne's comments shift from the actions of Wentworth's body to how full the room seems. Anne's discomfort is obvious. She is waiting out the over-abundance of social interactions. Because she is unable to interact within the society in a spatial way, the information from the communications around her forces Anne's

mind into overdrive. She is unable to reciprocate society with her body, especially Captain Wentworth's, for only "her eye half met" his. They are unable to connect on the ocular level, never mind the physical "We like sepulchral statues lay" as they once lay eight years ago moments before their ecstasy of love turned sour.

The very moment of her interaction with Wentworth for the first time, being in his physical presence and observing his actions and reactions within Social Time through her perspective, Anne is aware that she is different. She is unable to process what social interactions and movements of the body mean, what emotion or thought that the movement of the body imbue. After he has left the cottage, Anne is left in a state of disarray. Confused and over stimulated, Anne is a nervous wreck.

> "It is over! it is over!" she repeated to herself again, and again, in nervous gratitude. "The worst is over!" Mary talked, but she could not attend. She had seen him. They had met. They had been once more in the same room. Soon, however, she began to reason with herself, and try to be feeling less. Eight years, almost eight years had passed, since all had been given up. How absurd to be resuming the agitation which such an interval had banished into distance and indistinctness! What might not eight years do? Events of every description, changes, alienations, removals, -- all, all must be comprised in it, and oblivion of the past -- how natural, how certain too! It included nearly a third part of her own life. Alas! with all her reasonings, she found, that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing. Now, how were his sentiments to be read? Was this like wishing to avoid her? And the next moment she was hating herself for the folly which asked the question. On one other question, which perhaps her utmost wisdom might not have prevented, she was soon spared all suspense; for after the Miss Musgroves had

> returned and finished their visit at the Cottage, she had this spontaneous information from Mary --"Captain Wentworth is not very gallant by you, Anne, though he was so attentive to me. Henrietta asked him what he thought of you, when they went away, and he said, "You were so altered he should not have known you again" (40).

Mentioned before in the previous chapters, this crucial encounter is a moment of recognition in Anne that sets the process of the novel moving forward towards Anne rebuilding her poise. Anne's thought process is reflected in the short and succinct phrases of the narration. She exclaims to herself that "it is over! It is over" and is unable to talk to Mary, because she is too busy feeling emotion and the thoughts that are attributed to such rushes of feeling. Anne relives the meeting, the reintroduction, and she immediately exclaims "they had been once more in the same room". Here is a turning point in Anne's thoughts as reflected within the narrative. It is the first time that Anne has thought about not Captain Wentworth's feelings, emotions, or intentions. Here, Anne thinks about her *own* body in relation to his. While they were together, the narrative reflected her urge and attempt to understand his body. By studying his movements, his social graces, his bow, Anne tries to understand her own movements in relation to society—how she might once more move within Social Time. Her thoughts after his body has left are not related to what he is thinking, but instead to the fact that "she had seen him" and "they had met". Sight here is crucial. Sight, like poise, links the body and the soul in Anne Elliot. The sight of Captain Wentworth sparks a change in her thought process momentarily. Here, she realizes that she wis unable to interact with him fully as the Musgroves have. And with that revelation, "she began to reason with herself, and try to be feeling less". This feeling is what sparks a change in Anne; the sight of Wentworth is directly related to her "feelings".

It is important to note that the "feelings" Anne Elliot experiences at the sight of Captain Wentoworth are love. She admits, "She found, that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing". Anne Elliot is *in love* with Captain Wentworth, still after eight years of separation. Their separation has caused her feelings to falter, but the seed of what *was* is always within Anne. After reasoning within herself, she turns back to Captain Wentworth wondering "how were his sentiments to be read." In this stage it is also important to note that the reader still has extremely limited insight into Wentworth's growth and struggle to grapple with his respective place in society. This is the result of Anne's experience of time, that she is steeped only in God's time and only *now* recognizes that she is painfully detached from Social Time. She has yet to rebuild her connection to Social Time, and is thus unaware of others position within it. We do have information third hand (from Henrietta to Mary to Anne) about Wentworth; that he finds Anne "so altered he should not have known you again." Wentworth's recognition aligns with Anne's recognition of change; however what they notice is different. To Wentworth, Anne's looks and manner have altered. Apparently she is no longer a woman seeking to be admired or loved. She too, is unable to understand Social Time and he does not understand her actions within his society. For Anne, Wentworth is hard to read because he only experiences Social Time. She does not feel his spirit, only his words to others. It is not until later in the novel when Anne has built this connection to Social Time that the narrative begins to reveal Wentworth's struggle and Anne perceives his broken equilibrium as akin to her own.

As the result of Anne and Wentworth's reintroduction and eventual estrangement, they both realize that they are not the people they once were. By being joined in the same society, somewhat similar to "The Ecstasy's" *Joined Bodies,* Anne comes to a realization that she has existed in the world only conscious of God's Time and unaware of the Social Time around her.

Because she has a limited connection to Social Time, her interaction with Wentworth is jarring and disturbing to her thoughts and emotions. She is overcome with emotions and a sense of folly—she is unable to interact with Wentworth fully. Anne's recognition that she needs to reconnect to Social Time to be able to interact and communicate with Wentworth fully marks a transition to the third stage in *Persuasion.*

The Louisa Experience

The third stage of Anne's transformation is the most painful. As the novel progresses from her first meeting with Wentworth in the cottage, he develops a relationship with the Musgroves and is, much to Anne's dismay, invited and assimilated into their society. Already there at the acquisition of her immediate family and somewhat an outsider, Anne is uncomfortable. She does, however, find comfort in her discomfort. Anne is ready and willing to participate as inferior in acts that members of her society are unwilling to perform, such as nurse others or play pianoforte at a party. For all intents and purposes Anne has accepted being alone. The reintroduction of Wentworth into her society, however, throws her established place and peace of mind into a frenzy of emotion and memories.

It is not just Wentworth's presence that is painful for Anne, but his developing romantic involvement with Louisa Musgrove that causes her unhappiness. To put into perspective, after Anne ends her engagement to Wentworth she is also proposed to by Charles Musgrove who she also rejects. In turn, Charles marries Anne's older sister Mary after Anne rejects him. Louisa and Henrietta are Charles' much younger sisters, "Henrietta and Louisa, young ladies of nineteen and twenty" are right out of "Exeter [with] the usual stock of accomplishments, and were now, like thousands of other young ladies, living to be fashionable, happy, and merry" (38). When Wentworth proposed to Anne, she was nineteen. Now twenty-seven, Anne must observe and be

present as Wentworth carries on a flirtation with Louisa, who is the same age she was when Wentworth proposed. All in all, Anne gets to painfully re-experience the happiness and love that she once had with Wentworth by seeing him carry on with a woman seven years her junior.

> In Tony Tanner's excellent and comprehensive book, *Jane Austen,* he observes:
>
> Everything is in a condition of change in this novel, and as often as not it is change as deterioration or diminution. In such a world it becomes a real question, what can and should remain 'constant'? To retain an uncritical allegiance to certain decaying inert social hierarchies and practices means dehumanising the self for the sake of the rigidifying deathly formulae; to abandon oneself for the new might be to opt for a giddy dissolution...it is a novel of great poignancy and sadness, as well as one of real bitterness and astringency, for it is deeply shadowed by the passing of things, and the remembrance of things past (210-211).

Though Tanner refers to the grasping of "social hierarchies and practices" as a means of "dehumanising the self," I would also argue that this passage is applicable to the establishment of relationships and the pursuit of love within *Persuasion.* Just as the "uncritical allegiance to certain decaying" practices applies to social means, I would argue that women, specifically Louisa Musgrove, practices "dehumanising [her] self for the sake of the rigidifying deathly formulae" that is courtship. As a commentary on the old practices of courtship in general, Austen suggests that change is gradual and expected for a person to grow. But to institute change for the sake of love is absurd. To quote Tanner again, if Louisa does indeed "abandon oneself for the new might" it will be "to opt for a giddy dissolution." Not only is Wentworth a new presence in Louisa's life, but also he is also new within her social strata. She actively pursues him due to his status as a Captain and his position within society, but she must actively change herself to do so.

Tanner's question of constancy is also applicable to Louisa's behavior, because although she is constant to Wentworth she is not constant to herself. She is not firm, she tries to change and mold herself to Wentworth's wishes, when in reality, she is "abandon[ing]" herself.

Wentworth is under a delusion about Louisa from the very start, believing her actions and emotions to be a representation of the *real* Louisa, not a Louisa participating in the antiquated and "rigidifying deathly formulae" of courtship that he is so unused to in his new position of society. He compares Louisa's character to Henrietta's, paying her a compliment while at the same moment revealing his own insecurities left from after relationship with Anne.

> ...when it comes to things of consequence, when they are placed in circumstances, fortitude and strength of mind, if [Henrietta] have not resolution enough to resist idle interference in such a trifle as this. Your sister is an amiable creature; but *yours* is the character of decision and firmness, I see. If you value her conduct or happiness, infuse as much of your own spirit into her, as you can. But this, no doubt, you have been always doing. It is the worst evil of too yielding and indecisive a character, that no influence over it can be depended on.--You are never sure of a good impression being durable. Every body may sway it; let those who would be happy be firm (59).

Wentworth praises a "firm" character, one who does not "sway" and that has "no influence over it can be depended on." In this long speech of character that Anne overhears, he preaches not only what he wants in a woman, but he reveals the scars that Anne has left on his soul and the result of their ecstasy of heartache. Not only is Anne able to understand Wentworth's speech, marking a strengthening connection to Social Time, but she is also able to recognize his actions, which "Anne perfectly knew the meaning of" (73). Anne knows that Louisa is modeling herself to fulfill Wentworth's wishes. While realizing that Wentworth *does not* recognize Louisa's false

modeling. To him, Louisa is a “character of decision and firmness” with “fortitude and strength of mind.” Socially, Louisa appears this way in time. She puts on a beautiful act, that is both willful and capricious, that would make Wentworth feel this way. Wentworth cannot percieve Louisa’s self-abandonment as potentially destructive.

As Wentworth is persuaded to love Louisa through her abandon of self, Anne sits idly by observing and growing within herself. Throughout the narrative the reader is able to see Wentworth’s actions in society not just in the terms of the short punctuated sentences and emotions Anne feels, but as full-fledged actions. Anne accepts that Wentworth is falling with Louisa, and decides instead to rebuild herself. Her growing connection to Social Time is evident at Lyme, where there is something in her manner and description that alludes to a change.

> She was looking remarkably well; her very regular, very pretty features, having the bloom and freshness of youth restored by the fine wind which had been blowing on her complexion, and by the animation of eye which it had also produced. It was evident that the gentleman, (completely a gentleman in manner) admired her exceedingly. Captain Wentworth looked round at her instantly in a way which shewed his noticing of it. He gave her a momentary glance,--a glance of brightness, which seemed to say, "That man is struck with you,--and even I, at this moment, see something like Anne Elliot again" (87).

Wentworth notices her. Well, Wentworth notices another man noticing Anne and therefore himself comes to notice her. There is a disposition in her character that suggests an air of ease and comfort, so very different from the Anne at the start of the novel. Anne is growing more comfortable with herself, accepting herself, and growing within Social Time and God’s Time. Though she is not completely able to interact with society, making limited connection through her body (the results of the ecstasy of heartache) she has established a connection to Social Time.

Anne's body is recognized and "admired" "exceedingly" by someone outside of her party. This moment is a moment of triumph in the novel for Anne, and a moment of change in Wentworth--in his actions towards Anne and his reaction to himself.

While walking along the ocean at Lyme, Louisa engages Wentworth in a flirtation after he notices another man noticing Anne. Attempting to redirect the attention to herself, Louisa jumps off the Cobb, daring Wentworth to catch her. He catches her once while asking her, advising her against jumping again. She refuses his advisement and jumps too quickly, her head cracking against the pavement.

> There was no wound, no blood, no visible bruise; but her eyes were closed, she breathed not, her face was like death.--The horror of the moment to all who stood around! Captain Wentworth, who had caught her up, knelt with her in his arms, looking on her with a face as pallid as her own, in an agony of silence. "She is dead! she is dead!" screamed Mary, catching hold of her husband, and contributing with his own horror to make him immoveable; and in another moment, Henrietta, sinking under the conviction, lost her senses too, and would have fallen on the steps, but for Captain Benwick and Anne, who caught and supported her between them."Is there no one to help me?" were the first words which burst from Captain Wentworth, in a tone of despair, and as if all his own strength were gone. "Go to him, go to him," cried Anne, "for heaven's sake go to him. I can support her myself. Leave me, and go to him. Rub her hands, rub her temples; here are salts,--take them, take them."... Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied, to Henrietta, still tried, at intervals, to suggest comfort to the others, tried to quiet Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. Both seemed to look to her for directions. "Anne, Anne," cried

> Charles, "what is to be done next? What, in heaven's name, is to be done next?"Captain Wentworth's eyes were also turned towards her (74).

This is *the* moment where Anne shines in *The Louisa Experience* stage of *Persuasion.* Akin to the *Souls Gone Out* stage in "The Ecstasy", this is the moment that Wentworth recognizes Anne as a person inhabiting the same Social Time as himself—as someone who can make decisions and has answers. Anne is no longer a meek and nervous woman only experiencing the world through God's Time, but is interacting with a sense of poise. It is to be noted that she has not attained true poise, but is exhibiting a sense of action in this moment of great terror, prefiguring a change that will complete by the novel's end.

This passage is a comment on Anne's character, Wentworth's character, and Louisa's character. Reinstating Anne as a desirable person who is able to take charge in a situation, Wentworth is lost for action. There is a trade in action and reaction between characters. Once the man that pulled the little boy off Anne's back in her time of need, Wentworth is now unable to catch Louisa as she jumps into his arms, and is subsequently unable spiritually to react to her seemingly dead figure on the ground. He is lost, unable to react within God's Time since Social Time is lost here. There are no social protocols that dictate what one is to do in a moment of spiritual disturbance. Within this passage we are fully aware of Wentworth's limited connection to God's Time and his true lack of poise.

Louisa's character is chastened in this moment. Though cruel, and somewhat unusual, Austen punishes her character for abandoning herself to the love of a man. The lack of constancy in Louisa is seemingly put right through a physical injury. Able to connect later to Captain Wentworth's friend Captain Benwick, on a level playing field of broken bodies, Louisa eventually finds love. Austen praises Anne, a character of constancy who does not abandon

herself in the process of her change. Louisa's "Wentworth Effect" is very different from Anne's, though it yields a similar result. Louisa's experience might read as: "Boarding School, Tedious Family, Introduction of Wentworth, Changing Louisa to Persuade Wentworth, Broken at Lyme, Loving Benwick." Though Louisa achieves constancy in the end, it is a near death experience that is brought on by a sudden rashness of character, a "giddy dissolution" that yields her love for Benwick in an extreme, and ultimately futile way. Louisa does not persuade Wentworth to fall in love through her "firmness" bordering on extremism. Louisa reveals Wentworth's own flaws and lack of connection within himself, while helping build Anne's connections within herself. Louisa is a motive for Anne to try to work towards a balance of time, and she is an occasion for Wentworth to discover his extreme unbalance of time. The fall of Louisa, recalling the Fall itself, signals a transition to the fourth step within *Persuasion.*

Bath Time

In the last stage of *Persuasion,* Anne successfully builds a connection to Social Time. Able to participate in the duality of time (though not yet in soul and body) Anne is noticed by Mr. Elliot, her eligible cousin, as a woman to be admired. Just as the fourth stage is the longest in *The Ecstasy,* it is also lengthy in *Persuasion.* Anne is taken out of the society of Uppercross, Wentworth, the Musgroves, and reintroduced into the society of her immediate family. Anne returns to Bath and to her family "anticipating an imprisonment of many months" but ends the first night unable to contain herself surprised that she "could not have supposed it possible that her first evening in Camden place could have passed so well" (90, 95) Austen tests Anne's ability to interact within Social Time, and we observe how Anne is able to experience emotions and participate in society successfully. Anne's change is marked by a separation of volumes. Anne's entrance into Bath's society marks the start of volume II in the novel. The first three stages of Anne's transformation belong to volume I, while the last two functional stages of transformation belong to volume II. To affirm Anne's change, and to establish that she is indeed connected to social time, Austen animates Lady Russell's opinion through free indirect discourse within the narrative.

When Lady Russell meets Anne for the first time since seeing her before Uppercross, "there was some anxiety mixed with [her] joy in meeting [Anne]. She knew who had been frequenting Uppercross. But happily, either Anne was improved in plumpness and looks, or Lady Russell fancied her so..." (101). As established in the *Pre Russell & Post Russell* stage of *Persuasion,* Lady Russell's opinion of and emotion towards Anne are those of a surrogate mother. Thus, Anne holds her opinion in high regard, as someone who can judge if Anne is *well.* Fearful for Anne's well being, knowing that Captain Wentworth had been at Uppercross, Lady

Russell finds Anne ‘improved.” This improvement of Anne is much more than just “in plumpness and looks.” Anne has reconnected to both Social Time and God’s Time, linking them and reestablishing within herself a clearer relation between body and soul. Lady Russell notes Anne’s change, but is unable precisely to pin down what is different. The difference in Anne is not external, but internal. There is also a change in Anne’s relationship to Lady Russell, though not enough to discount the above claim. Through Anne’s transformation of self, she has also matured in her relationship to her surrogate mother. Instead of taking every piece of advice and agreeing with every decision Lady Russell has made for her, we learn that “it was some years since Anne had begun to learn that she and her excellent friend could sometimes think differently” (97). Anne now thinks differently from Lady Russell, a sign of making her own choices and decisions. To clarify, Anne thinking differently from Lady Russell does not take agency away from Lady Russell’s character, but rather it gives agency to Anne’s.

While residing in Bath, Anne dwells on news from Uppercross and wonders about Captain Wentworth frequently. Wanting more from Mary’s letters, Anne is only able to read what she is given. Following Louisa's fall, Anne silently wonders if Wentworth has changed significantly:

> With regard to Captain Wentworth, though Anne hazarded no enquiries, there was voluntary communication sufficient. His spirits had been greatly recovering lately, as might be expected. As Louisa improved, he had improved; and he was now quite a different creature from what he had been the first week. He had not seen Louisa; and was so extremely fearful of any ill consequence to her from an interview, that he did not press for it at all; and, on the contrary, seemed to have a plan of going away for a week or ten days, till her head were stronger (88)

Hearing news of Wentworth, Anne notes that "as Louisa improved, he had improved; and he was now quite a different creature from what he had been the first week." A peculiar syntactical structure reflects Wentworth's change. Though Wentworth is aligned with Louisa is recovering repetition of "as Louisa improved, he had improved" Wentworth is different from Louisa. He is "a different creature from what he had been the first week" of meeting Anne. Instead of nursing Louisa at her bedside, as a devoted lover might be expected to do in this situation, Wentworth disappears seeming "to have a plan of going away for a week or ten days, till [Louisa's] head [was] stronger." The word choice of this phrase indicates not only Wentworth's severed attachment to Louisa by his leaving, but it also indicates that Louisa's head is broken, that she is not strong. Is this strength in health? Or is it in mental ability? Or is it in a passion towards Wentworth that he is trying to *break* with his absence?

After Louisa's traumatic and near death fall, Anne and Wentworth are both changed characters. Anne connects to Social Time, entering society at Bath and not confined within her spirit. She is pursued by her cousin, Mr. Elliot, and finds great joy in being noticed and desired. Wentworth, however, disappears from the narrative only to be found in passing thoughts of Anne's and conversations within society. His person does not appear until he travels to Bath. Wentworth, so to say, goes off the grid. He is repairing his person, trying to reconnect to his soul as much as he can. Becoming aware of his inability to communicate fully with Anne, especially aftter the Louisa fiasco, Wentworth breaks (literally) his relationship with Louisa in order to repair himself. After finding out about Wentworth disconnecting to Louisa, Anne is overjoyed.

> The conclusion of the whole was, that if the woman who had been sensible of Captain Wentworth's merits could be allowed to prefer another man, there was nothing in the engagement to excite lasting wonder; and if Captain Wentworth lost no friend by it,

> certainly nothing to be regretted. No, it was not regret which made Anne's heart beat in spite of herself, and brought the colour into her cheeks when she thought of Captain Wentworth unshackled and free. She had some feelings which she was ashamed to investigate. They were too much like joy, senseless joy! (111).

Anne's investigation of her own feelings in this instant is not riddled with self-doubt, regret, anxiety and grief. She allows herself to hope, to feel the emotions that connect time, her soul, and her body. She logically infers that a relationship with Captain Wentworth is possible, that he is "unshackled and free." Anne *allows* her "heart to beat in spite of herself" and *allows* color to be brought "into her cheeks when she thought of Captain Wentworth." Though she has "feelings...she [is] ashamed to investigate" she notices that she has "feelings" and does not immediately cast them down. Not letting yourself wonder versus self-flagellating denial are two very distinct concepts that mark the final proof of Anne's change. She does not let herself "investigate" the feelings because "they were too much like joy, senseless joy!" Not daring herself to be happy *just yet* Anne has rekindled a sense of love towards the *thought* of Captain Wentworth. A distinction is to be made between this stage and the final stage. In *Bath Time* Anne lets herself be in love with the *idea* of Captain Wentworth, the available Captain Wentworth who is not romantically entangled with Louisa. The *idea* and the *person* are two very different concepts, two different steps. Anne will eventually get to the person, but falling in love with the *idea* is the first and necessary step towards the ecstasy of love that she needs to become a poised person.

Anne interacts with Captain Wentworth's person when they meet on the street. The feelings towards the person rather than just the idea of his person are important to mark in Anne's emotions and change. Anne notices him walking in the street with a party. After

choosing to walk instead of ride in Lady Dalrymple's coach, Anne walks with Mr. Elliot. Dipping out of the falling rain, Anne spots Captain Wentworth on the street and immediately reacts; "her start was perceptible only to herself; but she instantly felt that she was the greatest simpleton in the world, the most unaccountable and absurd! For a few minutes she saw nothing before her. It was all confusion. She was lost..." (116). Anne is literally blinded by the infatuation and emotions she feels towards Captain Wentworth. She was confused, "lost", and "for a few minutes she saw nothing before her." This reaction is not unlike Anne's first reaction to Captain Wentworth's presence at the start of the novel. What makes this interaction different and Anne different from the Anne of the *Reintroduction & Estrangement* stage is that Anne seeks Captain Wentworth out and starts a conversation with him: "she now felt a great inclination to go to the outer door" (116). The narrative tense has changed in the novel. Anne shows agency embracing a social relationship within Social Time in *present tense*. Anne does not regard social interactions in past or future iterations, but is able to articulate the moments as they pass. Anne's interaction with Wentworth now transcends a series of flutters, glances, and over analyzed thoughts.

> He was more obviously struck and confused by the sight of her, than she had ever observed before; he looked quite red. For the first time, since their renewed acquaintance, she felt that she was betraying the least sensibility of the two. She had the advantage of him, in the preparation of the last few moments. All the overpowering, blinding, bewildering, first effects of strong surprise were over with her. Still, however, she had enough to feel! It was agitation, pain, pleasure, a something between delight and misery (116).

Wentworth is the victim of nerves in this passage. He is the one that is “embarrassed” and unable to respond. He, too, is “obviously struck and confused by the sight of her.” For the first time in the narrative, the reader is given access to Wentworth’s thoughts through his too expressive face: “he looked quite red.” Experiencing emotions towards Anne’s presence, Wentworth’s spiritual feelings speak in physical terms through a blush. He is experiencing the “blinding, bewildering, first effects of strong surprise” that Anne had felt minutes before. Earlier in this paper, the term “ecstasy” was defined as: excessive grief or anxiety; madness; distraction; excessive joy; rapture. Anne’s feelings towards Wentworth now border on ecstasy, for “it was agitation, pain, pleasure, and something between delight and misery.” Feeling both “delight and misery” at his presence, able to feel the ecstasy of heartache and imagine an ecstasy of love, Anne is overcome. Wentworth, in concert with Anne, feels this same rapture and grief simultaneously as well, for as “he spoke to her, and then turned away. The character of his manner was embarrassment. She could not have called it either cold or friendly, or anything so certainly as embarrassed” (116).

Anne has inferred much from Captain Wentworth’s change, but has not been able to confirm it until this moment in the novel. Commenting on his break with Louisa and his solitary travels, Anne was able to postulate that Wentworth had changed and that Louisa's fall has affected him as much as it did her. It is not until this point, however, that Anne is able to affirm that her inferences into his character true.

> After a short interval, however, he came towards her and spoke again. Mutual enquiries on common subjects passed; neither of them, probably, much the wiser for what they heard, and Anne continuing fully sensible of his being less at ease than formerly. They had, by dint of being so very much together, got to speak to each other with a considerable portion of apparent indifference and calmness; but he could not do it now.

> Time had changed him, or Louisa had changed him. There was consciousness of some sort or other. He looked very well, not as if he had been suffering in health or spirits, and he talked of Uppercross, of the Musgroves, nay, even of Louisa, and had even a momentary look of his own arch significance as he named her; but yet it was Captain Wentworth not comfortable, not easy, not able to feign that he was (116).

This is a true meeting of Anne and Wentworth. Though they have been reintroduced before, Anne and Captain Wentworth were shells of who they once were. Reconnection to "Time had changed him" and the reestablishment of self-awareness through his failed interaction with Anne has "changed" Wentworth. In Austen's prose it is unclear if it is "Time" or "Louisa," but it is evident by the presence of both words and the syntactical linkage of both that they attributed to his change. Broken from each other, and almost disconnected from themselves through heartache, Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth from the start of the novel are completely different from the Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth in this passage. This *true* reintroduction of characters, of two people who have worked on rebuilding themselves, is the first moment in a series of moments that brings Anne and Wentworth closer and closer to becoming the poised people they want to perceive themselves as and that Austen means them to be in the end. Through the observance of Wentworth "not able to feign that he was [comfortable]" Anne is able to connect to Social Time, to fully understand and interpret other characters bodies in space. Wentworth is able to connect to God's Time and fully understand his own emotions and reactions to other character's souls in time. When the two are brought together, change is noticeable in each. Anne realizes that. He does not communicate with her with a "portion of apparent indifference and calmness; but he could not do it now.' Instead, "Wentworth not comfortable, not easy, not able to feign that he was." Communicating as equals for the first time,

on the same level, emotions are almost too much for the two characters. The change is significant in Wentworth's communication with Anne, but Anne's change is significantly noticed by the ladies in Wentworth's party. They comment that "Anne is pretty, I think, Anne Elliot; very pretty, when one comes to look at her. It is not the fashion to say so, but I confess I admire her more than her sister" (118). Anne's change, her reconnection to time, transforms the opinions of people around her. Anne's air "when one comes to look at her" has altered from the fading beauty that lost her "bloom" all too quickly from the start of the novel.

Anne and Captain Wentworth's second meeting assures Anne of not only her defined and strong emotion of love, but raise for her a possibility of Wentworth loving her. As Anne is rediscovering herself, she is being pursued by Mr. Elliot, her cousin. The man from Lyme who found her admirable (and Captain Wentworth noticed that he found Anne admirable) has entered Anne's society and means to develop a relationship with her. Anne, thinking nothing of it and only relishing the attention, does not understand that Mr. Elliot almost stops Captain Wentworth in his tracks. Jealousy creeps over Captain Wentworth, but it assures Anne of one thing.

> Anne saw nothing, thought nothing of the brilliancy of the room. Her happiness was from within. Her eyes were bright and her cheeks glowed,--but she knew nothing about it. She was thinking only of the last half hour, and as they passed to their seats, her mind took a hasty range over it. His choice of subjects, his expressions, and still more his manner and look, had been such as she could see in only one light. His opinion of Louisa Musgrove's inferiority, an opinion which he had seemed solicitous to give, his wonder at Captain Benwick, his feelings as to a first, strong attachment,--sentences begun which he could not finish--his half averted eyes, and more than half expressive glance,--all, all declared that he had a heart returning to her at last; that anger, resentment, avoidance, were no

> more; and that they were succeeded, not merely by friendship and regard, but by the tenderness of the past; yes, some share of the tenderness of the past. She could not contemplate the change as implying less.--He must love her (123).

Anne loves Captain Wentworth. This is the moment in the novel where she has investigated the feelings she was too ashamed to investigate before. This moment is different from *Pre Russell* Anne's over analyzing. This Anne has proof to follow on. She has the past to draw on. She has circumstance to consider. She has her own feelings to dwell on and apply. She has Social Time and God's Time to consider. Anne is *almost* fully able to be with Wentworth. She has persuaded herself in this moment. She has come to love him the way that she loved before, perhaps even more deeply. She knows she is meant to be with him. Anne reads 'his half averted eyes, and more than half expressive glance" as a sign that Captain Wentworth has "declared that he had a heart returning to her at last." But she cannot become a poised person *without* Wentworth acting on his emotions. A half glance is not enough. And even though she knows of her feelings and can interpolate his feelings, she has not had word from him. Wentworth has not enunciated his love for her...yet, for one to get a sign of love, one must give a sign.

There is a conversation at the Croft's house in which Anne affirms her constancy and love for Wentworth, through sideways and concealed comments and remarks. Not addressing Captain Wentworth directly, Anne discreetly steers her conversation with Captain Harville on women's constancy towards her own situation with Wentworth's. As Anne has this conversation, Captain Wentworth is simultaneously writing her a letter baring his soul and love to her. Some critics argue that the conversation *itself* is what persuades Captain Wentworth that Anne is in love with him. But the timeline of events do not line up with that argument. I would suggest that, yes the conversation aids to his knowledge of her idea of constancy, but because he

is writing the letter *while* the conversation is going on, already ruminating on what he is going to say, I claim that it is the look that they share just prior that is the culminating moment of the novel. The letter is the beautiful spark that leads to Anne and Wentworth's ecstasy of love.

Anne's conversation with Captain Harville is prompted by Mrs. Croft's exclamation about uncertain engagements. She proposes that engagements must have a time limit and lead directly to marriage, if not they are "unsafe and unwise" for both parties involved (155). Overhearing this conversation, Anne's attention is aroused:

> Anne found an unexpected interest here. She felt its application to herself, felt it in a nervous thrill all over her, and at the same moment that her eyes instinctively glanced towards the distant table, Captain Wentworth's pen ceased to move, his head was raised, pausing, listening, and he turned round the next instant to give a look--one quick, conscious look at her (155).

The "conscious look" in Anne's direction from Captain Wentworth; the "instant" it took for him to look at her is the moment of connection that is needed for their bodies to confirm their love for each other. Connection of eyes, very similar to Donne's *eyebeams,* joins two bodies. It shows that both Anne and Wentworth find Mrs. Croft's comment applicable to their situation and that the situation is on the front of their minds. After the look Captain Harville, a man in Wentworth's party, pulls Anne to the side to talk about Benwick and Lousia's situation. He says that Fanny, Benwick's dead fiancé, would never have moved on as quickly as he did. That he is almost ashamed of Benwick for falling in love again. Anne replies defending her sex:

> It would not be the nature of any woman who truly loved...We certainly do not forget you [men], so soon as you forget us [women]. It is, perhaps, our fate rather than our merit. We cannot help ourselves. We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us.

> You are forced on exertion. You have always a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into the world immediately, and continual occupation and change soon weaken impressions...If the change be not from outward circumstances, it must be from within; it must be nature, man's nature, which has done the business for Captain Benwick (156).

Anne argues that women are more constant than men, that they have no other occupation than to love and be loved. But this occupation is not a merit, but rather a cursed fate. She does not claim to condone the constancy; rather the constancy is a curse for women who "cannot help ourselves." Constancy in love, when slighted, is more of a burden than a blessing. Women, argues Anne, sit "at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us." It is not a pleasant life, but a tortuous one that preys one women's spirits. Men are inclined to forget more quickly, for they use their bodies. They have "always a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into the world" and because men are in a constant state of change, rather than women toiling away, "impressions" are soon "weaken[ed]" when it comes to love. The "change" Anne claims must "be from within;" the change must be initiated by the man. Because society confines women within their parent's house if they are ultimately slighted in love, and men are able to carry on in the world, women are more constant than men. But Captain Harville does not agree that it is a man's nature to forget. He argues that feelings are as strong as bodies that the soul can withstand only as much as the body allows:

> No, no...I will not allow it to be more man's nature than woman's to be inconstant and forget those they do love, or have loved. I believe the reverse. I believe in a true analogy between our bodily frames and our mental; and that as our bodies are the strongest, so are our feelings; capable of bearing most rough usage, and riding out the heaviest weather."

> "Your feelings may be the strongest," replied Anne, "but the same spirit of analogy will authorise me to assert that ours are the most tender. Man is more robust than woman, but he is not longer lived; which exactly explains my view of the nature of their attachments. Nay, it would be too hard upon you, if it were otherwise. You have difficulties, and privations, and dangers enough to struggle with. You are always labouring and toiling, exposed to every risk and hardship. Your home, country, friends, all quitted. Neither time, nor health, nor life, to be called your own. It would be too hard, indeed" (with a faltering voice) "if woman's feelings were to be added to all this (156).

Though souls can withstand damage and are strong like the body 'bearing most rough usage, and riding out the heaviest weather" Anne argues it still is the woman who loves the longest. Man, in the nature of societal roles and jobs they must carry out, are "more robust than women, but he is not longer lived." Anne's description of men references the ninth book of the New Testament, "The Epistle of the Galatians." From Paul the Apostle, he says "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). The religious connotations are hard to ignore, but for the purpose of this argument it is not the connotation that is significant but the word choice. Austen draws upon her religious background to phrase Anne's answer, indirectly communicating to Captain Wentworth that her heart is his. A man 'is not longer lived" than a woman, for he will forever live in the heart of the woman that loves him. Anne silently communicates to Wentworth through a "faltering voice" that she has given her soul up to him, in an almost divine manner, and he forever lives with her.

Amidst this conversation Harville pauses and notices a noise made by Captain Wentworth in a "hitherto perfectly quiet division of the room. It was nothing more than that his pen had fallen down, but Anne was startled at finding him nearer than she had supposed, and half

inclined to suspect that the pen had only fallen, because he had been occupied by them, striving to catch sounds, which yet she did not think he could have caught" (157).Hanging on every word of the conversation whilst writing a letter, Wentworth is attuned to Anne's hints. Harville continues his point, that women have been written over the ages through books, songs, and poems as fickle temptresses. In literary history, women are inconstant and he could "bring you fifty quptations in a moment on [his] side of the argument." Anne retorts with a comment directly targeted for Captain Wentworth's ears:

> I mean, while the woman you love lives, and lives for you. All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone."
>
> She could not immediately have uttered another sentence; her heart was too full, her breath too much oppressed (157).

She has said it. Anne has explained her feelings to another in society. Still damaged by heartache, she is unable to tell Captain Wentworth directly, but she tells him through the newest mode of communication she has mastered: conversation. Anne has broken out of her private sector, her spiritual life lived in God's Time, to rebuild her connection to lived experience or Social Time. This rebuilding, this quest for poise, has all been to realize her feelings for Wentworth. The feelings that she was too ashamed or too suspicious of she now spills for all to hear. She claims that she has been constant, that she has loved the "longest, when existence or when hope is gone."

The look shared between Anne and Captain Wentworth joins their bodies. Anne's conversation offers her soul, and Wentworth offers his in the only way *he* knows how: a letter. A extremely private form of communication that uses his body (through the act of writing) to

explain his soul, Captain Wentworth does not rely on half-glances and round-about conversation to tell Anne his feelings. Exemplifying his "robust" nature that Anne describes above, he pens in a short letter perhaps the most telling example of heartache seeking hope:

> I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own, than when you almost broke it eight years and a half ago. Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant. You alone have brought me to Bath. For you alone I think and plan.--Have you not seen this? Can you fail to have understood my wishes?--I had not waited even these ten days, could I have read your feelings, as I think you must have penetrated mine. I can hardly write. 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.--Too good, too excellent creature! You do us justice, indeed. You do believe that there is true attachment and constancy among men. Believe it to be most fervent, most undeviating in
>
> F. W.
>
> I must go, uncertain of my fate; but I shall return hither, or follow your party, as soon as possible. A word, a look, will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening, or never (158).

This is the moment when Wentworth admits that he has persuaded himself to love Anne once more, or rather, that he never stopped loving Anne, for "I have loved none but you." Austen Scholar, Kay Young, discerns a dynamic within this scene between Wentworth's language and

Anne's action: "written in the present tense, this letter, built around the imperative "must," insists on the emergence of these words that "must" be said because something must be represented" (79). Wentworth's letter is such that he is anticipating Anne's reaction to his admission of feelings. The letter makes him vulnerable and is written in a vulnerable tone. He admits his love, and feels "uncertain" of his "fate." He writes that anything will fulfill his nervous anticipation through "a word, a look, will be enough to decide" how the future stands. It is a scene of emotional triumph, that overcomes any gender, class, or time differences that may have hindered Anne and Captain Wentworth before. For the first time in the novel the reader is given access to Fredrick Wentworth's private and personal thoughts. He condenses the long time span of an entire novel into a matter of loaded and heart-wrenching sentences. He admits to folly of weakness and resentfulness, but shows a matter of growth in recognizing those emotions to be constancy to Anne. This letter is evidence that Captain Wentworth changed himself after Louisa's fall. He attempted to connect to his soul, enough to recognize what that he will "offer [himself] to [Anne] again with a heart even more [her] own, than when [she] almost broke it eight years and a half ago." The frankness and acknowledgment of pain and love as well as the instance to try *again* comes from Captain Wentworth's soul, so to say, while leaving his body within the narrative. Anne and Captain Wentworth have prepared themselves, have improved themselves, to convert their ecstasy of heartbreak into an ecstasy of love, forming the loveknot that both so deeply desires, after eight years of misery.

Persuaded

As Anne and Captain Wentworth have now prepared themselves to meet through actions of their body, they must also meet spiritually to complete their ecstasy. The final step in *Persuasion,* "Persuaded" is congruous with John Donne's final stage of "The Ecstasy:" *Changed Bodies.* As in the following scenes, Anne and Wentworth's souls have gone out of their individual bodies through the revelation of love that triggers their ecstasy. Unlike Donne's "The Ecstasy*",* however, the final stage of *Persuasion* consists of the actual ecstasy that converts Anne and Captain Wentworth into what I have been referring to as fully balanced or poised persons.

After writing the letter, Captain Wentworth has gone out of his body ("I had not waited even these ten days, could I have read your feelings, as I think you must have penetrated mine. I can hardly write") and after reading his letter, Anne's soul goes out of hers.

> 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…The absolute necessity of seeming like herself produced then an immediate struggle; but after a while she could do no more. She began not to understand a word they said, and was obliged to plead indisposition and excuse herself...Anxious to omit no possible precaution, Anne struggled, and said, "I am afraid ma'am, that it is not perfectly understood. Pray be so good as to mention to the other gentlemen that we hope to see your whole party this evening. I am afraid there has been some mistake; and I wish you particularly to assure Captain Harville, and Captain Wentworth, that we hope to see them both" (159).

Anne is lost. Supremely lost. Her agitation of "overpowering happiness" is so severe that she is unable to communicate with those around her. For a moment she is disconnected from time. She feels an absolute necessity to be alone, to try to understand *what is happening to her.* With the diction of "agitation" combined with "happiness" and her inability and "struggle" to communicate, Anne's intelligence and soul has started to depart from her body. This recalls Donne's poem "Our souls—which to advance their state,/ Were gone out—hung "twixt her and me./And whilst our souls negotiate there, / We like sepulchral statues lay," Anne is entering, through the narrative of her inability to communicate, the stage of "we like sepulchral statues lay." She tries to put off her meeting of Wentworth, to delay perhaps a communication through conversation that would be able to show him she returns his feelings.

Her brother in-law, rather begrudgingly, offers to put off his appointment at the gunsmith to walk her home. Trying to hold herself together, to try to understand *what is happening to her*, and hoping that her communication through another will reach Captain Wentworth another situation happens all together. Resorting to the use of his body, Captain Wentworth approaches both Charles and Anne together on the street. He offers to walk Anne home. Charles asks where Captain Wentworth is going and he replies, "I hardly know" (160). He has been looking for Anne, searching for her body. Also unaware of *what is happening to him* he is surprised to realize that he has been wandering the streets. As the two bodies meet in society, so too do two souls. The walk through Bath is the moment of ecstasy as described by John Donne:

> There could not be an objection. There could be only the most proper alacrity, a most obliging compliance for public view; and smiles reined in and spirits dancing in private rapture. In half a minute, Charles was at the bottom of Union-street again, and the other two proceeding together; and soon words enough had passed between them to decide

> their direction towards the comparatively quiet and retired gravel-walk, where the power of conversation would make the present hour a blessing indeed; and prepare for it all the immortality which the happiest recollections of their own future lives could bestow. There they exchanged again those feelings and those promises which had once before seemed to secure every thing, but which had been followed by so many, many years of division and estrangement. There they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their re-union, than when it had been first projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment; more equal to act, more justified in acting. And there, as they slowly paced the gradual ascent, heedless of every group around them, seeing neither sauntering politicians, bustling house-keepers, flirting girls, nor nursery-maids and children, they could indulge in those retrospections and acknowledgements, and especially in those explanations of what had directly preceded the present moment, which were so poignant and so ceaseless in interest. All the little variations of the last week were gone through; and of yesterday and to-day there could scarcely be an end (160).

Austen's language recalls the diction set forth in Johnson's definitions, as well as the diction used by John Donne himself, but the moment of the ecstasy of love is definitive in this scene in *Persuasion.* A private affair in "The Ecstasy," Anne and Wentworth's love must be consummated (so to speak) in "compliance of public view." As they walk through Bath their "smiles reined in and spirits dancing in private rapture" they are joined in body and now in soul. In "rapture," a word used in Johnson's definition of ecstasy, Anne and Wentworth discuss and "prepare for it all the immortality which the happiest recollections of their own future lives could bestow." The spirit in the Anglican tradition is an immortal being. Through ecstasy, Anne and

Wentworth become as one just Anglican divines described the union of body and soul. From this sentence on, the narrative shifts from just Anne's perspective to a wider scope of society more similar to Austen's other novels. Anne and Wentworth alone turn into a unified "they" and "their." It is no longer Anne or Wentworth's future, but "their own future." Again, Kay Young observes in her article, "Feeling Embodied:" "Austen mostly drops a veil over the actual words of love first exchanged—the words of passion spoken in the moment, not recollected in the tranquility of a moment late from the position of the established 'us'" (79). Through their love and through the result of their combination of souls they now have a "more fixed...knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment; more equal to act, more justified in acting" (160). Critic Stefanie Markovits notes in her article "Jane Austen and the Happy Fall": "At the conclusion of Milton's Paradise Lost, an earlier narrative of a felix culpa, Adam and Eve, in search of a "place of rest," "hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and slow / Through Eden took their solitary way." Anne and Wentworth also wander slowly through the streets toward the end of *Persuasion* but in a state of "private rapture," ignoring the world of Vanity Fair" (792). In one instant Anne and Captain Wentworth know more about each other through the combination of their souls than ever before. This recalls "The Ecstasy" "And if some lover, such as we,/Have heard this dialogue of one,/Let him still mark us, he shall see/Small change when we're to bodies gone." Anne and Wentworth are surrounded by people, but it is obvious that they are linked. Moving amongst the "sauntering politicians, bustling house-keepers, flirting girls...nursery maids and children," Anne and Wentworth notice nothing. They have become one.

Going through the process of becoming whole enough to recognize their feelings, Anne and Wentworth's love culminates in what I have identified as a loveknot at the end of *Persuasion.* As defined in the first chapter, loveknot is defined "as a complicated figure, by

which affection interchanged is figured". Anne and Wentworth have created a complicated figure, their two souls becoming one. As poised persons in this moment and for the rest of the novel they are connected in soul and body as well as time. They see each other fully, in who they once were and who they have become, and still endeavor to love. As critics Richard Handler and Daniel Alan Segal observe about the structure of *Persuasion* in their book *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Culture:* "*Persuasion*…focuses on the different understandings that characters entertain concerning the relationship of rank and personal worth" (62). The title *Persuasion* refers finally to a rekindling of love. *Persuasion* also points to the reestablishment of poise, to a reconnection of soul and body that can only be achieved through ecstasy. After heartache, Anne and Wentworth consciously rebuild their connection to Social Time and God's Time as well as try to connect broken body and soul in one. *Persuasion* explores the motivation to rebuild, to try to become whole and recognize one's emotions for another person. The initiative to change, and to fix what was broken by another person's decision, attempting *Persuasion* is not the simple act of persuading one heart to love another again. It is an attempt to communicate. In Austen's canon for a character to love, a person must communicate. To communicate, he or she must interact fully in time (both Social Time and God's Time) and understand the self as unified (body and soul). To communicate within themselves through the relationship between body and soul, both lovers must be constant. To be in love fully, justly, and to participate in an ecstasy to become *one* with *another,* Anne Elliot and Fredrick Wentworth seek to embody "poise" or balance in the fullest possible sense.

Conclusion

Published posthumously, *Persuasion* is Austen's greatest meditation on the relationship of body and soul. Anchoring herself in the Anglican tradition, Austen drew upon the theology of her church as well as the writing of Johnson to develop and expand her idea of body united with soul through the medium of a novel of love regained. Building on Donne's idea of the body/soul duality, I see a distinct connection between "The Ecstasy" and *Persuasion.* Tracing five stages within each, I draw parallels between Donne's verse and Austen's narrative, arguing that Jane Austen's *Persuasion* investigates what happens when an ecstasy is interrupted. The novel asks the question of what it means to be a soul with limited access to a body or a body severed from a soul. Reflected in the structure of the novel and in the free indirect discourse that draws us close to the character of Anne Elliot, the limited connection to a body also indicates a limited connection to time. Time exists as a duality in *Persuasion*: God's Time and Social Time. When a poised person does not complete an ecstasy of love, and is left in an ecstasy of heartache, his or her being is disconnected and limited. *Persuasion* illustrates how a soul with limited connection to a body and to Social Time is able to transform and rebuild connection. This transformation, however, is only accessible with the right motivation. When Captain Wentworth is reintroduced into Anne Elliot's life, the man who she had rejected eight years before by ending their engagement, she finds that she is unable fully to communicate with him. With renewed motivation, Anne improves herself through five stages of the novel ultimately to repair her connection to time and attempt to reach poise by reversing her ecstasy of heartache with Captain Wentworth through a complete ecstasy of love. I argue that, in *Persuasion,* a character must attempt to fix what was broken through a connection to time, recognizing his or her own emotions so as to be with another through an ecstasy of love (as described in "The Ecstasy"*).*

Worth for Austen is not established through social rank or rules, but through the true connection with oneself. This true connection gives Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth the ability to connect, fully, with another person.

We know that at the time she was writing *Persuasion,* Austen was dying. In a biographical memoir written by her nephew, James Edward Austen Leigh, he notes of Austen's illness "by God's mercy it was not attended with much suffering; so that she was able to tell her friends...and perhaps, sometimes persuade herself that, excepting want of strength, she was 'otherwise very well;' but the progress of the disease became more and more manifest as the year advanced" (156). Austen knew that she was sick, but did not know what was killing her. In a letter to a friend she attempts to play down the seriousness of her illness: "I have certainly gained strength through the winter and am not far from being well; and I think I understand my own care now so much better than I did, as to be able to care to keep off any serious return of illness..."(159). A certain level of denial might be expected in the case of an unknown sickness. As she wrote *Persuasion* she experienced the first of the symptoms, and soon illness overtook her. She finished *Persuasion* in August. March 17 of the next year was the last time she worked on a manuscript. In this respect, Jane Austen shares with John Donne a concern with death and dying. Donne "struggled throughout his life with the fear of death" (Targoff 106). Most of his poems (especially the sonnets) are concerned with the relationship of body and soul and salvation found in God. Donne was so obsessed with death that towards the end of his career as a minister he delivered his own funeral oration. Rising from his sickbed, he preached *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions: Together With Death's Duel.*

> And so in this sense of the words, this exitus mortis, the issues of death, is liberatio in morte, a deliverance in death; not that For will deliver us from dying, but that he will

> have a care of us in the hour of death, of what kind soever our passage be. And in this sense and acceptation of the words, the natural frame and contexture doth well and pregnantly administer unto us. And then, lastly, the contigination and knitting of this building, that he is our God is the God of all salvations, consists in this, Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death, that is, that this God the Lord having untied and knit both natures in one, and being God, having also come into this world in our flesh, he could have no other means to save us, he could have no other issues out of this world, nor return to his former glory, but by death (132).

Donne attempts to reason out death--that death is inevitable. God's son had to die to rise again. Flesh must die before the spirit is able to rise up. Death is the vehicle for the soul to rise out of the body in order to reach God. In a sense, death is deliverance. And while it is natural, and even the son of God had to go through it, Donne is still terrified by death. Even though the body and soul are "knit" together with death as the uniting agent, it still does not surpass the issue and "contexture" of death as finality. As the "hour of death" and a "passage", death is "liberatio in morte" to the soul but alarming to Donne as a man,

Donne famously explored death in his series *The Holy Sonnets.* Within this group of fourteen-line poems, "Donne's fears fall squarely on his hopes for salvation. It is here he confronts the flawed nature of his physical and spiritual being. It is here he questions what will become of him not in the grave, but in the aftermath of resurrection" (Targoff 106). Donne's concerns with his spiritual well-being were always understood in terms of his physical well being. Through the three quatrains and one rhyming couplet Donne frames his own questions and anxieties about death in I. of his *Holy Sonnets.*

> THOU hast made me, and shall Thy work decay ?
> Repair me now, for now mine end doth haste ;
> I run to death, and Death meets me as fast,
> And all my pleasures are like yesterday.
> I dare not move my dim eyes any way ;
> Despair behind, and Death before doth cast
> Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste
> By sin in it, which it towards hell doth weigh.
> Only Thou art above, and when towards Thee
> By Thy leave I can look, I rise again ;
> But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,
> That not one hour myself I can sustain.
> Thy grace may wing me to prevent his art
> And thou like adamant draw mine iron heart (Donne).

Calling into question mortality, creation, and damnation, it is the last three lines that would have spoken to Austen in her final days. "That not one hour myself I can sustain/Thy grace may wing me to prevent his art/And thou like adamant draw mine iron heart" emphasizes the futility of existence and the imperviousness of God's will within the Anglican tradition. Donne runs "to death" through life and living, creating and composing, yet "Death meets [him] as fast." By living with "feeble flesh" Donne questions if life is a "waste." If Death wastes man through life, should not "THOU," or God, "Repair [him] now, for now mine end doth hast;" is not this waste a critical problem for life itself? Through the sonnet, Donne wonders and attempts to reason that there must be a life after Death. That man must take on another form, whether it be in heaven, hell, or on Judgment day: "By Thy leave I can look, I rise again." Grappling with his own ideas of life and living, death and dying, heaven and hell Donne starts his Holy Sonnets by posing the main question that is a theme throughout his work: is there a meaningful connection between body and soul?

Jane Austen was not a stranger to death. She experienced the death of her mother, her sister-in-law Elizabeth Knight, her mentor Mrs. Lefroy, and her father. She writes in a letter to her brother Frank about the death of her father:

> Our dear father has closed his virtuous and happy life, in a death almost as free from suffering as his Children could have wished…Dr. Gibbs said that nothing but a Miracle could save him, and about twenty minutes after Ten he drew his last gasp. Heavy as is the blow, we can already feel that a thousand comforts remain to us to soften it. Next to that of the consciousness of his worth and constant preparation for another World, is the remembrance of his having suffered, comparatively speaking, nothing. Being quite insensible of his own state, he was spared all the pain of separation, and he went off almost in his Sleep (Austen ed. Le Faye 100).

Austen's experience of the death of others struck a seriousness and religious tone within her letters. Explaining her father's death to her brother, she reflects on his "virtuous and happy life" and is thankful that he did not "suffer…" while he passed. Austen attempts to find the good in the tragic, noting that George Austen's children "can already feel that a thousand comforts remain to us to soften [his death]." Death is a frightening prospect to Austen; but it is not a catastrophic event as it is to Donne. In her father's death Austen notes that "he was spared all the pain of separation" of his soul escaping his body for heaven and taking leave of his loved ones on earth. Separation of the body and the soul can be a painful process, as it is for Anne Elliot and Fredrick Wentworth, in alone seemingly broken or it can be a peaceful one in Death.

Suffering from a mysterious illness, Jane Austen initially distanced herself from the figure of the sick woman. Austen used illness as a target for her wit. Not lamenting or fearing death in her letters or writings directly, Austen does not approach her condition as Donne did. As critic Roger Sales observes:

> Austen contrived to mock the figure of the sick woman almost to the end. She described her state of health in March 1817 to Fanny Knight in the famous letter in which she

> discusses 'pictures of perfections': I have had a good deal of fever at times and indifferent nights, but am considerably better now and recovering my looks a little, which have been bad enough, black and white and every wrong colour. I must not depend upon being very blooming again. Sickness is a dangerous indulgence at my time of life (Sales 51, Austen 487).

We will never know why Austen approached *Persuasion* from a completely different perspective than her other novels, which were consistent in form. Using the word "bloom" to describe her own faltering looks and fading health here, Austen recalls her description of Anne Elliot. In a letter to her niece Fanny Knight on 23 March 1817 she writes: "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" (Austen & Le Fay 207). Referring to Anne Elliot as a heroine who is "almost too good for me" she also recognizes that her niece "will not like [the novel]." Penning a novel that that begins where others end and drawing theology and poetry together as a foundation for form, Austen approached *Persuasion* with a mood of resignation and even elegy. Critic Kay Young agrees in their article "Feeling Embodied:" "If there is ever a moment for Austen to feel pressed (by her losing ground with life) and able (by her maturity of life) to write a language of love, the writing of *Persuasion* is that moment" (79). *Persuasion* is Jane Austen's final work of love; she is penning a language of love. She already anticipates that her reader may not like the narrative. Yet Austen confronted her own mortality to write a book unlike any other.

Persuasion is often considered Jane Austen's "autumnal" novel. Concerned with loss and mourning, Austen, by extension, is concerned with the fragility of life and love. Though it is not obviously a religious novel, *Persuasion* also is aware of the fragility of body and soul, and the pain of separation through ecstasy. Austen's awareness of death and mortality in *Persuasion*

through the exploration of the tension between body and soul, recalls the funeral image of found at the end of the fifth stanza of “The Ecstasy:” “And whilst our souls negotiate there,/ We like sepulchral statues lay.” The image of a tomb in Donne’s poem recalls a burial fissuring, the lovers as effigies even as their “souls negotiate.” Through ecstasy or death, the soul and body will separate and mortality is inevitable. Henry Austen notes in Jane’s biographical notice that her sister, Cassandra, cared for Jane on her deathbed: “The day preceding her death she composed some stanzas replete with fancy and vigour. Her last voluntary speech conveyed thanks to her medical attendant [Cassandra Austen]; and to the final question asked of her, purporting to know her wants, she replied, "I want nothing but death." (192).

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