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The discourse of gratitude in the novels of Jane Austen

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THE DISCOURSE OF GRATITUDE IN THE NOVELS OF JANE AUSTEN

BY

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BA, Amherst College, 1953
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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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in

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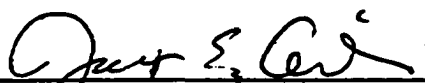
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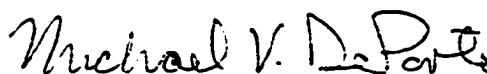
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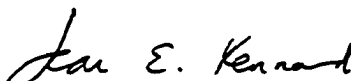
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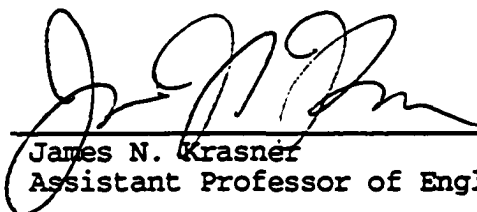
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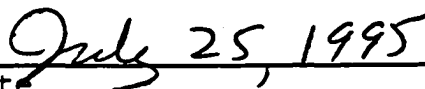
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DEDICATION

To Wendy. There can be no other choice.

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Many have helped me bring this study to its present state, which I hesitate to call a "conclusion" even as I hesitate to single out individuals, since so many have lent their aid at critical moments. However, foremost must be the Chair of my committee, Professor Janet Aikins, assisted by Professor James Krasner, who have worked tirelessly with a multitude of drafts and have always been supportive and encouraging. Behind them are many members of the Department of English, not all directly involved with this effort, but on whom I have often leaned for knowledge and motivation. Among these, Professor Sarah Sherman's friendship and counsel frequently have helped me get over the sometimes rocky road of graduate study.

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PREFACE

In Henry Fielding's Tom Jones: The Novelist as Moral Philosopher (Sussex University, 1975), Bernard Harrison distinguishes his approach from other "scholarly literary history" that deals with "philosophical and theological influences."

An idea is not a self-contained item of negotiable intellectual currency: it does not have a settled value and significance inscribed upon it like a bank-note or a share-certificate. The life of ideas is in systems of thought, and the same idea may take on a radically different weight and significance when transferred from one such system to another. This is something which influence-tracing as an activity undervalues: it is subject to an inevitable temptation to suppose that when we have assembled the influences bearing upon a writer we have understood his mind; whereas what we have done is often merely to assemble the materials upon which his mind worked to produce a structure yet to be comprehended. The temptation, in short, is always to regard the recipient of an older idea as a passive exponent of it, and to reserve originality for the original begetter, neglecting the truth that thought is not a matter of juxtaposing but of articulating ideas, and that originality in thought consists as much in the articulation as in the materials articulated. (22)

These comments are appropriate to my study of Jane Austen's novels, particularly because of the ironic paradox between Harrison's "original begetter" and his universal masculine author. Both must, it would seem, bring forth new ideas in a sort of parthenogenesis. Would a woman author, then, be disqualified as a "begetter" and limited to that of a "passive exponent" of the "originality" of a predecessor who "bear(s)" upon her? Austen would have fun with Harrison's metaphor, and might play with it comically as she mocks the sententiousness

or conceit of Messrs. Collins and Darcy in Pride and Prejudice.

The vocabulary of eighteenth-century moralist texts offers the same masculine universals as does Harrison, but I claim that Austen insists on gender equity in her dramas to challenge the inscribed masculinity of the discourse. Moral partnership for men and women is critical for the world facing her Regency characters and audience. Central to Austen's reshaping of the discourse, as I argue, is the role of gratitude, traditionally an oppressive duty "bearing" most heavily on women. In the novels, however, gratitude transcends gender and is revealed to be a virtue that graces and makes possible the future happiness which the novels implicitly promise.

Happiness, for Austen, seems to be the standard for evaluating decisions by their consequences, which is also the standard for Francis Hutcheson, whom Harrison would term the "original begetter" of the ideas that Austen's novels shape and transform. As I discuss, a number of scholars consider that Hutcheson's primary, if not exclusive, test of virtue by consequences classifies him as an early apostle of utilitarianism, and at least one of the readers of this dissertation expresses "shock" that Austen, then, might be identified as an early Benthamite. I am not a student of Bentham, and my impressions of his theories are conditioned by Foucault's presentation of prison design in Discipline and Punish, which seems at first like a long stretch from Austen, although Austen does caution us not to rely on first impressions.

Other scholars may wish to explore the possible connection of Austen with later utilitarianism, and perhaps try to locate the architecture of happiness in the structure of the prison.

My reading of Austen is didactic, a critical approach that has not been particularly popular in recent years. I believe Austen is seriously concerned about the values her society has espoused in the past and that she tries to show, through the workings of gratitude, how people might continue to join together in loving and virtuous bonds. My approach probably is close to that of Jan Fergus and of Maaja Stewart, whose recent work, Domestic Realities and Imperial Fictions: Jane Austen's Novels in Eighteenth-Century Contexts

(University of Georgia, 1993), pays more attention to the role of gratitude than it has attracted from most scholars. Although I disagree with many of Stewart's ideas, I think it is more significant that we may be participating in an important new debate that recognizes Austen as a major voice in the history of philosophical and moral discourse.

People have asked me why I want to talk about Jane Austen. My answer is, simply, that she is at the same time the wisest and funniest writer I know. Her humor reveals her wisdom. This dissertation cannot possibly do justice to my continuing delight in the short shelf of books she composed in an equally short lifetime.

Durham, New Hampshire
July, 1995.

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ABSTRACT

THE DISCOURSE OF GRATITUDE IN THE NOVELS OF JANE AUSTEN

by

William G. Sayres

University of New Hampshire, September, 1995

Jane Austen is preeminently the novelist of gratitude, and no substantive noun of similar moral content recurs in these texts with the frequency of "gratitude." Gratitude has enormous power in her novels. It is a necessary precursor of love in the formation of bonds between men and women, and no "good" mutual love is possible unless it evolves through the process of gratitude. For successful marriages, gratitude is even more necessary than love. Among the scholars who focus on significant terms in Austen novels, few give more than passing attention to gratitude or to the massive volume of eighteenth-century moralist texts that wrestle with gratitude's role in the discourse of virtue. Internal and external evidence confirm Austen's understanding of this discourse, particularly the texts of the "moral sense" philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) and of the Anglican bishop Thomas Sherlock (1678-1761).

Those scholars who do discuss gratitude in Austen tend to see it as the acceptance and approval of subordination to authority, necessary to correct humanity's essential depravity and selfishness, a long standing theosophical view in classical and Christianized philosophical discourse, and

which shadows the debate between Edmund Burke and William Godwin at the onset of the French Revolution. But Austen distances herself from older theosophical views, as well as from the Burke-Godwin debate itself, and instead uses Hutcheson, who believes in humanity's essential goodness, to transform gratitude into a virtue and guide for achieving happiness in this life, rather than to avoid punishment in the next.

Gratitude is closely linked with benevolence, traditionally an aristocratic virtue, but Hutcheson's biographer, William Robert Scott, argues that Hutcheson "democratizes" the Third Earl of Shaftesbury's elitist philosophy of benevolence. Hutcheson's theories, as well as the "practical Christianity" of Thomas Sherlock's Discourses, seem to support the same goal of human happiness that Austen's novels also endorse as the standard of moral virtue. Driving the moral thrust of her narrative seems to be confidence that, through gratitude, men and women can overcome social and gender structures that stand in the way of happiness.

CHAPTER I

THE VOCABULARY OF VIRTUE: GRATITUDE AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Gratitude energizes the moral world of all Jane Austen's novels, and no substantive noun of similar moral content recurs in these texts with the frequency of "gratitude."¹ Austen grants enormous power to gratitude. It is a necessary precursor of love in the formation of bonds between men and women, and no "good" mutual love is possible unless it evolves through the process of gratitude. For successful marriages, gratitude is even more necessary than love. A number of scholars have discussed what seem to them to be significant terms in Austen novels, yet none gives more than passing attention to gratitude² or to the massive volume of eighteenth-century moralist texts that wrestle with gratitude's role in the discourse of virtue. Internal and external evidence confirm Austen's understanding of this discourse, particularly the contributions of the "moral sense" philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) and of the Anglican bishop Thomas Sherlock (1678-1761).³ Austen, however, goes beyond Hutcheson's theory that gratitude is a variety of benevolence. Instead, she reshapes gratitude as the central continuing and positive value for the moral life. Driving the moral thrust of her narrative seems to be confidence that, through gratitude, men and women can overcome social and gender structures that stand in the way of happiness.

The moral discourse in which Austen, Sherlock, and Hutcheson participate is grounded in religious belief, a subject in Austen studies that has been approached warily. The allusions in novels and letters to attendance at "divine services," as well as comments on sermons and discussions of clerical duties, are all evidence that Austen observed at least the forms of religion and that the same could be expected of her characters. However, her religious commentary seems generally confined to character portrayals, often unflattering, of clerical figures, but which do not invite inferences about the offices they represent. Scholars tend to respond to the absence of more overt religious discussion by shrugging it off as not germane to their studies. Gilbert Ryle, for example, observes that Austen "draws a curtain between her Sunday thoughts, whatever they were, and her creative imagination."⁴ Recently, however, there seems to be more interest in drawing aside Ryle's "curtain." Bruce Stovel writes about the usefulness of Jane Austen's published prayers for understanding her novels, and Irene Collins has published a sympathetic biographical work, Jane Austen and the Clergy, which connects the novels with her life-long close involvement with the church and clergy.⁵ As with Hutcheson and Sherlock, I believe that Austen's ideas about benevolence and gratitude must be understood in relation to their religious sources and foundation.

The few scholars who do discuss gratitude in Austen tend to see gratitude as the acceptance and approval of subordina-

tion to authority, and misread Austen as they misunderstand how she transforms gratitude. Gratitude, according to these scholars, is repressive for the underclass, both women and the working poor. The view of gratitude as subordination has a long history in classical and Christianized philosophical discourse as well as in fiction prior to Austen. In 1740 the moralist George Turnbull saw social and economic inequalities as desirable for the flowering of virtue.

. . . [W]hat can be happier than deficiencies and wants, which are the foundation of so many and so great goods [such as] generosity and kindness, gratitude and reliance?⁶

When Squire Allworthy in Tom Jones condemns the game-keeper, Black George, not so much for stealing Tom's purse, but for "the black Ingratitude of this Fellow toward you,"⁷ he justifies punishment more for violating the relationship of servant and master than for a penal offence. Had the case been set in Swift's Lilliput, punishment would have been assured, since the Lilliputians made ingratitude a capital offence.⁸ Gratitude becomes a mechanism for controlling behavior of the lower classes and may be considered, in Foucault's terms, one of the "disciplines" that constitutes an "infra-law."⁹ The justification of punishment for perceived ingratitude reflects a skeptical view of human nature as inherently selfish and assumes that sanctions are necessary to enforce morality in a system of fixed class hierarchies. In philosophy, Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville also base their systems on the selfish view of human nature.

Hutcheson intrudes into this discourse as the eighteenth-century leader of "universal benevolence" moral philosophy, opposed to that of Hobbes and Mandeville. He was born into a dissenting Ulster family, and in 1710 entered the University of Glasgow, where he spent six years, then returned to head a private academy in Dublin. Leechman writes that he taught "for seven or eight years with great reputation and success,"¹⁰ then joined the faculty of the University of Glasgow in 1729 for the remainder of his life. In 1724, he published "Reflections on our Common Systems of Morality" in The London Journal, followed a year later by An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. The lengthy title goes on to claim that "In Two Treatises . . . The Principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury are explain'd and defended, against the Author of the Fable of the Bees: . .

.¹¹ Shaftesbury argues that humans have a natural propensity to virtue, for the same reason that we have a sense of beauty, which we approve, just as we recoil from vice as from ugliness. Mandeville, following Hobbes, argues the reverse, that people are naturally selfish.

Hutcheson avoids reliance on Shaftesbury's aesthetic analogy, and instead supports his claim that people are not naturally selfish but instinctively benevolent by an appeal to common experience. In the closest personal relations, benevolence is at its most intense and fuses with the reciprocal force of gratitude, a process important to Austen's dramas. Before Hutcheson's re-working of these ideas, grati-

tude had been approved as an admirable and obligatory duty to benefactors. But unlike benevolence, gratitude had never been recognized as either an "official" cardinal or theological virtue. Hutcheson, however, elevates it to a level of equal virtue with benevolence. William Robert Scott claims that the Inquiry "begins to democratize Shaftesbury's philosophy," which is "aristocratically esoteric" and "addresses . . . 'gentlemen of fashion.'"¹² The equalization of benevolence, usually an aristocratic virtue, with gratitude also seems to "democratize" the interaction of gentry and bourgeoisie in Austen's novels.

Hutcheson is also the principal developer and champion of the "moral sense" theory of ethics, a term first used casually by Shaftesbury, but which Hutcheson makes the principal motivator of behavior. Although Hutcheson states that he is an advocate for Shaftesbury and is not offering anything new, Adam Smith, Hutcheson's student at the University of Glasgow, gives him credit for originating the moral sense theory, which differs from Shaftesbury in substituting for the aesthetic link of virtue and beauty the idea that there is a separate, stand-alone "moral sense," which is as real as any of Locke's five senses. For Hutcheson, "divine grace" is the source of our "moral sense." He observes that people seem to have a "Sentiment" that approves "the Perception of moral Excellence, . . ."

And that Power of receiving these Perceptions may be called a Moral Sense, since the Definition agrees to

it, viz. a Determination of the Mind, to receive any Idea from the Presence of an Object, which occurs to us, independently on [sic] our Will.¹³

The moral sense reveals itself in virtuous feelings, foremost of which are benevolence and gratitude. Virtue is quantified, since the "Virtue" of an "Action . . . is in proportion to the Number of Persons to whom the Happiness shall extend." This theorem leads to its corollary, "that Action is best, which accomplishes the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers."¹⁴ D. D. Raphael observes that "Hutcheson appears to be the first to use this explicit formulation of the Utilitarian doctrine."¹⁵

Hutcheson also distances himself from Shaftesbury by insisting that the revealed truth of Christianity is fundamental to his philosophy. Although he commends Shaftesbury for giving "the best and most elegant account" of "the social nature of man," the subject of Hutcheson's Inaugural Lecture at the University of Glasgow (1730), he acknowledges that "in other respects he [Shaftesbury] is liable to censure from the theologians." Hutcheson's theocentrism is also the principle difference between his ideas and those of his admirer, follower, and correspondent, David Hume, revealed in a 1739 exchange of letters. John Mullan points out that the decorum of the correspondence masks this basic conflict.

But for the fundamentally friendly nature of this exchange, Hume might have added that whereas Hutcheson's moralism could look to the final proofs of religion, his own 'experimental' philosophy recognized only the facts of a world without external sanctions or purposes.¹⁶

Nevertheless, Hutcheson's philosophy, as well as his identification with Shaftesbury, exposed him to attacks from both the dissenting Presbyterian theocracy, of which he was a member by birth and education, and also to attempted legal prosecution by the Archbishop's court of the Anglican Church of Ireland. Scott writes that "[a]t this time it was a bold act to have placed Shaftesbury's name on the title-page of the Inquiry--in fact, Shaftesbury was then the bête noire of the combative theologian."¹⁷ Hutcheson's religious orthodoxy was also challenged by other moralists, including contemporaries John Balguy and Bishop Joseph Butler (possibly the "combative theologian" cited by Scott) as well as by John Wesley in sermons as late as 1788. The main points of contention are Hutcheson's measure of virtue by its contribution to human happiness, rather than by divine law, his belief that human nature is essentially good, not depraved, and that feelings are superior to reason as a guide to virtuous behavior. Except for consistent rejection of Hobbes and Mandeville in his writings, Hutcheson's comments on other moralists mix approval and criticism of his immediate predecessors, Cumberland and Puffendorf, and of Cicero among the ancients. He also responds in later published works to John Balguy, and carries on a debate in letters published in The London Journal with Gilbert Burnet.

Thomas Mautner observes that Hutcheson's religious views were those of "the Moderate party," in contrast with "the orthodox-conservative Evangelical party in the Church of

Scotland." Mautner associates such views with Anglican latitudinarians, and as they "slowly gained acceptance among the Scottish and Irish Presbyterians, . . . Hutcheson became their most significant early advocate."¹⁸ Despite scholarly disagreement over the definition of latitudinarianism and its influence, there clearly was an Anglican movement in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries that was opposed to the Evangelical theology of man's naturally depraved nature and innate sinfulness, which could only be redeemed through faith and repentance. By contrast, the so-called "latitudinarian" doctrine insisted that people generally were well-motivated, and by their own efforts could lead both a godly and happy life, pleasing to God and helpful to their fellow humans through charitable works and virtuous conduct.

Such views closely complement those of Francis Hutcheson and are also found in the writings and career of Thomas Sherlock whose sermons Austen praises in an 1814 letter to Anna Austen.¹⁹ Sherlock's biographer Edward Carpenter, writing in 1936 for the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," observes that "Sherlock is an able exponent of the claims of a practical religion" who is "opposed to 'Enthusiasm' in religion."²⁰ While Sherlock endorses benevolent feelings and conduct, he is concerned to establish their authority in scripture. Against the deistic attack on revealed religion, Sherlock re-focused religious thought to search for the "his-

torical Jesus"²¹ in such works as his Trial of the Witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus (1729).

Anglican latitudinarian religious thought has its antecedents in the late seventeenth-century "Cambridge Platonists," whose ideas Basil Willey recognizes as anticipating eighteenth-century "'moral sense' philosophies," joining philosophy and religion in a union, so that reason and faith mutually support each other. In their objective both of refuting Hobbes's "selfish" theory, as well as Calvinist predestination doctrine, they sought to offer a pragmatic moral code with a humanitarian focus that emphasizes benevolence as charitable works. Doctrinally, they occupy a "middle" position between the High Church and the Puritans, and share a common philosophical ground with the benevolence moralists, especially, I would emphasize, with Hutcheson.²²

The scholarly debate about what constituted "latitudinarianism" is incorporated in essays by R. S. Crane, Donald Greene, and Frans de Bruyn (1981),²³ which address a larger controversy over the nature and importance of eighteenth-century "sentiment" and "sensibility," which I discuss later in connection with the place of Henry Mackenzie in Austen's philosophy. De Bruyn's review of latitudinarianism goes back to the origin of the term and the meaning recognized by early apologists, as well as critics, which strongly emphasizes charitable works and "the ecumenical spirit." Those caught up in this movement reflected "their self-conscious sense of novelty" in their writings.

[E]ven the terminology used in their sermons conveys this sense of newness. Time and again the latitudinarians relied on the language of the new science--the language of Newton and Locke--to explicate their doctrines. ²⁴

"The language of Newton and Locke" is also aggressively employed by Hutcheson. He leans on Newtonian mechanics to explain how the moral sense promotes benevolence, which increases in proportion to the degree of intimacy that people have with each other, and he employs a series of algebraic proofs to demonstrate this theory in the first three editions of the Inquiry.²⁵

Locke also argued that it should be possible to prove virtue mathematically.

They that are ignorant of algebra cannot imagine the wonders in this kind are to be done by it: . . . This at least I believe, that the ideas of quantity are not those alone that are capable of demonstration and knowledge; . . . and [the nature of God and "ourselves"], if duly considered and pursued, . . . might place morality amongst the sciences capable of demonstration: wherein I doubt not but from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences, as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to any one that will apply himself with the same indifferency and attention to the one, as he does to the other of these sciences.²⁶

Hutcheson's attempt at moral mathematics exposed him to some ridicule, such as the mockery Scott attributes to Laurence Sterne.

Hutcheson, in his philosophic treatise on beauty, harmony and order, plus's and minus's you to heaven or hell, by algebraic equations--so that none but an expert mathematician can ever be able to settle his accounts with S. Peter--and perhaps S. Matthew, who had been an officer in the customs, must be called in to audit them.²⁷

When Hutcheson abandons this apparent attempt to take up Locke's challenge in the fourth edition, he explains that "some Mathematical Expressions are left out, which, upon second Thoughts, appear'd useless, and were disagreeable to some Readers."²⁸ Even at this point (1738), it may be that the influence of "sentiment" was making moral mathematics unappealing, even though Jane Austen later found Hutcheson's math useful to suggest Emma's moral transgression against Miss Bates.

De Bruyn backs Crane against Donald Greene on the theory that sentimental moral philosophy can trace its sources in latitudinarianism, but I think the debate gets into a quagmire on the shifting and overlapping interpretations of "sentimentalism" and "sensibility." I cannot draw a line that this massive scholarship has failed to inscribe, but Austen does use both terms, and "sensibility" quite clearly suggests understanding through the "senses," or feeling guided by reason. "Sentiment" and its derivatives imply feelings that have lost their moorings in reason, as personified by the incomplete and weakened figure of the sighing romantic, Captain Benwick, in Persuasion, a character whose prototype may be found in James and Henry Austen's periodical The Loiterer, which Jane Austen appears to have read, and to which she may have contributed while in her teens.

Hutcheson's A System of Moral Philosophy and Thomas Sherlock's Several Discourses preached at the Temple Church are both reviewed approvingly by Hugh Blair in the 1755 first

edition of the original Edinburgh Review, joining in one volume three writers important to Austen.²⁹ Blair's reviews clearly see no religious incompatibility between fellow Presbyterian Hutcheson and the Anglican bishop, Sherlock, which tends to support Mautner's claim for Hutcheson's importance to the liberal Anglican movement dubbed "latitudinarianism."

Sherlock was born into a politically visible church family. His father had been Dean of St. Paul's and "Master of the Temple," essentially the regular preacher and religious overseer of that institution of lawyers. Thomas succeeded his father in the post in 1705, and with such a congregation may have sharpened his own legal knowledge, demonstrated later in his theological courtroom drama, The Trial of the Witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus (1729), which went through eighteen editions during the next one hundred years. In a rapidly rising career, Sherlock became chaplain to Queen Anne and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge.

Both Sherlocks were strong Tories, and Thomas's career was interrupted by the consequences of his pamphlet, Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, as well as his opposition to the essentially Evangelical doctrine of "Sincerity" advocated by King George I's appointee, Bishop Hoadley. This confrontation put him at odds with Robert Walpole's Whig administration and cost him his royal chaplaincy. He managed to regain favor, however, and his upward mobility resumed with successive appointments as Bishop of

Bangor, Salisbury, and London, although he declined the offer of "the primacy," i.e., Archbishop of Canterbury. This political adaptability of the Sherlocks is celebrated in a contemporary jingle.

As Sherlock the elder, by his jure divine
 Did not comply till the Battle of Boyne;
 So Sherlock the younger still made it a question
 Which side he would take till the Battle of Preston.³⁰

As did his father in 1690, Thomas apparently kept his options open until the collapse of the ill-supported rising of 1715.

Sherlock's attack on Hoadley also brought him in conflict with John Balguy, who defended Hoadley's doctrine of "Sincerity" with the same appeal to "reason" he used in attacking Hutcheson's moral sense theory. "Reason," for Balguy, is deductive, leading to the knowledge of a priori truth revealed in Scripture. Sherlock argues that, if "Sincerity" is the ultimate test of a Christian, there would be no way of "converting a Papist," whose erroneous belief is supported by "Sincerity." Balguy replies that a "Papist" is not "sincere" if he refuses to listen to "reason."³¹ Sherlock and Hutcheson, then, joined admiringly by Blair, also share in Balguy a mutual opponent. Their common offense seems to be their shared belief that the workable usefulness of principles in the world testifies to their religious merit and moral worth, not their conformity with a priori divine authority, deduced by "reason."

Sherlock's sermons argue for the reconciling of frequently opposing viewpoints, including the common basis of "natural religion" and the "gospel;" "sense" and "reason" as

both gifts of God; and the need for good works to supplement faith in order to achieve salvation. He is vocal against "enthusiasm," which he sees as divisive and one-sided in its negative view of human nature and rejection of good works. He strongly urges Christian charity, and advises his audience to agonize less over the purity of their motives, and to be more concerned with the positive effects of their benevolence on others. His focus on charity matches Hutcheson's elevation of benevolence, and his test of virtue by its effects seems close to the relativism of Hutcheson's proto-utilitarian approach.

Jane Austen's Tory family may well have approved Sherlock's record of early resistance to the Hanoverian Whigs, and discounted his later compliance as the practical recognition of political pressure to conform. Anglicans Overton and Relton in their 1906 history show that the Church hierarchy's accommodation with the Hanoverian succession created a split between the clergy and church leaders.

The great mass of the inferior clergy were in their heart of hearts in favour of James the Pretender, while the dignitaries, as in duty bound, were in favour of George . . . and the result was a growing alienation between the higher and lower clergy.³²

There are no strident pronouncements on record by the Austen family clergy on this issue, but Jane Austen's Stuart idolatry at age fifteen is trumpeted in her "History of England" and it seems reasonable to assume that her views were not inconsistent with those of her family.

However, by the time of the third Hanoverian monarch, and the permanent end of Jacobite restoration efforts, the urgency of the issue had subsided, and the appeal to Austen of Sherlock's sermons, which say nothing about claims to the Crown, seems to have little to do with sympathetic Toryism. Austen's letter expressing her enjoyment of Sherlock's sermons probably refers to the 1812 Clarendon edition of his works, which were collected and published thirteen times between 1754 and 1830, not counting the separate editions of Trial of the Witnesses mentioned above.

Jane Austen's "dear Dr. Johnson" also admires Sherlock. Boswell asks Johnson for his opinion on "the best English sermons for style," and Johnson's reaction to Sherlock is that "his style too is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study." "Sherlock's Sermons" is also the only sermon collection included on a list of thirty books on various topics recommended by Johnson to a clergyman "for his studies."³³ The "style" admired by Johnson apparently grated on John Balguy, who in attacking Sherlock criticizes his "Stile" as a "Satyrical Way of Writing by no means proper for Divines," who should "be content to imitate the Simplicity of the Gospel."³⁴ It seems not unlikely, however, that Sherlock's "style" might have been a factor in Austen's professed admiration.

Sherlock and Hutcheson together represent the full development of the first of what Isabel Rivers sees as "two

crucial shifts in ideas" that "took place" in the later seventeenth century.

The first is an emphasis in Anglican thought on the capacity of human reason and free will to co-operate with divine grace in order to achieve the happy and holy life. This optimistic portrait of human nature represents a rejection of the orthodox Reformation tradition, which stresses the depravity of human nature. . . . The second is the attempt to divorce ethics from religion, . . .³⁵

Clearly, neither Sherlock nor Hutcheson participate in Rivers's "second" category. Hutcheson, however, does seem to acknowledge reason as an ally and monitor for the judgment of feeling: "When the moral Sense is thus assisted by a sound Understanding and Application, our own Actions may be a constant Source of solid Pleasure, . . ."³⁶ Scott comments on this and other gestures to reason.

It will thus be seen that Hutcheson assigns an important if somewhat vague position to reason in the process attending moral decisions. In fact so far from reason being 'expressly excluded,' it has the function of 'assisting,' even of 'governing' the Moral Sense . . .³⁷

Austen, too, seems to recognize that reason and feelings should work in concert to guide conduct, but in case of conflict, she grants authority to the feelings. An early scene in Pride and Prejudice situates gratitude in relation to the conflict of feeling or sentiment versus a priori obligation, deduced by reason. Darcy's affirmation of love is received by an astonished Elizabeth Bennet with unexpected hostility.

In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It is natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could feel gratitude, I would now thank you.

But I cannot--I have never desired your good opinion,
and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly.³⁸

Elizabeth acknowledges that gratitude is an "obligation" but, rather paradoxically, also "natural" and based on feeling, a paradox which rests squarely on the same dichotomy offered in Samuel Johnson's 1755 Dictionary definitions: "1. Duty to benefactors. . . . 2. Desire to return benefits."³⁹

"Obligation" points toward the pervasive and ancient moral discourse of rights and duties, but the primacy Elizabeth gives instead to her feelings ("feel" is underlined in the text) suggests the "moral sense" approach of Hutcheson's An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil.⁴⁰ This and other Hutcheson works may be read as a running moral commentary on Austen's dramatic narrative, which in turn seems to test and probe for the strengths and weaknesses in Hutcheson's philosophy.

Except for conduct book literature, Mary Poovey appears to dismiss the moralist texts important to Austen as inaccessible to modern audiences.

The special resonances and impact that her contemporaries sensed in the statements and situations of Austen's novels are dim or absent altogether for twentieth-century readers.⁴¹

The term "gratitude" today has an antiquarian ring, yet this study claims that understanding its meaning for Jane Austen is essential to understanding her novels. The challenge, then, is to access a defunct and lost moral universe, and to revivify it for the modern scholar.

The term "moralist" has an even more antiquarian ring than "gratitude," and its connotation today might be somewhat disparaging, as suggesting hypocrisy or a "holier-than-thou attitude." The O.E.D.'s first definition, "One who practices morality," even quotes ironic usages in the eighteenth century and earlier that reflect a similar attitude. But the first and only definition in Samuel Johnson's Dictionary is "One who teaches the duties of life," which is echoed in the O.E.D.'s second definition, "A teacher or student of morals; a moral philosopher," and there were legions of them in addition to Hutcheson. Although debating among each other in books, letters, pamphlets, and journals, their shared project was opposition to the "selfish" theories which were also perceived as irreligious, particularly those of Thomas Hobbes.

By melding classical philosophy with Christian doctrine, they sought to produce a workable theory of morals grounded in religion, and differed among each other primarily on the relative authority of feeling or reason. For David Norton, Hutcheson's argument with the advocates for reason "was a dispute among friends--the friends of virtue--concerning the foundations of morality."⁴² Hutcheson strives to formulate moral principles which have a general applicability, while Sherlock is more concerned with the practical applicability of moral principles than with motives, including benevolence as expressed through the paramount Christian virtue of charity.

Sherlock suggests that the "act of charity" itself is of more moral significance than introspective anxiety about "special motives" and that virtue can be, at least tentatively, deduced from its effects. Since consequences in terms of personal happiness is also Hutcheson's "bottom line," he and Sherlock seem to agree in essentials. Particularly in Emma and Persuasion, the last two novels, Austen seems to move toward this pragmatic approach to virtue. The novels, then, engage in a dialogic triad of dramatic text with the works of Hutcheson and Sherlock, with gratitude the unifying focus.

Over forty years after the deaths of Hutcheson and Sherlock, and during Jane Austen's young adulthood, the role of gratitude becomes a point of contention between Edmund Burke and William Godwin in the larger debate about rights and duties in the contemporary context of the French Revolution. Godwin's Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (1793, rev. 1796, 1798) is a direct rebuttal to Burke's Reflections on the Revolution on France (1790). Godwin's contention is that human rights, amply justified by reason, are denied by the irrationality of authority systems resting on nothing but tradition and "prejudice." Gratitude is among such irrational institutions, and Godwin argues, consequently, it "is no part either of justice or virtue."⁴³ Godwin completes the rejection of gratitude with its corollary: "It is therefore impossible for me to confer upon any man a favour; I can only do him right."⁴⁴ That is, if I am in a po-

sition to help a needy person, that person has a "right" to my resources.

Burke, on the other hand, appeals strongly to feelings which seem to revere traditional institutions of authority. In "Letter to a Noble Lord" (1796), he charges that "ingratitude is the first of revolutionary virtues" and "Revolutionaries are miscreant parricides," for whom "Ingratitude is indeed their four cardinal virtues compacted and amalgamated into one."⁴⁵ As Squire Allworthy also insists in condemning Black George, ingratitude is an evil aberration from gratitude, which is the duty of allegiance, respect, and thankfulness for benefits and protection owed to those placed in authority over us.

For Austen, gratitude itself seems to be placed at risk in the conflict between rights and duties, which become the rallying cries of ideological enemies in the real war that casts its shadow over these debates. If gratitude is at risk, then so is benevolence and, by a kind of logical domino effect, the whole idea of the society founded on virtue that both Burke and Godwin, despite their mutual hostility, claim to endorse. Austen's novels, particularly the later ones, are profoundly involved with challenges raised by the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, as many scholars have conclusively established, but the Burke-Godwin debate seems more an ominous presence lurking at the margins of the novels, unlike Hutcheson and Sherlock, whose very texts are inscribed in Austen's.

Austen's response to the debate's implied, if unspoken, challenge to gratitude addresses the complex relationship of "feeling" and "obligation" with which Elizabeth Bennet prefaces her rejection of "gratitude" for Darcy's avowal of love. Unlike Godwin, however, Austen does not subordinate feelings to reason, and reject gratitude as such, and unlike Burke, neither does she recognize that duty exercises controlling authority over her feelings or, for that matter, her reason. Each of the novels, with increasing stress, tests the strength and justification of Austen's vision of gratitude for the society emerging around her. In Mansfield Park and Emma, it barely survives the test, but in Persuasion gratitude seems to fully and conclusively claim its authority.

Austen's linkage of "obligation" and "gratitude" seems to agree with Hutcheson's pairing of these terms in his posthumous A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy (1747), when he claims that "there's no obligation more sacred than that of gratitude," although he admits that "[t]he term obligation is both complex and ambiguous."⁴⁶ Nevertheless "obligation," whether or not we are influenced by self-interest, always leads back to the inward motivation of the moral sense.

But if by Obligation we understand a Motive from Self-Interest sufficient to determine all those who duly consider it, and pursue their own Advantage wisely, to a certain Course of Actions; we may have a Sense of such Obligation by reflecting on this Determination of our Nature to approve Virtue, to be pleas'd and happy when we reflect upon our having done virtuous Actions, . . . and also by considering how much superior we esteem the Happiness of Virtue to any other Enjoyment.⁴⁷

When Hutcheson talks about "duty" rather than "obligation," it is in terms of duty to God⁴⁸--he is not interested in duty as a prescribed standard of conduct abstracted from the moral sense and the guidance of reason.

"Obligation" and "duty" imply the assistance of reason for knowledge of virtue, and therefore Austen's attempt to join "obligation" with "feeling," brings together the "head" and the "heart" in shared allegiance. J. A. Kearney finds "that the ideal state of affairs for Jane Austen is when reason and feeling possess equal strength."⁴⁹ This reading has, in my opinion, much to recommend it, and also suggests why Austen might find the views of Thomas Sherlock compatible with her own.

Nor do we teach that nature and reason cannot lead to the speculative knowledge of divine truths; for the evidence of all divine truth resolves itself ultimately into either sense or reason; which are the common gifts of God to mankind, by the principles of which the truth of all things, depending upon the deductions of sense and reason, may be proved and examined.⁵⁰

Sherlock, however, argues that "sense" and "reason" are means to an end, the "knowledge of divine truth," as distinguished from Kearney's reading that the balance of the two by itself as a sort of golden mean is Austen's ideal. The flaw in Kearney's argument is that the ideal of balance implies a kind of stasis, of forces coming to rest in equilibrium. Reason in Austen serves as a moderator and guide for the passions; it serves the feelings but does not overrule them, and both are but means to the goal of happiness.

Hugh Blair's review of Hutcheson's A System of Moral Philosophy in the original Edinburgh Review makes much the same favorable observation about Hutcheson's work as Kearney does concerning Austen.

His philosophy tends to inspire generous sentiments and amiable views of human nature. It is particularly calculated to promote the social and friendly affections; and . . . it has the air of being dictated by the heart, no less than the head.⁵¹

In fact, Hutcheson's philosophy is "dictated" primarily by the "heart," although he is far from slighting the usefulness of reason in A System, or any of his works, as he acknowledges in his discussion of the moral sense.

And 'tis pretty plain that reason is only a subservient power to our ultimate determinations either of perception or will. The ultimate end is settled [sic] by some sense, and some determination of will: . . . Reason can only direct to the means; or compare two ends previously constituted by some other immediate powers.⁵²

Reason guides the moral sense when decisions are unclear, and in the earlier Illustrations Upon the Moral Sense (1728), he acknowledges that "Our Reason does often correct the Report of our Senses, about the natural Tendency of the external Action, and corrects rash Conclusions about the Affections of the Agent."⁵³

The important and consistent focus for Hutcheson is moral decisions in a social environment. The "moral agent" must be a viable human being, combining both "head" and "heart." That Hugh Blair, who enjoys two approving references in Austen's novels, applauds Hutcheson's union of "heart" and "head" suggests, I believe, that Jane Austen might also find

his philosophy compatible with her own. Gratitude as both a "feeling" and an "obligation" requires, in the latter sense, the exercise of reason and, thus, the use of the "head" as well. These novels, then, seem like playful enactments of the moralist project and perspective on human nature, and I agree with those scholars who have concluded that Austen may be read, therefore, as a moralist herself, with didactic intentions.⁵⁴ Understanding Austen requires engaging her moral point of view and recognizing that the playfulness is a serious game that tests and refines moral codes.

But how can Austen offer as new and empowering an idea of virtue with antecedents in moralist writings of the first part of the preceding century, whose authors had no idea of coming political upheavals, or the vast shifts in wealth and social class directly or indirectly linked to the French Wars? Despite the gap in years since Hutcheson published his ideas, Austen seems to recognize that the fluidity and relativism Hutcheson introduces into gratitude gives it an adaptability to the violent changes of the period, which directly intrude in her personal life, and rumble at the edges of her dramas. Where Godwin would discard gratitude, Austen would dramatically revitalize it.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of gratitude's transformation by Hutcheson and Austen, but by making benevolence and gratitude interchangeable, benevolence is dethroned as the latter is elevated. Austen, then, seems to embrace the "democratization" of these virtues that Scott con-

siders Hutcheson's major departure from Shaftesbury. This leveling of the field, as it were, challenges the hierarchical class, economic, and gender structures associated with benevolence, and is as subversive, in a sense, as Godwin's political and atheistic anarchism.

Jane Austen was not alone in responding to Hutcheson years after his texts were first published. Isabel Rivers notes that Hutcheson was John Wesley's "'bête noir' among moralists" and that Wesley was attacking Hutcheson in sermons in 1785 and 1788. Wesley's objections are that human nature is not essentially good, but evil, and that grace alone is the means to salvation.⁵⁵ Hutcheson's confidence that people have essentially good instincts and his conviction that benevolence is the greatest virtue because it promotes human happiness are at the core of Sherlock's pragmatic Anglicanism, and of the moral perspective revealed in Austen's novels.

Since the shared responses of Austen's moral discourse community are, as Poovey observes, "dim or absent" today, scholars who have attempted to identify Austen's philosophical point of view often contradict each other.⁵⁶ These disagreements reflect, as I have suggested, the failure to recognize the central unifying role of gratitude, particularly as shaped by the moralist thought of Francis Hutcheson. But instead of stimulating further research and discussion, this failure to arrive at any sort of consensus has not encouraged continued investigation, and most studies I have cited are

over ten years old. Why does scholarship seem to have turned away from inquiry into Austen's philosophical sources? One reason that suggests itself may be the sexist focus of these studies.

D. D. Devlin sees Samuel Johnson and Bishop Joseph Butler "looking over her [Austen's] shoulder as she writes," which calls up the cameo of the spinster novelist in her drawing room, hovered over by her shadowy mentors, and writing in tidy little journals, easily whisked under cover. Even though there seems to be admiration in C. S. Lewis's claim that Austen "unblushingly" employs "the great abstract nouns of the classical English moralists,"⁵⁷ he nevertheless implies that she takes a daring leap from feminine propriety to repeat the very words of masculine pundits.

Much Austen scholarship today, instead of investigating philosophical sources, tends to reflect feminist readings that posit, with much justification, a hostile relationship between women writers and repressive patriarchal ideology, and to examine how women accept, reject, or evade its dominance.⁵⁸ Finding that the texts of that ideology tend to be flawed by inscribed sexism, substantive study of their content seems unrewarding, and also perhaps irrelevant.

Instead, feminist scholarship tends to define the discourses of gender, or of morality, or both as concerned primarily with issues of power rather than of virtue; or rather that power defines virtue itself. Gilbert and Gubar note the weak position of women "[g]iven the financial, social, and

political power of men."⁵⁹ Claudia Johnson claims that Austen, as well as other women novelists, employs "the device of centering her novels in the consciousness of unempowered characters--that is, women."⁶⁰ Wendy Moffat points out that Austen's apparently most autonomous character, Emma Woodhouse (Emma), is "not representative" of women of her class or time, and that to "treat Emma as if she had power in her fictional world" is "to repress history."⁶¹

The eighteenth-century British legal system often is cited for its complicity in the cultural repression of women. Phoebe Smith analyzes English property and inheritance law that forces women into dependency on a system of "benevolent paternalism," and she shows that in Sense and Sensibility this system fails to benefit the Dashwood sisters and their mother, whom the laws of England have ground into poverty.⁶² By employing the term "benevolent," Smith, although she seems unaware of it, opens up the ancient debate about the relative importance of virtue as benevolence, versus justice as codified in laws. Smith correctly sees that Sense and Sensibility exposes the law's profession of equal protection as a sham for women, but in focusing on the texts of the law and neglecting those of moral philosophy, she fails to recognize that Austen offers a positive alternative in a code of virtue based on gratitude. Smith's only acknowledgment of the moralists is perfunctory.

By the ease with which Fanny [Dashwood] undermines John's benevolent intentions, Austen appears to support the view held by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and Bernard de Mandeville that humans are naturally self-

ish, rather than naturally benevolent as posited, for example, by the Third Earl of Shaftesbury.⁶³

"Such as" and "for example" imply a comprehension of the moral philosophy discourse, but Smith's citation for such inclusive generalities is an Alistair Duckworth article in a collection of essays. Smith's view, of course, is quite different from mine, and perhaps reflects her reliance on Duckworth's scholarship for her understanding of the moral discourse of the time.

My discussion of the novels will show that, for Austen, gratitude is a virtue of far greater potential for happiness than reliance on the law, which always betrays people and sabotages happiness. This is not to suggest that Austen offers some kind of "money isn't everything" moral treatise, or that gratitude is financially rewarded. But gratitude does, however, seem to open purse strings, and to grace the deployment of resources, such as Darcy's funding of Wickham's marriage to Lydia in Pride and Prejudice. For Austen, gratitude as "empowerment" reverses the subordination of virtue to power that Smith, Gilbert and Gubar, Susan Fraiman, and others seem to argue. Instead, in the world of Austen's novels, virtue defines power. The "empowerment" of gratitude applies to both men and women in Austen's novels, but its effects are more manifest for "unempowered" women.

My reading also contrasts with that of the few scholars, such as Richard Handler and Daniel Segal, who recognize the role of gratitude in novels by Austen and her contemporaries,

but who see its function as reinforcing repressive power structures that deny women power of choice.

Like admiration, gratitude can be either a masculine or feminine sentiment, but, in contrast to admiration, it is more frequently a feminine response to male initiative. Since it is men who have the advantage of choice, it is women who must be grateful to men for taking the initiative at the key moments of courtship.⁶⁴

Marriage is only one institution where gratitude enforces ideology. Claudia Johnson seems to read Austen as writing against the constraints of gratitude in all kinds of relationships.

In contrast to conservative writers such as West, More, and Edgeworth, Austen explores the sinister aspects of benevolence and the burden of gratitude it places on a recipient.⁶⁵

But Johnson reflects the older "traditional" view that gratitude defines the inferior position of a dependent to a superior's "benevolence," and thus apparently makes virtue dependent on class, economic, and even gender inequality.

According to the "traditional" view, economic inequality was not necessarily considered undesirable, as attested by the moralist George Turnbull quoted earlier, and in the marriage proposal the woman's gender inequality reflects those "deficiencies and wants" which the suitor supplies. For Handler and Segal, then, gratitude is gender-skewed and a characteristic, if not unique, feminine response. Austen, however, makes gratitude equally applicable to men and women, in marital engagements as in all relationships.

This genderization of virtue creates a double standard, reflected in the popularized version of morality offered by

Richard Steele in Tatler #172, which suggests that "there is a Sort of Sex in Souls" and "[t]he virtues have respectively a Masculine and a Feminine Cast."⁶⁶ Addison ducks the question in Spectator #128, while contrasting the "Nature" of men and women.

Women in their Nature are much more gay and joyous than Men; whether it be that their Blood is more refined, their Fibres more delicate, and their animal Spirits more light and volatile; or whether, as some have imagined, there may not be a kind of Sex in the very Soul, I shall not pretend to determine.⁶⁷

Addison advises that husbands and wives should strive to benefit from each other's qualities, but much of the essay is devoted to showing how "irregular Vivacity of Temper leads astray the Hearts of ordinary Women," with unfortunate domestic consequences (10).

There is ample evidence of Austen's familiarity with Addison and Steele, and both Margaret Kirkham and Robert Uphaus insist that Austen not only rejects the double standard, but creates heroines who assert independent moral authority. Kirkham argues that:

Jane Austen's heroines are not self-conscious feminists, yet they are all exemplary of the first claim of Enlightenment feminism: that women share the same moral nature as men, ought to share the same moral status, and exercise the same responsibility for their own conduct.⁶⁸

Much of Kirkham's book is concerned with establishing that Jane Austen shared the feminist ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft, which is also the thesis that Robert Uphaus develops. Uphaus notes "Austen's clear departure from the assumption that women lacked a full moral character," and finds that she "im-

plements" Mary Wollstonecraft's goal for "the consideration of women not as moral objects of decorum and propriety, but as 'moral beings'."⁶⁹

Paula Cohen also claims that Austen's position "can be seen to mark a convergence with Wollstonecraft," and she places Austen in opposition to Rousseau's belief that gender differences in character and moral capacity are grounded in "natural law."⁷⁰ The connection suggested by Cohen between Austen and Rousseau is tenuous, but her exploration is important because it represents one of the few recent serious efforts to connect Austen with the texts of moral philosophy. However, her observations on Rousseau apply equally well to the "double standard" of popular philosophy and moral behavior as reflected in Addison, Steele, and conduct literature. Cohen claims that Austen's story-telling is a "self-conscious declaration that she must depend on other texts for the creation of her own," which "implies a potential plasticity in the code of behavior which governs her novels; . . ." The authority Austen exercises over her own texts and their moral code "testifies to her increased self-confidence as a woman and a writer capable of shaping a model for male-female interaction in which both sexes are at last governed by the same principles."⁷¹

Although I question the Rousseau connection, I agree completely with Cohen that Austen is building her own text of moral philosophy, within which women characters have or gain power, and successfully assert their claims to gender equity

and moral parity with men. What is important is that scholars like Cohen, Uphaus, and Kirkham, who do try to place Austen in a moral discourse, and who study the texts of that discourse, seem to find her women characters not powerless, but strong. Scholars who overlook, exclude or belittle the influence of moral philosophy, and who concentrate instead on conduct literature, legal codes, and perceived ideological repression, see Austen's women as victimized and oppressed. To the extent that an Emma does not seem to fit the pattern, she is "not representative" (Moffat) and to the extent that Austen does not seem to speak out against female oppression, she is engaging in deep irony. This seems to be Susan Fraiman's position.

I am arguing . . . that the female protagonist's humiliation, as much as it advances the marriage plot, also comments ironically on this plot and on marriage as a girl's developmental goal.⁷²

My study, by contrast, follows the approach of those who look at Austen in the context of the moralist discourse, but argues further that the centrality of gratitude to the novels, based upon Hutcheson's ideas as mediated by Thomas Sherlock's pragmatic Christianity, suggests a unity and coherence lacking in the earlier studies I have noted.

Margaret Kirkham claims that the feminist ideas of Austen were buried "in the aftermath of the anti-feminist reaction which followed Mary Wollstonecraft's death, a time when open discussion of feminist ideas, however unexceptionable they might appear to modern readers, was almost impossible."⁷³ Since Hutcheson's ideas represent, in my opinion, the

philosophical basis of Austen's feminism, he may have been caught in the same reaction which re-imaged Austen as the "gentle Jane" who wrote "comedies of manners." Therefore, his importance to Austen's view of gratitude, and its empowerment for her women characters, has been lost to modern scholars. This is not to argue that Hutcheson is a "feminist" philosopher. His texts reflect the usual masculine universal nouns and pronouns, and his examples draw on male historical models. But, as I have suggested, his radical idea of the exchangeability of benevolence and gratitude erases and even reverses culturally recognized gender roles.

William Blackstone believes that "Hutcheson became lost, historically, between Shaftesbury and Hume,"⁷⁴ but Blackstone clearly is talking about his disappearance in our times. For over fifty years after his death in 1746, his texts participate in philosophical discourse, and the 1771 first edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, in its article on "Moral Philosophy, or Morals," specifically cites Hutcheson, along with Shaftesbury, Butler, and "the Stoics."⁷⁵ Hobbes, Hume, and Mandeville differ from Hutcheson, as well as from most of the other sixty-five moralists identified by Selby-Bigge, in excluding from their theories a unifying and authoritative religious basis. John Mullan appears to see the severance of this link as progress.

Famously, he [Hume] abandoned the theocentrism of writers like Locke and Hutcheson, both of them in different ways willing to submit philosophy to the final verdict of religious belief.⁷⁶

Mullan, of course, does no more than implicitly claim that philosophy should be secular study. Because most "theocentric" moralists believed in human nature as essentially benevolent, Mullan also disparages eighteenth-century novels which "show benevolence as an operative, reforming influence," since "it is typically like the benevolence of Pamela to the poor of the neighborhood; rewarding the obedience of the socially inferior, affirming hierarchy, . . ." (144). Mullan, however, fails to do justice to Hutcheson's concept of benevolence and gratitude as interchangeable, which undermines the structure of oppressive hierarchy. As I have argued, it is this idea, with its profound implications, that drives Austen's novels.

Chapter 1 Notes

¹ Peter De Rose and S. W. McGuire, A Concordance to the Works of Jane Austen, vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1982) 470-71.

² C. S. Lewis claims that "the great abstract nouns," of which he names over a dozen, "of the classical English moralists are unblushingly and uncompromisingly used." "A Note on Jane Austen," Selected Literary Essays by C. S. Lewis, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969) 178. Stuart Tave mentions Fanny Price being made to "think herself ungrateful" in Mansfield Park, but his brief allusion is in the discussion of "memory." Some Words of Jane Austen (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1973) 201. Other terms featured in his study are education, disposition, and propriety. In addition to Lewis, Tave notes that "those who have studied her [Austen] for her words" include "David Lodge, Mary Lascelles, Howard Babb, and others" xi. Frederick Keener criticizes Lewis's list as "too exclusively moral" and suggests several others, including "prejudice, idea, associations, and motive" (251) but his central focus is "self-love." The Chain of Becoming: The Philosophical Tale, the Novel, and a Neglected Realism of the Enlightenment: Swift, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Johnson, and Austen, (New York: Columbia UP, 1983) 55-85.

³ There have been only two biographical studies of Hutcheson, the first a preface by his contemporary, William Leechman, to the posthumously published A System of Moral Philosophy (1755. See note 10) and William Robert Scott's Francis Hutcheson. His Life, Teaching, and Position in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1900), the latest critical biography to be based on original research. More recent studies of Hutcheson's philosophy lean on these two works for biographical information. The only full-length biography of Sherlock is Edward Carpenter, Thomas Sherlock 1678-1761, published under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in London (New York: Macmillan, 1936). John Overton and Frederic Relton, The English Church from the Accession of George I to the End of the Eighteenth Century (London: Macmillan, 1906) also includes much biographical information.

⁴ quoted in Jon Spence, "The Abiding Possibilities of Nature in Persuasion," SEL 21.4 (1981): 634n.

⁵ Bruce Stovel, "'A Nation Improving in Religion': Jane Austen's Prayers and Their Place in Her Life and Art," Persuasions 16 (1994): 185-96. Irene Collins, Jane Austen and the Clergy (London: Hambledon, 1993).

⁶ quoted in Charles Stewart-Robinson, "The Rhythms of Gratitude: Historical Developments and Philosophical Concerns," Australasian Journal of Philosophy 68.2 (1990): 201.

⁷ Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975) 968-9. Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding.

⁸ Jonathan Swift, A Voyage to Lilliput. In Gulliver's Travels, ed. Paul Turner (1726; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986) 47.

⁹ Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979) 208.

¹⁰ "Some Account of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author" (24 Dec 1754), preface to Francis Hutcheson, A System of Moral Philosophy (1755). Vol. 5, Works x.

¹¹ Printed in London for booksellers in London and Dublin. This major early work was republished, with some substantive changes, in five editions, of which two were posthumous, through 1772. Publication histories suggest that Hutcheson's works enjoyed a popularity in the eighteenth century unequalled by any other moral philosopher, even crossing the Atlantic to guide Thomas Jefferson in drafting the Declaration of Independence, and Gary Wills argues that Hutcheson's influence on this document is more significant than Locke's (Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence [Garden City: Doubleday, 1978]). Henry F. May claims that Hutcheson was among the few widely known "Scottish thinkers" in colonial America, and that his "moral sense theory influenced such opposite colonial thinkers as Jonathan Edwards and Charles Chauncey." (The Enlightenment in America [New York: Oxford, 1976] 38).

¹² Scott 178-86.

- 13 An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil. "Treatise II" of An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (1725). Vol. 1, Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson, ed. Bernhard Fabian (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1971) 108-109. Facsimile edition.
- 14 Vol. 1, Works 164.
- 15 British Moralists, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) 284.
- 16 Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) 33.
- 17 Scott 52.
- 18 Introduction, Francis Hutcheson, On Human Nature / Francis Hutcheson, ed. Thomas Mautner (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 10-11.
- 19 "I am very fond of Sherlock's Sermons, prefer them to almost any.--" Letter 28 September 1814 to Anna Austen, Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra and others, ed. R. W. Chapman, vol. 2, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932) 101. This long letter is mostly criticism and advice to niece Anna on a manuscript submitted to Austen for her comments, which include references to a number of popular authors as standards of comparison for Jane and Anna's writing. The comment on Sherlock is tagged on at the end of the letter, which suggests that Austen is responding to an opinion or question by Anna in the context of the other writers discussed.
- 20 Carpenter, 252, 256.
- 21 Thomas Preston, "Biblical criticism, literature, and the eighteenth-century reader," Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England, ed. Isabel Rivers (New York: St. Martin's, 1982) 121-22.

22 Basil Willey, The English Moralists (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965) 172-86.

23 R. S. Crane, "Suggestions toward a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling'" (1934), The Idea of the Humanities and Other Essays Critical and Historical (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P, 1967) 190, 193-94. Donald Greene, "Latitudinarianism and Sensibility: The Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling' Reconsidered," Modern Philology 75 (1977): 159-83. Frans De Bruyn, "Latitudinarianism and Its Importance as a Precursor of Sensibility," JEGP 80 (1981): 349-68.

24 De Bruyn, 352.

25 Hutcheson was not an innovator, but rather developed the approaches of others who built upon the ideas of Locke. William Youngren points out that Richard Cumberland's De Legibus Naturae (1672) "goes so far as to draw a parallel between benevolence and the motion that propels the Newtonian universe." He quotes Cumberland that "benevolence is 'daily renewed by the reciprocal force of gratitude.'" "Founding English Ethics: Locke, Mathematics, and the Innateness Question," Eighteenth-Century Life 16.3 (1992): 28. Quite clearly, Cumberland, whom Hutcheson acknowledges in various places in An Inquiry and other works, anticipates Hutcheson's Newtonian moral mechanics, but I believe Hutcheson extends Cumberland's "reciprocal force of gratitude" to a true equivalence with benevolence, which seems to be the idea working in Austen. Youngren also discusses Ralph Cudworth's interest in moral mathematics, written in the late seventeenth century, but his principal works were not published until 1730, after Hutcheson had written a number of texts, including An Inquiry (1725). Based on publication data, however, it does seem that Hutcheson was the principal conduit of such ideas, either his own or those derived from others, into eighteenth-century moral discourse.

26 Of Human Understanding (1690), The Works of John Locke, vol. 2 (1823; Darmstadt: Scientia Verlagsgalen, 1963) 368-69.

27 Scott, 32n. Scott cites The Koran on page 161 in vol. 8 of Sterne's Works, published in Edinburgh in 1799, which I have not consulted. But Wilbur L. Cross claims that The Koran (1770) is a well-authenticated forgery of "an imaginary autobiography" of Sterne by "Richard Griffith the elder,"

which he wrote on a bet (The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne, 3rd ed. [New Haven: Yale UP, 1929] 520). Philosophically, Sterne should approve of Hutcheson, although he might also find Hutcheson's moral seriousness a tempting target for wit, as Jane Austen apparently also found his moral "mathematics." Forgery or not, the piece, published twenty-four years after Hutcheson's death, suggests the ongoing interest in his philosophy, which continues with The Mirror a decade later.

28 "Bibliographical Note," Vol. 1, Works, ix.

29 The Edinburgh Review for the Year 1755, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1818). The twenty other articles, the majority also reviews, include Adam Smith on Samuel Johnson's Dictionary. The preface to the 1818 reprint of the first Edinburgh suggests that the journal ceased publication with the second 1756 number because its aim to offer a forum for a range of viewpoints made it vulnerable to religious factionalism. Despite its early demise, Thompson considers the Edinburgh a forerunner of Mackenzie's Mirror published twenty-four years later.

30 Carpenter 13.

31 John Balguy, Silvius's Letter to the Rev. Dr. Sherlock (London: J. Roberts, 1719) 14-15.

32 Overton and Relton 58-59.

33 James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., vol. 2 (1791; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1924) 189, 564.

34 Balguy, Silvius's Letter 26-27.

35 Vol. 1, Whichcote to Wesley, in Reason, Grace, and Sentiment. A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991). 1.

36 An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions, vol. 2, Works, 109.

37 Scott 204.

38 Pride and Prejudice (1813), The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. R. W. Chapman, 3rd. ed., vol. 2 (1932; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988) 190.

39 Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language (1755; London: Times Books, 1979).

40 There is strong textual evidence that Jane Austen was very well acquainted with Hutcheson's An Inquiry. Mark Loveridge has pointed out that Mr. Weston's "conundrum" on the letters M and A in Emma parody Hutcheson's use of these same letters in his attempt to present moral principles as an exercise in Newtonian mechanics. "Francis Hutcheson and Mr. Weston's Conundrum in Emma," Notes and Queries 30.3 (1983) 214-16.

41 Mary Poovey, The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P, 1984) 206.

42 David Fate Norton, David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Skeptical Metaphysician (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982) 69.

43 Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (3rd ed., 1798), ed. Isaac Kramnick (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985) 171. Kramnick notes that in the 1796 second edition Godwin "gave more importance to the role of feeling and sentiment" as opposed to "the strident rationalism of the first edition," and that this shift is reflected in changes in the gratitude discussion (57). Therefore, I cannot say with confidence whether the comment of 1796 from Burke is a response to Godwin or vice versa. The more important point, however, is that both seem conscious of the debate, although only Godwin specifically identifies Burke as his antagonist, and the modifications in favor of "feeling" that Kramnick cites suggest a partial concession to Burke.

44 Godwin 176.

45 "Letter to a Noble Lord" (1796). In The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, vol. 5 (London: Bohn, 1902) 138.

46 A System of Moral Philosophy, Works, vol. 5, 264

47 An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil, Works, vol. 1, 250-51.

48 See chapters 9 and 10, A System of Moral Philosophy, Works, vol. 5, 168-220.

49 J. A. Kearney, "Jane Austen and the Reason-Feeling Debate," Theoria: Journal of Studies in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences 75 (May 1990): 107, 111.

50 Discourse XVII, vol. 1, Discourses preached at the Temple Church, and on several occasions; to which are added, Discourses on the use and intent of prophecy; together with Dissertations; A charge to the clergy of the Diocese of London; a letter on the earthquakes in MBCCCL; and the trial of the witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. By Thomas Sherlock, D. D. Late Lord Bishop of London, and Master of the Temple. A New Edition, in Four Volumes (Oxford: Clarendon, 1812) 325. The Discourses alone were first published together in 1754 and went through six editions before being included in the 1812 Clarendon collected works. Chapman suggests that this is the edition Jane Austen refers to in her 28 September 1814 letter. (Letters, vol. 2, 406).

51 "Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy," The Edinburgh Review (1755), 2nd ed. (London 1818) 20.

52 A System of Moral Philosophy, Works, vol. 5, 58.

53 Works, vol. 2, 283.

54 Austen's approach for Jan Fergus is "emotional didacticism," and Fergus distinguishes herself "from many modern critics in considering Austen's intentions primarily

didactic." (Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel [Totawa: Barnes and Noble, 1983] 3). Fergus refers approvingly to David Lodge who observes that "her novels unequivocally endorse certain values and reject others." ("Composition, distribution, arrangement. Form and structure in Jane Austen's novels," After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism [London: Routledge, 1990] 122). The modern philosopher, John Casey, emphasizes the "head" in Austen's Emma and Mansfield Park as showing that virtue requires the active operation of the intellect, and he claims that "[m]oral goodness in Jane Austen is not something independent of active intelligence." Pagan Virtue. An Essay in Ethics (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 163.

55 Whichcote to Wesley, vol. 1, Reason, Grace, and Sentiment 230-31.

56 B. C. Southam's Critical Essays on Jane Austen (London: Routledge, 1968) includes two essays which introduce much of the debate on moral influence. Denis Donoghue finds a number of moralists represented in the novels and concludes that "there is much to be said for approaching Mansfield Park, Sense and Sensibility, Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion by way of the eighteenth-century English moralists." ("A View of Mansfield Park," 55). Gilbert Ryle claims that "Jane Austen's specific moral ideas derived . . . from Shaftesbury" ("Jane Austen and the Moralists," 118). D. D. Devlin in Jane Austen and Education (New York: Harper, 1975) responds that "Professor Ryles's article is . . . wrong" (52) and "that many of her novels are a . . . criticism of Shaftesbury" (who, for Devlin, seems to be indistinguishable from Hutcheson). Philip Drew, however, agrees with Ryle, but argues "that her ethical position is even more related to that of Shaftesbury's great successor, Joseph Butler," thus rejecting Devlin's anti-Shaftesbury reading of Butler. ("Jane Austen and Bishop Butler," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 35.2 (1980): 127-28. C. S. Lewis considers Austen a genetic mouthpiece for Johnson: "I feel much more sure that she is the daughter of Dr. Johnson: she inherits his commonsense, his morality, even much of his style." ("A Note on Jane Austen," Selected Literary Essays by C. S. Lewis, ed. Walter Hooper, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969, 186). Peter De Rose agrees (Jane Austen and Samuel Johnson, Washington: UP of America, 1980). Mark Loveridge (Note 40 above) concludes that Austen's clever use of Hutcheson's M=A formula reveals both her knowledge of Hutcheson, as well "oblique criticism of the deficiencies or eccentricities of a Moral Sense writer" (216). Hoyt Trowbridge reaches into philosophical antiquity, and finds that Austen's values "are actually very ancient.

The particular sources from which she derived them, . . . probably could not be determined in any case," and "could have been found in either Plato or Aristotle, as well as in many later philosophers and moralists. . . . Jane Austen gives these ideas a Christian coloring . . ." ("Mind, Body, and Estate: Jane Austen's System of Values," From Dryden to Jane Austen. Essays on English Critics and Writers 1660-1818, Albuquerque: U. of New Mexico P, 1977, 288).

57 See note 2.

58 Faced with the need to reference the feminist discourse, Robert Uphaus ("Jane Austen and Female Reading," Studies in the Novel 19.3, [1987]) prefaces his citations by saying "I would not presume to describe the spectrum of debate regarding Austen's 'feminism'" (345). With this disclaimer, he proceeds to list a number of familiar works, including Mary Poovey's The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer, which I have discussed, and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984), which focuses on the marriage plots in Austen and argues that women exchange one form of patriarchal submission for another (Part II, 107-83). They restate the same thesis in editorial remarks on Austen in The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, eds. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (New York: Norton, 1985) 208. Their idea of prescriptive choice was advanced earlier by Jean Kennard, Victims of Convention (Hamden: Archon, 1978), who also notes "the sexism implicit in certain literary structures" (10) of the period, which of course would include most moral philosophy works. More recently, Wendy Moffat comes to much the same conclusion as Kennard and Gilbert and Gubar, in expressing dissatisfaction with what she sees as Emma's ultimate submission to patriarchy. "Identifying with Emma: Some Problems for the Feminist Reader," College English 53 (1991) 45-58. So does Susan Fraiman in "The Humiliation of Elizabeth Bennet," chapter 3 of Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development (New York: Columbia UP, 1993) 59-87.

Exceptions to the absence of moral philosophy investigation by feminist scholars are Margaret Kirkham, Jane Austen. Feminism and Fiction (Sussex: Harvester, 1983) and Paula Marantz Cohen, "Austen's Rejection of Rousseau: A Novelistic and Feminist Initiation," Papers on Language and Literature 30.3 (1994) 215-34. Kirkham's study primarily concerns the ideas Austen shares with Mary Wollstonecraft, and she cites no other moral philosophers except to quote (83) Gilbert Ryle's "Jane Austen and the Moralists," who makes a sketchy argument that Austen's philosophy is that of

Shaftesbury. Critical Essays, ed. Southam, 106-22. Cohen argues that Elizabeth Bennet educates and humbles Darcy, contradicting Fraiman's conclusion. For other representative feminist studies, see discussions in note 16 to Uphaus's essay (344) and in Fraiman 60-61 and 158-59.

59 Gilbert and Gubar, The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women 208.

60 Claudia L. Johnson, Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1988) xxiv.

61 Moffat 48, 50.

62 Phoebe A. Smith, "Sense and Sensibility and 'The Lady's Law': The Failure of Benevolent Paternalism," The CEA Critic 55.3 (1993): 3-24.

63 Smith 7-8.

64 Richard Handler and Daniel Segal, Jane Austen and the Fiction of Culture (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona P, 1990) 72.

65 Johnson 107.

66 Richard Steele, No. 172 (16 May 1710), The Tatler, Ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 2, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 444.

67 Joseph Addison, The Spectator, ed. Donald Bond, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) 8.

68 Kirkham 84.

69 Uphaus 339.

70 Cohen, 233n, 215-20.

71 Cohen 233.

72 Fraiman 64.

73 Kirkham 161.

74 William T. Blackstone, Francis Hutcheson and Contemporary Ethical Theory (Athens: Georgia UP, 1965) 8.

75 Roger L. Emerson, "Science and Moral Philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment," Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, ed. M. A. Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 27.

76 Mullan 8.

CHAPTER II

THE TEXTS OF VIRTUE: JANE AUSTEN AND MORAL DISCOURSE

Two worlds uneasily coexist in Jane Austen's novels, as well as in the society they mirror. One is a world of laws, which administers justice unjustly, and serves the avarice of the mean, contemptible, and the simply unworthy. This is the world which disinherits mothers and daughters through primogeniture reinforced by custom in Sense and Sensibility, or through the entailed estate in Pride and Prejudice, the world that through fraud, greed, and relentless creditor pressure both creates and impoverishes the widowhood of Mrs. Smith in Persuasion.

The other world is the world of virtue, which for Hutcheson is virtually synonymous with benevolence. For Austen, a world driven by virtue represents the only real hope for happiness and protection from laws, which invariably are perverted by the venial to serve their selfish objectives. Virtue requires self-motivated giving of help or resources; justice relies on laws for protection against harm or loss. For Hutcheson, there is no question which is the more important, as he reveals in the concluding section of An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil.

To conclude this Subject, we may, from what has been said, see the true Original of moral Ideas, viz. This moral Sense of Excellence in every Appearance, or

Evidence of Benevolence; and that we have Ideas of Virtue and Vice, abstractly from any Law, Human or Divine. . . .

But that our first Ideas of moral Good depend not on Laws, may plainly appear from our constant Inquiries into the Justice of Laws themselves, and that not only of human Laws, but of the divine.¹

Hutcheson proves his claim by a logical exercise that demonstrates the futility of seeking the "laws of a Superior" when it comes to divine Justice and concludes that the only absolute is divine benevolence as the guide for human virtue.

Austen even shows in Sense and Sensibility that the force of legal guarantees of benevolent intent can be twisted into a threat used to thwart that benevolence, when Fanny Dashwood talks her husband out of a moral commitment to provide an annuity for his widowed stepmother and her daughters. Since an annuity is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation, Fanny frightens John with the possibility that his stepmother's life span might exceed actuarial assumptions, and then she adds the clinching argument: ". . . and after all you have no thanks for it. They think themselves secure, you do no more than what is expected, and it raises no gratitude at all."² Fanny argues that, since the money may be seen by the mother as a legal right rather than benevolence, "it raises no gratitude."

Fanny, however, expresses a hard-nosed concept of gratitude that has classical support. Cicero encourages carefully calculated generosity, both public and private, in order to "win us greater gratitude" that will enhance personal power and prestige.³ Cicero argues that generosity

(beneficentia) and gratitude are subject to the overriding principle of justice, in which he includes the laws of the state. Cicero's De Officiis claims the authority of Socrates and Plato in presenting the cardinal virtues of prudence (wisdom), justice, fortitude (courage), and "moderation" or "self-control."⁴ Of these categories, "justice . . . is the crowning glory of the virtues . . . and, close akin to justice, charity ['beneficentia'], which may also be called kindness or generosity."

In the next twenty-four pages of the Loeb Classical Library edition, Cicero amplifies on justice, "the crowning glory of the virtues," before taking up "kindness and generosity," which "calls for the exercise of caution," so that generosity will not "be beyond our means" or hurt instead of help, "and finally, that it shall be proportioned to the worthiness of the recipient; for this is the corner-stone of justice; and by the standard of justice all acts of kindness must be measured" (47). It is clear that the scope of generosity is circumscribed, not only by justice, but also by a rather narrowly construed virtue of prudence.

How did Cicero's "beneficentia" become elevated to "benevolence," the most important virtue for Hutcheson and "the Name of Perfection" itself? The answer is that "benevolence" represents the linkage of the classical cardinal virtues with the central "theological" or Christian virtue of "charity." The scriptural foundation of Christian benevolence rests principally on Matthew

22: 37-40, which records Jesus's response to a loaded question put to him in the temple by "one of them, which was a lawyer."

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.⁵

This is a sweeping mandate indeed, and Thomas Sherlock affirms in his Discourse on this text that "the whole reason of religion lies in these two general commandments; that in these all particular duties and precepts are founded; . . ."⁶ "Benevolence" is among the examples Sherlock uses to illustrate the love which Jesus commands, and in a later Discourse he amplifies on this topic, using as his text 1 Peter 4:8, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

[This epistle] plainly shows how highly the Apostle [Peter] esteemed this great virtue of charity; and that it is the perfection of a Christian, the very life and soul of all other duties. . . . [T]he charity spoken of in the text [has reference to no particular acts]. It is therefore the principle of charity, or a general benevolence of mind towards one another, which the Apostle recommends.⁷

The term "charity" as used by Sherlock to mean the "love" of one's neighbor commanded by Jesus and manifested by "benevolence" reflects, originally, the King James translation of caritas from the Latin Vulgate, in turn a translation of the Greek agape. For Sherlock and the earlier translators, love and benevolence are indistinguishable, and all three words have the same meaning. But the alternative translations have evolved into different meanings, so that "charity" is one of

those terms whose special "resonance" for the eighteenth century is, as Mary Poovey suggests, "dim or absent" for modern readers.⁸ But for Sherlock and Austen, love, charity and benevolence converge into the same, central Christian virtue, and their common quality is giving, not allocating resources with due consideration to the circumstances, as Cicero advises. Maaja Stewart, who has written on gratitude in Tom Jones as well as in Austen, observes that the gratitude of Miss Bates in Emma expresses this coalescence of meaning.

Her gratitude is not an expression of social humility to social superiors that demeans both the giver and the receiver, but an expression of trust in "such good neighbors and Friends" that is part of her trust in life itself as a gift of God. The community called forth by Miss Bates is thus the premarket Christian community of caritas and reciprocity that coexists uneasily with the dominant market society in the novel.⁹

Stewart's focus is the subjugation of women by the emergent British imperialism and capitalism, which debases gratitude into a form of enslavement for the powerless, contrasted with Miss Bates's Christian gratitude as a vestigial cultural remnant. Stewart fails to recognize, however, that Emma learns from Miss Bates, and that Austen tries to show that the "pre-market" gratitude is not moribund, but survives as the hope for virtue in the modern world.

Hutcheson always starts with and leads back to benevolence as "absolutely good" and not justified by useful returns of gratitude, or subject to justice codified in law, as Cicero argues. Hutcheson first reverses, then conflates, Cicero's justice-benevolence relationship. Neither Hutcheson

nor Austen attempts to argue for the triumph of virtue over vice, but all contend that a system of virtue represents a viable alternative, perhaps the only alternative, to selfish human nature shielded by law. Hutcheson's near-contemporaries and successors, Hobbes, Mandeville, Hume, and Adam Smith, however, continue to argue the importance of justice over benevolence, but at the same time abandon (with the possible exception of Smith) Hutcheson's theocentrism for a secular and skeptical view of human nature. Fanny Dashwood's argument that charity must be avoided where it does not "earn gratitude" is exposed, then, as un-Christian, and this religious subtext underscores the venial selfishness of her hypocritical hiding behind the law.

Sense and Sensibility suggests Austen's disapproval of Fanny's idea of gratitude and benevolence. More concrete evidence of Hutcheson's informing presence has been persuasively argued by Mark Loveridge, who identifies Mr. Weston's alphabetical conundrum in the later Emma as an algebraic equation employed by Hutcheson to express the highest value possible for benevolence.¹⁰ Mr. Weston poses his riddle to the assembled party at the Box Hill outing.

"--What two letters of the alphabet are there, that express perfection?"

"What two letters!--express perfection! I am sure I do not know."

"Ah! you will never guess. You (to Emma), I am certain, will never guess.--I will tell you.--M. and A.-- Em--ma.--Do you understand?"

The reaction to this sally, intended to compliment Emma, is mixed, but Mr. Knightley has the last word: "Perfection

should not have come quite so soon" (371), a veiled rebuke that he soon makes explicit in chastising Emma for earlier humiliating Miss Bates.

The equation Mr. Weston borrows for his conundrum is Hutcheson's "proof" of benevolence as the "Perfection of Virtue," presented after four pages of intermediate steps.

Since then Benevolence, or Virtue in any Agent, is as $M+A$, or as $M+1+A$, and no Being can act above his natural Ability, that must be the Perfection of Virtue where $M=A$, or when the Being acts to the utmost of its Power for the publick Good; and hence the Perfection of Virtue in this case, or $M+A$ is as Unity.¹¹

In the process of proof, benevolence is symbolized by "B," while "M=Moment of Good," and A represents "Abilitys," so that " $M=BxA$." Austen's adaptation of Hutcheson's unique, if not bizarre, mathematics for an alphabet game in Emma is an astonishing feat, and could not be accomplished without intimate knowledge and understanding of the philosopher's method and objectives. Loveridge suggests that Austen's comic reworking of Hutcheson might represent "oblique criticism of a Moral Sense writer."¹² This reading rests on the questionable assumption that values cannot be "serious" if they are used in "comic" situations. Further, Mr. Knightley's criticism that "Perfection should not have come quite so soon" is loaded with moral meaning, emphasized by the italics in the text that set off the word, which joins Austen and Hutcheson in a larger moral discourse. Mark Loveridge's article creates a rare opportunity to link specific texts of Austen and Hutcheson, and the algebraic "demonstration" of virtue has a

cameo appearance in Emma to underscore ironically just how far Emma is from "the name of perfection" in her cruel ridicule of Miss Bates, whose superior virtue is pointed out by Maaja Stewart.

Where did Jane Austen acquire both her specific knowledge of Hutcheson's arcane benevolence formulae, as well as the larger understanding of his philosophy which shapes gratitude's driving role in the novels? I will discuss three possible sources: her father George Austen's library at Steventon, sermons heard and read, and periodical literature, probably in the form of bound volumes of older journals.

The formulae themselves only appear to have been published in "Treatise II" of the first three editions of An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue.¹³

It is probable that more than sixty years must have passed since publication before this work seems to have attracted Austen's interest, and its domicile for the latter part of that period, I suggest, would likely be her father's five hundred volume library, sold upon the family's move to Bath in 1801.¹⁴ It is an exasperating mystery that no catalog of its contents seems to have survived, yet it is scarcely conceivable that this collection was never inventoried. David Gilson appears to have done the most exhaustive research, except possibly for Deirdre Le Faye, but his investigation comes up empty-handed: "Her [Austen's] first recourse would have been to her father's library; virtually nothing is known of the fate of the books which this comprised, . . ." ¹⁵

The response to my own personal inquiries also has been that no inventory of the library's contents seems to exist.

Nevertheless, moral philosophy and sermon literature must have been represented in George Austen's library, and Hutcheson's credentials to be among the moralists are stronger than most. Republication of Hutcheson's original writings ended in the late eighteenth century, except for subsequent anthologies of representative moralists, such as L. A. Selby-Bigge's 1897 compilation, updated by D. D. Raphael in 1969. His complete works only became generally available to scholars through the seven volume 1971 Georg Olms facsimile edition. My count shows twenty-one printings or editions of his various writings between 1725 and 1788, of which twelve were posthumous (Hutcheson died in 1746), and L. A. Selby-Bigge's 1897 compilation adds translations and editions of letters under pseudonyms to this total.¹⁶ In Selby-Bigge's bibliography, Hutcheson's publications easily exceed in number of printings those of the sixty-five other moralists represented, whose writings spanned the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, including such canonical figures as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Bernard Mandeville, and David Hume, which testifies both to the large market for moral philosophy, as well as to the significant share of that market represented by Hutcheson.

Although the comprehensive study of the history of books published in the eighteenth century has yet to be completed, there clearly was a lively market for moral and religious

literature, as indicated by the extensive publication histories of just the texts discussed in this study. Thomas Preston's research reveals that "an average of 230 books on religion was published annually" over most of the eighteenth century,¹⁷ while John Vladamir Price, in "The reading of philosophical literature," observes that "[i]t would be tedious to enumerate the philosophical books that were published in just one decade, the 1750's."¹⁸ However, Ian Maxted's study of gross publication data makes it possible to estimate the religious book market. Maxted tabulates an average number of titles for most of the second half of the eighteenth century at 600 per annum, rising to 700 in the last decade.¹⁹ Preston's figures, then, suggest that religious books alone represented perhaps more than one-third of the market. James Raven concludes that published sermons "were such a staple of the eighteenth-century book trade that there survive numerous announcements by booksellers pleading that the market was saturated and that no new collections could be accepted for publication."²⁰

At what point the market might be "saturated" is hard to say, but there certainly must have been a substantial demand for sermon literature. The data seems to contradict J. Paul Hunter's claim that "they [sermons] seldom caught on with the public," although he does argue that "[d]idactic writings in the early eighteenth-century were everywhere." These included "theological treatises which, . . . often argued points of practical divinity and moral obligation as well as creed."²¹

I suspect that Hunter is defining "sermon" narrowly, since many of Sherlock's "Discourses" follow the sermon pattern of explicating a biblical passage referenced or quoted at the beginning of the text and relating its significance to practical concerns of an audience. The length of these Discourses is about that of other acknowledged Anglican sermon literature, and when Jane Austen says she is "very fond of Sherlock's sermons," I have no doubt she includes those nominally published as Discourses. Whether to stimulate demand for more publishable sermons, or to unload excessive inventories, Thomas Mautner notes that Shaftesbury accused the booksellers of fomenting the trade in moral and religious texts.

The publishing of books and pamphlets on religion and morality had become a very profitable business, so profitable indeed that booksellers in their unscrupulous quest for material gain could be suspected, at least in jest, of fomenting theological controversy. Shaftesbury likened them to a glazier who, in order to insure a thriving business, tosses a football to a bunch of street urchins on a frosty morning.²²

Mautner's conclusion seems somewhat better supported than Hunter's, and Jane Austen's observations as both a reader and hearer of sermons tends to verify it. Unfortunately, there appear to be no surviving sermons of her father, George, or of her brother, James,²³ and Henry's published sermons probably were not written or delivered before his ordination in 1816, a year before Jane Austen died. Nevertheless, her comment in the Letters on Sherlock's sermons is comparative--she "prefer[s] them to almost any,"²⁴--which strongly suggests

that she could draw on a wide knowledge of sermon literature for such comparisons.

In contrast to her admiration of Sherlock, Austen expresses dislike for her cousin, Edward Cooper's, "new Sermons" as "fuller of Regeneration and Conversion than ever--with the addition of his zeal in the cause of the Bible Society."²⁵ The "British and Foreign Bible Society" was founded by the Evangelical Anglicans who had formed what came to be known in 1812 as the "Church Missionary Society,"²⁶ and this object of Edward Cooper's "zeal" reflects the Evangelical focus of his Practical and Familiar Sermons, Designed for Parochial and Domestic Instruction (1809), which went through eight or more British and an 1817 American edition, testifying at least to the existence of a more receptive audience than Jane Austen. The titles tend to confirm the Evangelical approach to piety: "The Unfruitfulness and Misery of Sin," "Mortification of Sin a Reasonable Duty," and "The Day of Account." Austen's distaste for the subject of "Conversion" may have been stimulated by a sermon entitled "Description and Danger of Conviction When not Followed by Conversion."²⁷

Volume one is dedicated to "The Reverend Thomas Gisborne," whom Overton identifies as a leading Evangelical, and whose sermons his "contemporaries" regarded as "models . . . of that much neglected art."²⁸ In an 1805 letter, Austen thanks Cassandra for having "recommended 'Gisborne'," and "having begun," expresses pleasant surprise that she is en-

joying it.²⁹ Chapman guesses that she refers to An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex, which as conduct literature avoids the religious exhortation of Evangelical sermons. Although Cooper's dedication to Gisborne suggests his own self-identification with the Evangelicals, Austen's enjoyment of Gisborne's conduct book does not, it seems to me, undercut her later professed dislike for the Evangelical sermons published by her cousin.

In the absence of surviving sermons by James or her father, sermons collected in the nine volumes of The English Preacher (1773) suggest that Austen might have heard a prevailing concern with doctrine as reflected in conduct, representing the growing taste for "practical" preaching identified by the compiler, William Enfield.³⁰ The index to this work groups sermons by six "Subjects":

- I Virtue and Vice in General
- II Religion and the Duties of Piety
- III Social Virtues and the Opposite Vices
- IV Personal Virtue and the Opposite Faults
- V Christianity
- VI Historical Subjects [from the Bible]³¹

Within these subject headings, at least four sermons address "charity" as the single most important Christian virtue, reinforcing the principle of benevolence and good works.

These categories contrast with what Reverend Overton, a mainstream Anglican and admittedly negative toward the Evangelicals within the Church of England, gives as his summary of the content of Evangelical preaching.

They insisted upon the total depravity of human nature. The image of God was not only defaced but ef-

faced by the Fall. Restoration to Divine favour was effected by Christ not only on behalf of man, but instead of man, who of his own will had no power to turn himself Godward.³²

This summary of human powerlessness for self-help is clearly the doctrine against which Sherlock inveighs. What makes Overton useful in his combined capacity both as an historian of the established church, as well as a committed cleric, is the struggle against his evident bias as he attempts to acknowledge the positive influence of Evangelicalism, not much more than a century after the events and writings he discusses. In some ways, I feel his prejudice may be an indicator of likely attitudes for and against the Evangelicals in Jane Austen's clergy-dominated family.

The dialogue between Hutcheson's theories and Sherlock's advice also suggests the interplay of motive and conduct in the novels, which reflects the importance Austen evidently attaches to sermons in the spiritual and temporal life of the parish. In Pride and Prejudice, when Wickham recalls a desire for a clerical life, Elizabeth's immediate question is, "How should you have liked making sermons?" Wickham is equally quick to respond "Exceedingly well," but Elizabeth reminds him that "there was a time when sermon-making was not so palatable to you as it seems to be at present; . . ." (328-29).

In Mansfield Park, Edmund and Fanny include sermons in a wider view of clerical duties, but the Crawford siblings reveal indeed that they see little more than sermon-making among the clergyman's functions (92-93, 341). Echoing his

son's feelings, Sir Thomas rebukes them with observations on Edmund's duties that seem modelled on Sherlock's Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of London (1759), reportedly the only one of these annual pastoral charges that Sherlock allowed to be printed. Henry Crawford tries to advance a scheme for his renting the parsonage at Thornton Lacey, on the assumption that Edmund can discharge his clerical offices while he continues to live at Mansfield Park. Sir Thomas, however, informs him in no uncertain terms that Edmund will reside on his living.

It is perfectly natural that you should not have thought much on the subject, Mr. Crawford. But a parish has wants and claims which can be known only by a clergyman constantly resident, and which no proxy can be capable of satisfying to the same extent. . . . [Edmund] knows that human nature needs more lessons than a weekly sermon can convey, and that if he does not live among his parishioners and prove himself by constant attention their well-wisher and friend, he does very little either for their good or his own. (247-48).

Sherlock considered residence as "the Foundation of all other Duties and it would be absurd to speak of any other without presupposing this."

Can you deliver the Message of Christ, as his Ambassador, to Persons to whom you have no access? Can you oversee the Flock, or Feed the Church, which you have forsaken? Can you dispense the Mysteries of God to those whom you neither see nor speak to? Can you watch for their Souls, to whose Persons, as well as to their spiritual Wants, you are a Stranger?³³

Austen comes close here to putting Sherlock's words in Sir Thomas's mouth to denounce, as Sir Thomas cannot do in the confines of polite social discourse, the principles and conduct of the Crawfords, as Fanny Price also speaks the lan-

guage of Sherlock's sermon text to condemn the erring Henry and Maria Bertram in the wilderness at Sotherton.

The terms "wants and claims" of Sir Thomas, and Sherlock's rhetorical insistence that the health of "their Souls" requires attention to the "Persons" as well as the "spiritual Wants" of parishioners in order for the priest to "Feed the Church" are the vocabulary of "good works," which latitudinarian Anglicans endorse as fundamental to the Christian life. Sherlock and Sir Thomas condemn as pastoral negligence the focus on spirituality as an excuse for neglect of human needs. Even worse for Sherlock is transforming the vice of such neglect into a virtue, which Sherlock accuses "the enthusiasts" of doing in arguing that faith alone is required for salvation.

There is, in the language made use of to explain the doctrine of grace, something liable to be abused by ignorant or crafty men. We say, that of ourselves we can do nothing; whence they conclude, that we have nothing to do. We say, that it is the grace of God which enables us to do every thing; from whence they conclude, that every thing must be left to the grace of God, and that we need only work ourselves into a strong persuasion that God is at work for us, and may still ourselves. And this persuasion, which is generally mere enthusiasm, they dignify with the name of Christian faith.

To convince his reader of the need to join faith and works, Sherlock offers an allegorical parable of a person who

. . . wanted to move a weight, that required double his strength to move. If a friend came to his assistance, would it not be properly said, that his friend enabled him to do what he did? but would it follow that his friend did all, and he nothing?

Should there remain any doubt as to his meaning, Sherlock drops the rhetorical questioning and states an unambiguous conclusion.

Now then works are necessary to salvation; and it matters little in what degree they are necessary, or how they are to be named: if they are necessary, you must do them; and that is enough to secure the practice of virtue and holiness in the world.³⁴

Sherlock's position on faith and works stands in sharp contrast with the Reverend Cooper's list of topics, and Overton's summary of the content of Evangelical preaching.

Benevolence and gratitude link the faith versus works debate, whose concern is "salvation," with the concerns of Hutcheson's moral philosophy. Both benevolence and gratitude are feelings that originate in the moral sense, but are focused on tangible benefits leading to the happiness and well-being of others. This pragmatism suggests the cooperation of head and heart that Blair commends in his comments on Hutcheson's last published work, which appeared in the 1755 Edinburgh Review, where he also praises Sherlock's Discourses. Earlier, Hutcheson himself had contributed to philosophical discussions in the London Journal and The Dublin Weekly Journal.

In his biography of Henry Mackenzie, Harold Thompson argues that the posthumous Hutcheson philosophical discourse continues in Henry Mackenzie's The Mirror (1779-80), which Catherine Morland's mother in Northanger Abbey prescribes for her despondent daughter (241),³⁵ and in its successor, The Lounger (1785-87). Thompson also notes that both Walter Scott

and later Leigh Hunt recognized Mackenzie's debt to Hutcheson.³⁶ Further, The Loiterer (1789-90), a journal of Oxford vignettes and collegiate satire edited and largely written by Jane's brothers, James and Henry Austen (and to which Jane Austen may have contributed at age 15) claims literary kinship with "The Mirror" in its first edition. Thus it seems that Austen may have encountered Hutchesonian philosophy directly in an early edition of his Inquiry, and also through the sentimentalism of Mackenzie's journals, as well as through the playful satires on sentiment in The Loiterer. But the philosophy reflected in Mackenzie's stories seems to have degenerated, from the union of head and heart that Hugh Blair approves, into pure feeling and emotionalism. The figure of the "sentimentalist" who substitutes words for actions recurs, both in Lounger stories and in James and Henry Austen's, The Loiterer, where the division of head and heart becomes apparently irreversible, and which seems to end the Hutchesonian conversation as philosophical discourse. Jane Austen's novels, however, reclaim this discourse, and re-connect the "head and heart" that the earlier Edinburgh Review applauds.

According to Brian Vickers, Austen "mocked the figure of The Man of Feeling in Sanditon,"³⁷ the novel left unfinished at her death. Austen also reveals a kind of exasperated admiration of Walter Scott, who both dedicates Waverley (1814) to Mackenzie as "Our Scottish Addison," and who later praises Emma highly in an important review.³⁸ However, what Austen im-

explicitly criticizes in The Mirror is not Hutcheson or Mackenzie, but a patronizing essay about proper educational influences on young women, attributed to "Mr. Alex. Abercromby," later a judge "of the Court of Session in Scotland."³⁹ It seems more likely that Austen "mocks" the sentimental figure of the abused Harley in The Man of Feeling, who is victimized by his emotional sensitivity, rather than the work itself. Comically, Austen seems to affirm both Hutcheson and Mackenzie against "sentiment."

Mackenzie uses the genre of sentimental fiction to disclose its menace to happiness and, indeed, to survival, but his essay "On Novel Writing" in The Lounger is didactic criticism, in the style of Samuel Johnson's Rambler #4, of that very genre.

In the enthusiasm of sentiment there is much the same danger as in the enthusiasm of religion, of substituting certain impulses and feelings of what may be called a visionary kind, in the place of real practical duties, which, in morals, as in theology, we might not improperly denominate good works. In morals, as in religion, there are not wanting instances of refined sentimentalists, who are contented with talking of virtues which they never practice, who pay in words what they owe in actions; or perhaps, what is fully as dangerous, who open their minds to impressions which never have any effect upon their conduct, but are considered as something foreign to and distinct from it.⁴⁰

Robert D. Mayo observes that "ultimately Mackenzie the novelist says nothing about prose fiction of which Johnson the moralist could possibly have disapproved,"⁴¹ and joining religious belief with good works is a consistent theme of Sherlock's Discourses.

In The Mirror, the shift toward sentiment in the discourse of Hutcheson's philosophy after his death seems particularly relevant to the "Story of LaRoche," a fable of the conversion to Christianity of a notorious skeptic, identified subsequently by Mackenzie himself as David Hume, who had been Hutcheson's student in Edinburgh. When shown the story by Mackenzie, Adam Smith, who had been an Edinburgh Review contributor, "immediately recognized its subject (or target) as David Hume,"⁴² and he must also have recognized that this story continues posthumously the earlier correspondence between Hume and Hutcheson, which records the widening gulf between their philosophies.⁴³ "The Story of La Roche" appeared three years after Hume's death, and for John Mullan, "It is a fiction which, though it cannot quite make Hume into a Christian, is an attempt to exorcise the spirit of his philosophical reputation."⁴⁴ The Hume threat to religious belief cannot have gone unnoticed by Austen, although he is only acknowledged, again in Northanger Abbey (109), as the author of The History of England.

By degrees the mind of the philosopher surrenders to the fervent and emotional piety of La Roche. "His parishoners caught the ardour of the good old man; even the philosopher felt himself moved, and forgot for a moment, to think why he should not."

La Roche's religion was that of sentiment, not theory, . . . A philosopher might have called him an enthusiast; but if he possessed the fervour of the enthusiasts, he was guiltless of their bigotry. "Our

Father, which art in heaven!" might the good man say--for he felt it--and all mankind were his brethren.⁴⁵

This careful distinction of LaRoche's version of "sentiment" from "enthusiasm" is echoed in Lounger 20 (above), and reflects distrust at the individualism of the "enthusiasts" claim for a direct relationship with God, versus the social nature of religion in benevolent feelings toward "all mankind," manifested by good works.

But the sentiment which pulls the erring philosopher back to religion in the "Story of La Roche," seems to be quite different from the Hutchesonian philosophy "dictated by the heart, no less than the head" that the Edinburgh Review editor found so commendable. The conclusion of Mackenzie's fable notes that the sentiment triggered by "remembrance overcame him [the philosopher] even to weakness," which certainly is not characteristic of Hutcheson's socially involved moral agent. It is not even a quality of the good La Roche, who through all his trials is a faithful shepherd to his flock of parishioners. Sentiment seems to drive out reason, at least during moments of "remembrance," and the result is a loss of vitality, to which indeed the man who "excelled all" others in "the development of abstract subjects"⁴⁶ may, because of living in the world of thought, be constitutionally vulnerable. This is hinted at by the narrator's comment, "[t]he truth was, that indolence was the habit most natural to him."⁴⁷

I suggest that this "indolent" and "weak" figure is a product of the separation of "head" and "heart," and that he

is recognized as a sort of "species" in the first number of The Lounger, "Introduction--Character of the Author, indolent with Feeling, and Vacant with Observation."⁴⁸ The piece is not self-mocking, contrary to what one might expect, nor does it invite an ironic reading. Rather, it privileges "the loungeer" as an observer and commentator. Nevertheless, "the loungeer" warns of the "passive feelings of sensibility," after he listens to a mutual friend tell about a certain Mr. Woodfort who is moved to tearful sympathy with distress "in a tender novel" or "the representation of a tragedy," but "in real life" his "feeling and generosity unaccountably forsake him."

Scarcely ever has he been known to relieve the distresses he is so willing to pity, or to exercise the generosity he is so ready to applaud. The tenants on his estate are squeezed for rents higher than their farms can afford; his debtors are harassed for payments, in circumstances which might often plead for mitigation or delay. Nay, I know some of his pretty near relations, for relief of whose necessities I have applied with success to others, after having in vain solicited Woodfort's assistance to relieve them.⁴⁹

Not only is Woodfort incapacitated by feelings of sentiment, he also has lost touch with the morality of his own life. In many ways, he suggests a prototype for John Dashwood in Sense and Sensibility, who seems moved by the idea of fulfilling his father's dying request to provide for his mother and sisters, but whose generous feeling quickly evaporates when faced with the impact on his own situation.

The "loungeer" adds his own observations to his friend's story:

To this it may be proper to add, that the very indulgence in the passive feelings of sensibility has a

tendency to produce indolence, langour, and feebleness, and to unfit the mind for anything which requires active and firm exertion.⁵⁰

This observation is appropriate to the speaker in "Characters of Dr. Villars, and Mr. Sensitive," created for The Loiterer by W. B. Portal, family friend and school mate of James and Henry. This tale seems almost an elegy for Hutcheson in the figure of the venerable Dr. Villars and his somewhat sickly nephew, Mr. Sensitive.

In all their views of things, the Doctor is sanguine, the other inclines to Despondence, and while both wish to find things better than perhaps their Nature will admit, the one fancies he sees in the world less Defect, the other less Excellence than really exist. . . . [W]hile the Doctor's Heart expands with a thousand Projects for fostering Virtue, nothing enters Mr. Sensitive's Brain but how more effectually to repress Vice.⁵¹

This comparison captures the degeneration from the elderly Villars' benevolent sensibility to the morose romanticism of his alienated nephew's sentimentality, who perhaps reappears in Persuasion as the forlorn widower and sentimental Byron worshipper, Captain Benwick. The Loiterer also associates the benevolent Villars with the position represented by Sherlock and the latitudinarians on the importance of good works, while Mr. Sensitive clearly is identified with the "enthusiasts," whom Mackenzie accuses of "bigotry" in "The Story of La Roche."

By personal example, the Oxford student who narrates this tale in The Loiterer seems to show that one may rationalize inaction, as John Dashwood rationalizes moral inaction in Sense and Sensibility when confronted with the desperate

needs of mother and sisters. The thought processes of both are alike in justifying their non-involvement, whether moral action or the pursuit of knowledge.

I account myself, therefore, singularly fortunate, who have fallen upon such valuable Friends; . . . from whom I may acquire Information without the tediousness of Research, and arrive at Truth without the Exertion of Reflection. . . . And thus I imbibe more real and efficient Knowledge extended at my Ease on the Doctor's Sofa, than toiling through the close stowed Learning in the Library of my College, bewildered among Titles and Indexes, and enveloped in Dust. (10)

Hutcheson's steady focus on moral behavior has been converted to little more than the idle furniture of the academic mind, and "the lounge's" warning has become a fulfilled prophecy. Drained of energy and desire, the academic is all mind, but a mind passive and inert.

In The Loiterer's story, the "head" and the "heart" have become permanently divided, which defines the barely viable organism represented by the narrator passively absorbing academic knowledge on Dr. Villar's sofa. The elderly doctor, however, looks back to the philosophy applauded by The Edinburgh Review in Hutcheson that combines head and heart, and whose goal is human happiness. But The Loiterer's mock fin de la philosophie is the challenge Austen picks up, and she shows in her novels that benevolence and gratitude belong to the world of the present and future, not to miscellaneous intellectual acquisitions of the academy, or to the decayed sentiment of Mr. Sensitive. The supine figure of split and de-energized values in The Loiterer symbolizes the spiritual

sickness caused by the failure of heart and head to work together.

Before concluding my discussion of "the texts of virtue," I would like to address the argument that Austen reveals the influence of Bishop Joseph Butler, Hutcheson's near contemporary, more than that of any other moralist. J. A. Kearney concludes that "[c]losest to her position is that of Bishop Butler . . ."⁵², a relationship also suggested earlier by D. D. Devlin, Philip Drew, and Park Honan. Honan dismisses Hutcheson as "the eighteenth-century philosopher of happiness,"⁵³ and Devlin merely acknowledges him as the apostle and echo of Shaftesbury.⁵⁴ Drew, like Kearney, ignores Hutcheson, and instead argues for Butler against Gilbert Ryle's attempt "to establish her affinity" with Shaftesbury.⁵⁵

My argument for Hutcheson and Sherlock as more important does not necessarily exclude ideas attributable to other moral philosophers, including Butler. However, I feel that these three studies have, collectively, two serious flaws. The first is that slight consideration is given to Hutcheson's texts, when in fact their publication dovetailed with the appearance of Butler's major works, and each acknowledged the other, approvingly by Hutcheson, critically by Butler.⁵⁶ Further, Loveridge's brief essay is strongly persuasive of Austen's knowledge of Hutcheson, although his article in Notes and Queries was published after Devlin's and Drew's studies. The case built by Loveridge would seem to require some modification of earlier studies, particularly since no

comparable textual link between Austen and Butler has yet been offered.

In the preface to An Essay, Hutcheson actually claims for his moral sense theory the support of Butler.

I hope it is a good Omen of something still better on this Subject to be expected in the learned World, that Mr. Butler, in his Sermons at the Rolls Chapel, has done so much Justice to the wise and good Order of our Nature.⁵⁷

Butler, however, does not return the compliment. Although he never cites Hutcheson by name, he does seem to attack the idea that all virtue is summed up in benevolence. In Dissertation: Of the Nature of Virtue, he conflates Hutcheson's "moral sense" with his own idea on "conscience" under the general category of a "moral faculty,"⁵⁸ which is more responsive to the intrinsic morality of decisions as determined by Christian revelation and influenced by traditional Christian sanctions of reward and punishment. Such considerations make morality more a matter of the individual's relation to God's commands and gives less weight to Hutcheson's standard of the promotion of people's happiness. Therefore, for Butler, "benevolence and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice."⁵⁹ The significance of Butler's devaluation of benevolence is that it also devalues gratitude by breaking Hutcheson's dynamic union of the two, and, in fact, Butler has little to say about gratitude. The distance between Austen and Butler is proportional to his neglect of gratitude. For Butler, gratitude would be considered a "duty," the

first definition in Johnson's Dictionary cited earlier in this study. and "duty" needs little discussion, only compliance with external authority. Since the exchange of benevolence and gratitude in relationships is basic to the growth of love in Austen's novels, Butler's different concerns seem almost irrelevant.

Butler, on the other hand, does not reject happiness, but insists that it is more a spiritual satisfaction from following conscience as our duty. Those who shirk this duty

shall at last find, that he who has given up all the advantages of the present world, rather than violate his conscience and the relations of life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own interest and happiness.⁶⁰

Nothing could be farther from Austen than this invitation to take up the Cross and find happiness in sacrifice. Anne Elliot in Persuasion endorses "a strong sense of duty" (246), but her referent is the child-parent relationship, and by implication the spousal relationship in marriage, and neither Austen nor Hutcheson challenges the mandates of these social institutions. In Austen, however, the authority of gratitude is always the authority of one's feelings, Johnson's second definition of gratitude as "desire."

Hutcheson's focus is benevolence and gratitude as the two faces of virtue's coinage, whose value is stated in the quantity of human happiness they bring, and this also seems to be Austen's standard of value, not Butler's advice to look beyond privation in "the present world" for an ultimate "happiness." But neither is Hutcheson's emphasis on feelings and

happiness an excuse for hedonism, since the moral sense may give wrong readings, and "reason often corrects the report of our senses." In my discussion of Mansfield Park, I argue that Sherlock's sermon that Kearney quotes, offers a commentary on the sexual frolic of Henry Crawford and Maria Bertram in the "wilderness" of Sotherton, where reason is lost in the indulgence of passion. Sherlock addresses conduct and its consequences, whereas Hutcheson's concern is the instinctive motive to virtue or vice, leading to the threshold of action, where the sermon takes over.

Although in some ways, Sherlock's ideas are not unlike Butler's, particularly in their concern with conduct, he differs importantly from Butler in lamenting the acrimonious divisions among Anglicans, freethinkers, and deists.

You see how nearly natural religion and the Gospel are allied in the foundation of their hopes and expectations. It is a pity such near friends, who have but one common interest, should have any disputes. But disputes there are.⁶¹

By contrast, Overton points out that Butler wrote The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature (1736) "to counteract the practical mischief which he thought the Freethinkers . . . were doing."⁶² As I have suggested, there is a rigidity and other-worldliness to Butler that devalues the goal of human happiness for fallible beings in Austen, but with which Sherlock seems much more in tune. Both Butler and Sherlock were products of Cambridge, but Butler scholar Ernest Mossner sees him as a minority view against the dominant "selfish or utilitarian

school, basing itself on Locke and Newton," and he identifies Sherlock with this "school."⁶³ Mossner's choice of the term "selfish" is unfortunate and suggests a misleading connection with the diametrically opposed ideas of Hobbes, Mandeville, and Hume. However, "utilitarian" does seem to apply to Sherlock's concern with the practical benefits of Christian principle, such as charity, as well as to Hutcheson's standard that virtue is measured by its contribution to human happiness.

"Happiness" for Austen is, indeed, "salvation" for her characters, and her dramas seem to work like Sherlock's parables, whose homely examples illuminate larger truths. Even an apparently trivial incident in Austen's incomplete 1804 work, The Watsons, contrives to make a larger statement about benevolence, gratitude, and happiness. A fine, ten-year old boy, "uncommonly fond of dancing," is allowed by an indulgent mother to join the adults at a ball. Emma, the heroine, observes that his delight at securing a young, pretty partner is quickly dashed when the partner seizes a better opportunity.

If the poor little boy's face had in it's [sic] happiness been interesting to Emma, it was infinitely more so under this sudden reverse;--he stood the picture of disappointment, with crimson'd cheeks, quivering lips, & eyes bent on the floor. His mother, stifling her own mortification, tried to sooth his, with the prospect of Miss Osborne's second promise;--but tho' he contrived to utter with an effort of Boyish Bravery "Oh! I do not mind it"--it was very evident by the unceasing agitation of his features that he minded it as much as ever.--Emma did not think, or reflect;--she felt and acted--. "I shall be very happy to dance with you Sir, if you like it." said she, holding out her hand with the most unaf-

fect good humour.--The Boy in one moment restored to all his first delight--looked joyfully at his Mother . . . The Thankfulness of Mrs. Blake was more diffuse;--with a look, most expressive of unexpected pleasure, & lively Gratitude, she turned to her neighbour with repeated & fervent acknowledgements of so great & condescending a kindness to her boy.⁶⁴

A great deal is packed into this little story to make it a crystalline parable of virtue that exemplifies unimpeachable benevolence and gratitude. Emma's action is utterly spontaneous feeling--"she felt and acted"--unlike Cicero's and Fanny Dashwood's careful weighing of benevolence against calculations of reciprocal gratitude. Her action is pure benevolence, free of any taint of self-interest or (presumably) sexual attraction, since the lad is too young for banter such as Henry Tilney's flirtatious comment to Catherine Morland in Northanger Abbey that "I consider a country-dance as an emblem of marriage" (76). Finally, gratitude is felt both by the beneficiary and his mother, the observer of Emma's instinctive compassion, which testifies to the propagation of virtue by example.

Austen's parable draws on the commonplace to reveal virtue in action. Sherlock provides the moral commentary, based on his reading of the biblical commandment to "love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). For Sherlock, "love, with respect to our equals, is friendship and benevolence: towards inferiors it is courtesy and condescension: . . ."⁶⁵ Austen erases the distinction between "equal" and "inferior" in her story. Emma's gesture in addressing her young partner as "Sir" may only be gallantry, but it bridges any inequality

of status due to age, and offering herself as the boy's dance partner qualifies as the "benevolence" that Sherlock considers an act of Christian love, and reflects that "democratization" of virtue that Scott finds in Hutcheson.

Austen's opposition to the genderization of virtue is demonstrated when she re-writes this parable in Emma, in which virtually the identical scenario is repeated in a more complex version with gender roles reversed. Mr. Knightley steps to the rescue of this later Emma's protégé, Harriet, who has been cruelly snubbed at the Crown Inn ball, and dances with her, for which Emma is "all pleasure and gratitude" (328). Further, Mr. Knightley's benevolent act encourages Harriet to consider their inequality of station not so formidable as to preclude thoughts of marriage--a backfire of benevolence that, of course, creates comic problems of horrendous proportions. Hutcheson does acknowledge that reason may be needed to correct the false report of our senses, but it deserts Harriet to give an ironic twist to the rather "pat" version of the benevolent dance partner tale unfolded in the earlier work.

Dancing, however, stops short of being a metonymy for married life in Austen, although Henry Tilney seems to argue that it is, with the exception that the duties of dance partners to each other are reversed in marriage.

I consider a country-dance as an emblem of marriage. .
 . . In marriage, the man is supposed to provide for the support of the woman; the woman to make the home agreeable to the man; he is to purvey, and she is to smile. But in dancing, their duties are exactly changed; the agreeableness, the compliance are

expected from him, while she furnishes the fan and the lavender water. (76-77)

By accepting him as a dance partner, Henry claims that the woman exercises the power to make the dance happen, whereas in marriage the husband provides for the needs of the union. Tilney's theory implies, then, that the reciprocal response of gratitude is owed by the man in the dance and by the woman in marriage, but the literal-minded Catherine seems instinctively to reject, not Henry's logic, but the fundamental premise that any connection exists between dancing and marriage.

People that marry can never part, but must go and keep house together. People that dance, only stand opposite each other in a long room for half an hour. . . . I cannot look upon them at all in the same light, nor think the same duties belong to them. (77)

Paradoxically, Henry later finds himself bound by gratitude even more strongly in proposing marriage than in offering his hand in the dance, as Austen turns his own simile against him.

Chapter 2 Notes

1 Vol. 1, Works 249, 253.

2 Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility (1811) The Novels of Jane Austen, vol. 1, 3rd ed., R. W. Chapman (1933; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988) 10-11.

3 Cicero, De Officiis, trans. Walter Miller (1913; Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990) 233, 235 (Loeb Classical Library).

4 Cicero 17.

5 Bible, King James version.

6 Sherlock, Discourses, vol. 1, 251.

7 Sherlock, Discourses, vol. 2, 213-15.

8 In the 1611 King James version, Paul devotes his famous first Letter to the Corinthians (13:1-13) to extolling the qualities of "charity." His conclusion in the last verse is, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." The King James version is translated from the Vulgate, in which the Latin translation of the original Greek agape is caritas. The O.E.D. (vol. 3, 2nd ed., 1989) defines "charity" as "Christian love: a word representing caritas of the Vulgate, as a frequent rendering of [agape] in N.T. Greek." However, three earlier English translations use "love" instead of "charity," and it is not until an 1881 version that "love," as the preferred translation from the Greek, again replaces the King James "charity." In versions since then, including the 1960 Revised Standard Version, "love" continues to be the translation. (The New Testament Octapla, ed. Luther A. Weigle [New York: Thos. Nelson, 1962] pp. 976-7).

9 Maaja Stewart, Domestic Realities and Imperial Fictions: Jane Austen's Novels in Eighteenth-Century Contexts (Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia P, 1993) 149.

- 10 Loveridge 214-216.
- 11 An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil (1725), Works, vol. 1, 172.
- 12 Loveridge 216.
- 13 "Treatise II" usually is entitled An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil, rather than the cover page title of An Inquiry Concerning the Original of our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good.
- 14 "My father has got above 500 Volumes to dispose of;--I want James to take them at a venture at half a guinea a volume." Letter to Cassandra, 14 January 1801, Letters, vol. 2, 111. Chapman gives the same quantity, presumably on the authority of this letter. Jane Austen. Facts and Problems (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949) 38.
- 15 A Bibliography of Jane Austen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982) 431.
- 16 British Moralists, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (1897; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964) 385-392.
- 17 In Rivers, ed. 99.
- 18 In Rivers, ed., 173.
- 19 Table 11, The London Book Trades, 1775-1800 (Folkstone: Dawson, 1977) xxxi.
- 20 Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750-1800 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 104.
- 21 Before Novels: The Cultural Context of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction (New York: Norton, 1990) 249, 248, 251.

22 Mautner, 29 (and note).

23 Deirdre Le Faye writes: "I am sorry to have to say that no ms. sermons by either Revd George Austen, or either of his sons James and Henry, survive amongst the family papers I have seen. There is mention as recently as 1937 (JA and Steventon, by Emma Austen-Leigh) of just one sermon that was then in the hands of descendants, composed by Revd. George Austen." Letter 11 March 1993.

24 Vol. 2, Letters 406.

25 Letter to Cassandra, 8 September 1816, vol. 2, Letters 467.

26 Overton and Relton 342.

27 "Contents," vol. 1 (Hartford: Goodrich, 1817) vii-xii.
"First American from the Eighth London Edition." Microfilm.

28 Overton and Relton 232.

29 30 August 1805, vol. 1, Letters 169.

30 Mautner 151.

31 William Enfield, Compiler, The English Preacher: or Sermons on the Principal Subjects of Religion and Morality, 9 vols. (London: Johnson, 1773).

32 Overton and Relton 154.

33 In Carpenter 149.

34 Discourse XVIII, Discourses, vol. 1, 348-51.

35 Deirdre Le Faye confirms the presence of The Mirror in the Austen household. William Austen-Leigh and Richard Arthur, Jane Austen: A Family Record (Boston: Hall, 1989) 102. Henry Mackenzie, ed. The Mirror. A Periodical Paper Published at Edinburgh in the years 1779 and 1780. 2 vols. 2nd American ed. (Philadelphia: Spottswood and Johnson, 1793). A number of pieces might have been considered appropriate for the despondent Catherine by her mother in Northanger Abbey, who feared her daughter had been spoiled by her stay with the Tilney family, such as numbers 51 on a girl's alienation from her father after too much exposure to "fine company" and 14 "Of Indolence." Number 15, "Of Education," appeals for "the education of a gentleman" that will "produce a being less dishonourable to the species than the courtier of Lord Chesterfield, and more useful to society than the savage of Rousseau," vol. 1 (69). Such thoughts also seem to inform George Knightley's francophobic attack on the character of Frank Churchill in Emma.

36 Harold William Thompson, A Scottish Man of Feeling. Some Account of Henry Mackenzie, Esq. of Edinburgh and of the Golden Age of Burns and Scott (London: Oxford UP, 1931) 20.

37 Introduction, The Man of Feeling, by Henry Mackenzie, ed. Brian Vickers (London: Oxford UP, 1967) viii.

38 Quarterly Review XIV (1815) 188-201. In B. C. Southam, ed., Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968) 58-69.

39 "Advertisement," vol. 1, The Mirror, Rpt. in vol. 28, British Essayists, ed. A. Chalmers (Boston: Little Brown, 1855) v, ix.

40 No. 20 (18 June 1785), vol. 30, British Essayists, 142-3.

41 The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815 (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1962) 145.

42 Mullan 114.

- 43 Letters 17 September 1739 and 16 March 1740, The Letters of David Hume, ed. Greig, rpt. in vol. 2, British Moralists, ed. Raphael, 108-11.
- 44 Mullan 115.
- 45 "The Story of La Roche" The Mirror No. 42 (19 June 1779), vol. 28, The British Essayists 248.
- 46 "The Story of La Roche" 240.
- 47 "The Story of La Roche" 250.
- 48 vol. 30, The British Essayists xi.
- 49 No. 77 (22 July 1786), vol. 31, The British Essayists 185.
- 50 189.
- 51 No. 30 (22 April 1789), James Austen, ed., The Loiterer. A Periodical Work in Two Volumes. First Published at Oxford in the Years 1789 and 1790 (1790; Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications, 1984). Microfilm. Early English Newspapers Series. 8-9.
- 52 Kearney 110.
- 53 Jane Austen: Her Life (New York: St. Martin's, 1987) 356
- 54 Devlin 67-8.
- 55 "Jane Austen and Bishop Butler," Nineteenth Century Fiction 35.2 (1980): 127-8.
- 56 Hutcheson, An Inquiry (1725), An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions. With Illustrations On the Moral

Sense (1728). Butler, Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel (1726), Of the Nature of Virtue, "Dissertation II" in The Analogy of Religion (1736).

57 Vol. 2, Works xix.

58 Raphael, British Moralists, vol. 1, 379.

59 Raphael, British Moralists, vol. 1, 383.

60 Butler, Sermons (1729), vol. 1, British Moralists, ed. Selby-Bigge, 225.

61 "Discourse V," vol. 1, Discourses 128-9.

62 Overton and Relton 115.

63 Ernest Campbell Mossner, Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason (New York: Macmillan, 1936) 188.

64 Vol. 6, Works 329-31.

65 "Discourse XIII," vol. 1, Discourses 251-64.

CHAPTER III

DISCOVERING GRATITUDE: THE SEARCH FOR MORAL GUIDANCE IN NORTHANGER ABBEY AND SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Northanger Abbey reveals that growing up as a young woman in Regency England is to experience brutality and deception, and that the lessons learned are one's own powerlessness in the face of hostile force and violence, expressed as restraint, constraint, assault, and intrigue. Claudia Johnson observes that "bullying of various sorts is rampant" in Northanger Abbey and that characters "resort even to physical compulsion."¹ Gratitude is also shown to be moral compulsion which, however, may be a peaceful alternative to the attainment of objectives by physical force, although at first it seems to serve the ends of oppression. Gratitude is liberated from serving tyranny by the claim on Henry Tilney that Catherine Morland successfully opposes to the demands of his father, General Tilney, who can claim the authority of filial gratitude.

I must confess that his [Henry's] affection originated in nothing better than gratitude, or, in other words, that a persuasion of her partiality for him had been the only cause of giving her a serious thought. (243)

Nevertheless, Austen's narrative explanation that gratitude is Henry's motive for proposing marriage seems gratuitous. What purpose is served by this reader enlightenment? I suggest that behind the story of Henry as the center of a gratitude conflict between Catherine and his father, and be-

neath his veneer of a civilized, worldly, mentor, Austen sees Henry as sexually abusive and violent toward Catherine. His "gratitude" may or may not be read as remorse, but does seem to represent sort of a quid pro quo acknowledged toward his victim. The narrative assurance of "perfect felicity" awaiting them (250) is heavy irony, since Austen has already interposed the obligation of gratitude for a scoundrel whose offense reveals him incapable of love.

Austen, then, is telling two stories at the same time, and she superimposes the lighthearted story of Catherine's awakening from a gothic dreamworld on the nightmare of a young woman's sexual victimization by adapting the genre and traditions of the fable. Gratitude can be seen as the link between the stories and genres.

In Northanger Abbey, gratitude seems drained of emotional content. Instead, it means obligation, conduct, and behavior, and seems to have little to do with the feelings. The concept is that of a manifest "duty," Samuel Johnson's first definition in his 1755 Dictionary, and not that of a powerful "feeling," Johnson's second definition. In all other Austen novels except for Northanger Abbey and Sense and Sensibility, gratitude is feeling, and a necessary ingredient in love. Gratitude is also feeling in Samuel Hutcheson's philosophy, and the absence of any suggestion of Hutcheson's philosophy suggests that Northanger Abbey (originally Susan) was composed before First Impressions (later published as Pride and Prejudice), possibly even earlier than Elinor and

Marianne, the epistolary version of Sense and Sensibility, written in Jane Austen's twenty-first year.² Jan Fergus seems to accept the chronology that places Susan as a later composition than the original versions of the other two novels, but contends that "in it Austen reverts to the modes of burlesque and parody that she had enjoyed in the juvenilia."³ Although Susan clearly was revised, both before its sale to Crosby in 1803 as well as prior to its contemplated publication as Northanger Abbey in 1813, I believe the role of gratitude places it, not as a "reversion," but as a composition much closer to Austen's Juvenilia, where there is a continuing challenge to the authority of gratitude, which is burlesqued and spoofed, as a kind of youthful rebellion against an imposed and burdensome duty.

The germ of Austen's plot seems to be found in the epistolary Lady Susan, dated by Chapman as probably composed in 1793 or the following year. The ogre in the earlier work corresponding to the widower General Tilney is the widowed Lady Susan, who holds her terrified daughter, Frederica, in fearful and abusive bondage, a bondage implied in the iron grip of the General on his children in Northanger Abbey. Lady Susan's sister-in-law schemes to free Frederica from her mother by attaching her to Reginald, a young man whom the mother happens to have set her sights on as well. The sister-in-law describes her observations of the pair, and the qualities of the intended husband which she counts on for the plan to work.

I cannot help fancying that she is growing partial to [Reginald], I so often see her eyes fixed on his face with a remarkable expression of pensive admiration! . . . I am much mistaken if a syllable of his uttering, escape her.

I want to make him sensible of all this, for we know the power of gratitude on a heart such as his; & could Frederica's artless affection detach him from her Mother, we might bless the day which brought her to Churchill.⁴

Although there is gender reversal of characters, the plot still relies on the power of gratitude to encourage a marriage proposal, and to free Frederica from her mother's clutches, as it also releases Henry from his father's tyranny. The erotic symbolism of Frederica's "eyes fixed on his face" also recurs in Catherine Morland's gaze of surrender on Henry Tilney before his attack.

As I have suggested, claims to gratitude may empower the powerless, but this power is costly. In Northanger Abbey, the quid pro quo of gratitude can also be seen as, perhaps, even more like a pay-off to Catherine. Gratitude is probed and satirized in other works from the Juvenilia, and the challenge always seems to be that the price, whether in moral values or personal integrity, is too high. In "A Letter from a Young Lady" in the miscellany collected as "Scraps,"⁵ the writer willingly gives perjured testimony to support a fraudulent plaintiff, who "in gratitude waited on me the next day with an offer of his hand" (MW 175). "Evelyn" (1792) is an extended burlesque of excessive gratitude, which is pushed to reductio ad absurdum, and In "Jack and Alice" (1787-90),

Lucy declines an offered life of comfort and security because of the burden of gratitude.

Your Ladyship's kind wish of my always remaining with you, is noble and generous but I cannot think of becoming so great a burden on one I so much love & esteem. That one should receive obligations only from those we despise, is a sentiment instilled into my mind by my worthy aunt, in my early years, & cannot in my opinion be too strictly adhered to. (MW 27)

These youthful challenges to gratitude suggest an effort to degrade its sacrosanct status, or at least to convert it from a childhood burden to a resource for rebellion. The authoritarian targets may be the law, as in "A Letter," or parents, as in Lady Susan and Northanger.

The burden in Northanger Abbey that bears on the Tilney children, as well as on Catherine, is General Tilney. Why should Catherine's claim to gratitude be superior to that of Henry's father? The General can also marshal gratitude's heavy artillery on his own behalf to demand that Henry obey his directive to drop Catherine. The difference seems to be that gratitude may create a constructive engagement to marry, and therefore prior claims are subordinate to the performance of this covenant. The child's duty of gratitude to a parent as inherent in the relationship itself is affirmed by a long line of literary and philosophical texts. After humiliation by Goneril, King Lear turns in pathetic desperation to her sister, Regan.

Thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude.
(Act 2, Scene 4, 169-71)

What are the "dues of gratitude" owed under the "bond of childhood?" Sir William Blackstone gives filial obligation the force of law for the eighteenth century, based on "a principle of natural justice and retribution. . . . For to those who gave us existence we naturally owe subjection and obedience during our minority, and honour and reverence ever after."⁶

Conversely, violation of the "bond of childhood" with a parent is ingratitude, which David Hume denounces as a crime that aggravates offenses against parents.

Of all crimes that human creatures are capable of committing, the most horrid and unnatural is ingratitude, especially when it is committed against parents, . . .⁷

The paradigm for filial gratitude is found in an eighteenth-century Anglican sermon to be the Christian's relationship with God.

Our blessed Lord . . . represented his Father as altogether good, and kind, and lovely, and enjoined obedience to him as a free tribute of gratitude and love; as the homage of affection, not of fear; as the duty of a son, not the work of a servant.⁸

Although fear does seem present in the Tilney children's "homage" to their father, the General nevertheless has a strong practical claim, in addition to cultural support, to Henry's gratitude, since he owns the parsonage property and controls the living at Woodston, where Henry now serves as parish priest.

The house stands among fine meadows facing the south-east, with an excellent kitchen-garden in the same aspect; the walls surrounding which I built and stocked myself about ten years ago, for the benefit of my son. It is a family living, Miss Morland; and

the property in the place being chiefly my own, you may believe I take care that it shall not be a bad one. Did Henry's income depend solely on this living, he would not be ill provided for. (176)

Thus Henry's recognition of a "superior" gratitude owed to Catherine must overcome the formidable opposing claims of his father. Further, the gratitude that motivates Henry, as well as that invoked by Shakespeare and Blackstone, is recognized as obligation or "duty," unrelated to the "feelings." At most, Henry's gratitude is a reasoned response to Catherine's feelings, and a reversal of Dr. John Gregory's analysis of a woman's response to a man's love.

--What is commonly called love among you, is rather gratitude, and a partiality to the man who prefers you to the rest of your sex: and such a man you often marry, with little of either personal esteem or affection. Indeed, without any unusual share of natural sensibility, and very peculiar good fortune, a woman in this country has very little probability of marrying for love.⁹

Gregory's theory is based on the widely shared assumption among his contemporaries that men are more passionate and capable of love than women, and Austen seems determined to contest this premise. After Catherine's first meeting and dance with Henry, the narrator speculates on whether Catherine will dream of him that night.

Whether she thought of him so much, while she drank her warm wine and water, and prepared herself for bed, as to dream of him when there, cannot be ascertained; but I hope it was no more than in a slight slumber, or a morning doze at most; for if it be true, as a celebrated writer has maintained, that no young lady can be justified in falling in love before the gentleman's love is declared, it must be very improper that a young lady should dream of a gentleman before the gentleman is known to have dreamt of her. (30)

The "celebrated writer" is revealed in a footnote to be "Mr. Richardson," writing in "Rambler" #97, but the relationship of initiative and response attributed to him shares the same assumptions as Gregory's essay. The unvoiced comment in Austen's humorous sally, of course, is how little these male "authorities" know about women's feelings, and the absurd logic which subjects the unconscious to a rule of behavior mocks their assumptions, despite Austen's admiration for both Richardson and Johnson.

Austen frequently presents gratitude as a sort of obligation incurred in response to the love of another, but she seems to argue that it may equally well define man's response to woman's affection, as it does for Henry Tilney, or indeed be the precursor of love for both. In Persuasion, her last novel, Frederick Wentworth speculates to Anne Elliot on the possible explanation for the unlikely engagement of Captain Benwick to Louisa Musgrove.

Had it been the effect of gratitude, had he learnt to love her, because he believed her to be preferring him, it would have been another thing. But I have no reason to suppose it so. (182-3)

Gratitude here is seen as sufficiently powerful to overcome the contrasts in temperament and character that would seem to make their union improbable, but it does not necessarily speak well for future happiness, or for the concordance of feeling that eventually joins the hearts of Anne and Frederick, and which readers are encouraged to believe will also unite Henry and Catherine. Indeed, as obligation, gratitude may be a potent threat to future happiness, as Wentworth

himself realizes with dismay that, because of his own earlier attentiveness to Louisa, he "was hers in honour if she wished it."

He found too late, in short, that he had entangled himself; and that precisely as he became fully satisfied of his not caring for Louisa at all, he must regard himself as bound to her, if her sentiments for him were what the Harvilles supposed. (242)

He is, fortunately, rescued by "the astonishing and felicitous intelligence of her engagement with Benwick" (243).

Narrative explanation of Henry Tilney's gratitude discloses that he, too, recognizes the same constraints that Wentworth acknowledges.

He felt himself bound as much in honour as in affection to Miss Morland, and believing that heart to be his own which he had been directed to gain, no unworthy reaction of a tacit consent, no reversing decree of unjustifiable anger, could shake his fidelity, or influence the resolutions it prompted. (247)

Since filial obedience to his father's directive turns out to have been the basis of Henry's courtship, the argument seems to be that the General must live with the consequences of Henry's success. Legal terms such as "bound," "tacit consent," and "decree" invest the argument with the judgment of the moral court that General Tilney has waived his rights to gratitude and assigned them to Catherine.

Austen, however, leaves final judgment of competing claims to the reader, to whom she presents the moral question that the novel is supposed to address, and which readers may answer as they interpret the facts.

I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether

to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience. (252)

But implied in the subtext is an equally sweeping moral question, "what price gratitude?" Catherine's claim to Henry's gratitude is power for the powerless, but she has gained it at substantial personal cost. The form of the didactic moral question that ends the novel also is characteristic of fables and biblical parables, such as those employed for moral or religious instruction, texts with which Austen, who may have been still in her teens, would be better acquainted than with the works of moral philosophy that seem to inform her later novels.

Another "fable" in Catherine's schooling is John Gay's "The Hare and Many Friends," which "she learnt . . . as quickly as any girl in England" (14). Gay's fable teaches a lesson about human nature through bestial allegory just the reverse of the biblical Good Samaritan parable.¹⁰ A hare, beset by hounds, exhausts herself in evasive action, and begs to be carried out of danger by, successively, a horse, bull, goat, sheep, and calf. Each claims some kind of incapacity to help, but says that the next animal to follow will surely give the hare a ride. The calf, however, although the hare's last hope, pleads that he would offend the others by helping her after they had declined.

Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence.
Excuse me, then. You know my heart,
But dearest friends, alas! must part.
How shall we all lament! Adieu.
For see the hounds are just in view.¹¹

The reader turns with the hare to see violent death at hand, more terrifying in anticipation than the event itself. And this fable is what Catherine "learnt as quickly as any girl in England"? Although Austen may be seen as making some kind of joke about moral instruction, I think the significance lies in the meaning of "learnt." The mock drama of the novel is that the adolescent Catherine is "training for a heroine" (15), and "learnt" may mean that she learns the truth of this fable in her own experience, not necessarily that she memorizes Gay's verse. Catherine, although not threatened by hounds, finds herself regularly betrayed, forced, dropped, or neglected by those in whom she places her trust. All of these parables and fables inform Catherine's story, and their violence represents a subtext commentary on what usually passes for innocuous horseplay in Austen's comedy.

Catherine herself is the hare, but Austen's comic drama masks forces that threaten her happiness quite as deadly as the hounds and reveals the defenselessness of a young woman against the brutality of the ethical system she encounters growing up. This system also unites the animals in their common refusal to help the hare, who clearly cannot escape her "space" that she shares with oppressors and presumed friends. Gay's hare is female, but except for the generic labels of "sheep" and "goat," all the other animals who might help her are identified as male. The significance of this gender differentiation seems to be not that men are evil or ruthless, but that their moral inertia, which sacrifices an innocent

victim, is supported by a common system of values. There seems to be almost an invisible fence that encloses the hare's world, and she can only double back and zig-zag to throw off the hounds and the ethical system that conspires against her.

Like the hare, Catherine, too, must share the same space with friend and foe. A seventeen-year old of Catherine's social class does not expect freedom of movement, nor does she hunger for it. Her social class is surrounded by an invisible fence, quite as impenetrable as that which confines the hare. In such confinement, where can Catherine look for guidance and help in the personal choices that open up to her? At home her father, the clergyman, says not a word throughout the novel, nor are any thoughts attributed to him independent of his wife, whose concerns are more with the health and schooling of the six younger children. Both parents are only too happy to have their family friends, the Allens, take their eldest daughter off their hands. From Fullerton, Catherine is conducted to Bath, chaperoned by the the Allens. Catherine seeks direction from others, but Mrs. Allen, however, turns out to be totally laissez faire, and Mr. Allen is too preoccupied with allieviating his gout and pursuing his own interests to intervene, except with retrospective comments. Mrs. Allen declines to advise Catherine on the propriety of accepting invitations from the Thorpes for excursions from Bath, leaving Catherine with no excuse to follow her conflicting inclination to join the less insistent Tilneys, who

nevertheless turn out to be manipulating her through polite manners as she is overtly bullied and lied to by the Thorpes. Her brother, James, might be expected to be an authoritative source of guidance, but he is befuddled by love of Isabella Thorpe, and reinforces their demands against the wishes of his sister.

Catherine's education at home is delegated to books, and allowed wide latitude in her reading, she avoids "books of information" (15), but gobbles up an eclectic diet of poetry, gothic romance, Shakespeare, and Gay's Fables. Ironically, this mix seems to offer a more faithful foreshadowing of the near future than morally instructive "books of information." Catherine brings home with her the mental cruelty she suffers at the abbey, but finds no solace in her family's bosom for the mental anguish she betrays, which her mother attributes to a let-down after enjoying the elegant life with the Tilney's. In yet another parental abdication to textual instruction, her mother runs off to fetch volume one of The Mirror, which contains, she states, "a very clever Essay . . . about young girls that have been spoilt for home by great acquaintance,"¹² which she expects will cure Catherine's malaise (241). The real cure, of course, is presented as Henry's unexpected arrival and marriage proposal.

As is obvious to any reader, the novel both praises and spoofs the popular gothic romance, in particular Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho (1774), whose heroine is pulled and pushed violently through a labyrinth of medieval

geography, before emerging intact and happy. Claudia Johnson argues that the "physical compulsion" in Northanger Abbey "emphasizes the political subtext of gothic conventions: her [Radcliffe's] villain, General Tilney, is not only a repressive father, but also a self-professed defender of national security."¹³ Johnson seems to see the novel more as a political and cultural critique of Regency England, but I suggest its principal concern is with the psychological anxieties of a young woman, dependent on others for both security and happiness. Uncertain of her authority to make her own decisions, as well as lacking the power to do so, she writes herself into the scripts of the gothic novels she devours.

Both readings, however, are commonplace, and there is no doubt that Catherine's predicaments reflect a political and cultural context. Claudia Johnson also argues against interpretations that find that "Austen's parody in Northanger Abbey debunks gothic conventions out of an allegiance to the commonsense world of the ordinary, where life is sane and dependable, if not always pleasant."

But by showing that the gothic is in fact the inside out of the ordinary, that the abbey does indeed present a disconcerting double image, particularly forbidding and arrogant to one who, like Catherine, does not have an entrée. Northanger Abbey does not refute, but rather clarifies and reclaims, gothic conventions in distinctly political ways.¹⁴

As I have suggested, I think Johnson veers off hastily toward a political interpretation, but I do agree that the novel reveals "the gothic" to be more reality than fiction in Catherine's experience. Nevertheless, I would argue that

Catherine's life is an overlapping of many texts, including both ancient fables and biblical parables as well as Gay's modern satiric versions, and their biblical parable counterparts.

Marilyn Butler sees "[a]ll of Jane Austen's novels" as "fables which act out traditional concepts of the qualities and the role of the gentry," specifically "a pointed adaptation of the Cinderella myth."¹⁵ Butler's sweeping theory needs more support than she provides, but certainly a number of fables are combined in Northanger Abbey. Like Radcliffe, Austen eventually offers explanations that explain the apparently marvelous in terms of the commonplace and probable, such as Henry Tilney's debunking of Catherine's gothic fantasy about the fate of his mother. For Mark Loveridge, the reader also is expected to learn from the debunking of the marvellous.

The reading mind must be led to make an inference from the narrative--the "fable"--to the moral that the fable is designed to reveal (Austen reminds her readers that novels and fables share interests, in her discreet reference in the first chapter to John Gay's fable of "The Hare and Many Friends").¹⁶

As I have suggested Catherine learns from experience that there is no escape from the vicious "hounds" of life, unlike gothic novels that find a safe haven for heroines.

Certainly if any safe haven were to beckon Catherine, she should find security among the powerful and close-knit Tilneys in the shelter of their "abbey." Yet Austen uses the verb "seemed" to describe Catherine's impressions of the Tilneys on the first two occasions of seeing them en famille, which lends mysteriousness and a sense of illusion to her ex-

periences, heightened by her feeling of "awe" in the General's presence, whose progressive "metamorphosis" for Loveridge includes transformation into a "repressive and rapacious ogre."¹⁷ "Awe" is the eighteenth-century response to "the sublime" that suggests the immanence of supreme and perhaps occult power, dangerous even if not an immediate threat to one's personal safety, and Catherine's awe foreshadows the evidence of that power, later to be directed at her. When the mystery of the General's inexplicable volte-face is unravelled, Catherine is revealed to have been identified as a suitably wealthy prospective bride for Henry, and maneuvered into visiting Northanger Abbey under a strategy masterminded by the General and executed by his children. Leaving Bath, the caravan of coach and four, followed by Henry's curricule, is like a troop movement. The trip is referred to as "their journey into Gloucestershire," and the preposition "into" seems to emphasize that Catherine is leaving one enclosed space, only to enter another as captive, albeit a willing one, of her hosts. Her path leads into increasing confinement and restricted movement, until she is face-to-face with the agent of her undoing, at the point of her least ability to resist.

Her approach to the abbey grounds penetrates deeper into a series of further enclosures, as she "found herself passing through the great gates of the lodge into the very grounds of Northanger," thence "actually under the Abbey walls," "beneath the shelter of the old porch," and "passed on to the

hall, . . . " (161). Her survey of the grounds, conducted the morning after her arrival, confirms that indeed she is captive in a beautiful prison.

The whole building enclosed a large court; and two sides of the quadrangle, rich in Gothic ornaments, stood forward for admiration. The remainder was shut off by knolls of old trees, or luxuriant plantations, and the steep woody hills rising behind to give it shelter, were beautiful even in the leafless month of March. (177)

The setting is remarkably like another luxurious prison, the Happy Valley in Samuel Johnson's fable, Rasselas, with which Northanger Abbey shares other similarities, as noted by Mark Loveridge¹⁸ and Frederick Keener.¹⁹

The place . . . was a spacious valley . . . surrounded on every side by mountains, [from which] rivulets descended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, . . .

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; . . . All the diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.²⁰

Northanger Abbey is really a self-contained kingdom, and the General impresses on Catherine the scope of his reign, which extends to Henry's living and vicarage at Woodston, twenty miles from Northanger. Enlarging on his philosophy that "every young man" should have "some employment," he notes that "[e]ven Frederick, my eldest son, you see, who will perhaps inherit as considerable a landed property as any private man in the county, has his profession" (176).

Having drawn this vaguely defined but impressive map of the kingdom, the General conducts Catherine on an inspection of its attractions, particularly the "kitchen-garden."

The walls seemed countless in number, endless in length; a village of hot-houses seemed to arise among them, and a whole parish to be at work within the inclosure. (178).

The whole domain, however, is a vast, comfortable, prison, as the "countless walls" suggest, presided over by a master artificer who creates botanical wonders such as pineapples (178) in the hot-houses and kitchen-garden.

But only the wizard of fable could transform himself once more into the ogre who inexplicably evicts Catherine, even though a plausible explanation is later offered of the General as the dupe of John Thorpe, who misled him about Catherine's wealth. Catherine is jolted into new proof of her powerlessness, and even Eleanor again seems enchanted into powerlessness as well, when she pleads with Catherine to forgive her for bearing the message of her expulsion.

. . . yet, I trust you will acquit me, for you must have been long enough in this house to see that I am but a nominal mistress of it, that my real power is nothing. (225)

Throughout the novel, Catherine's powerlessness is revealed. Henry reminds her that in both "matrimony and dancing . . . man has the advantage of choice, woman only the power of refusal;" (77), but the sententious gravity of the statement is masked as flirtatious banter and dismissed by the literal-minded Catherine, who is not disposed to look beyond her enjoyment of the dance. John Thorpe lacks Henry's grace and sense of scene, but physically demonstrates Catherine's powerlessness when he contrives to get her into his carriage. Catherine, however, finds that Thorpe has misled her

that the Tilneys had called off a prior engagement with her when she sees them from the carriage.

"Stop, stop, Mr. Thorpe, . . . How could you tell me they were gone?--Stop, stop, I will get out this moment and go to them." But to what purpose did she speak?--Thorpe only lashed his horse into a brisker trot; . . . Catherine, angry and vexed as she was, having no power of getting away, was obliged to give up the point and submit. (87)

If Catherine is indirectly restrained from leaping by fear of injury, on the next occasion she is physically held back from keeping her postponed date with the Tilneys. Further, her brother, James, backs up the Thorpes by an appeal to sisterly loyalty.

Isabella, however, caught hold of one hand; Thorpe of the other; and remonstrances poured in from all three. Even James was quite angry. (100)

But Catherine insists she will not be "tricked" into violating her promise to the Tilneys, "[a]nd with these words she broke away and hurried off" (101). Catherine must use her own physicality to free herself from the combined holds of the Thorpes.

Claudia Johnson argues that Henry Tilney is no better than the other bullies, only "more polished" (37), and I also think that Henry's toying with Catherine's unsophisticated openness, under orders from the General to woo her, amounts to manipulation little different from the use of force. But his most severe assault is the reproof he administers to Catherine's gothic novel reconstruction of the fate she concocts for General Tilney's deceased wife, whom she imagines

either murdered, or possibly even alive but hidden away in captivity.

Catherine finally penetrates to the innermost recesses of the abbey in her clandestine investigation of the room Mrs. Tilney had occupied. Her wide-ranging earlier surveys of the premises obscured the reality that these chambers offered only greater confinement, but this final compartment proves a cul-de-sac when she is surprised by Henry's unexpected return. Using the same back stairs that gave Catherine access to his mother's apartment as a shortcut to his own quarters, he catches her red-handed at her most powerless moment, with no way out.

For the reader of their ensuing conversation, Catherine's efforts to change the subject from the true reasons for their unanticipated encounter are hilarious, but Henry sees through the awkward efforts of an unskilled prevaricator and fills her in on the sad but commonplace circumstances of his mother's illness and death nine years earlier. After dispelling her illusions, he turns to Catherine's lurid imaginative version.

"And from these circumstances," he replied, (his quick eye fixed on her's,) "you infer perhaps the probability of some negligence--some--(involuntarily she shook her head)--or it may be--of something less pardonable." She raised her eyes towards him more fully than she had ever done before. (196)

What is this meeting of "his quick eye" with hers, "raised . . . towards him more fully than she had ever done before?" Why should this be the occasion for Catherine to deliver herself, body and soul, with the symbolic sexuality of direct

gaze? At this point, Catherine still clings to her psychological investment in the idea of General Tilney having aided or abetted his wife's death in some way. Her illusions are her clothes but, unlike the mythical deluded Emperor, she senses the imminent threat of nakedness. By "rais[ing] her eyes towards him more fully than she had ever done before," she pleads with Henry, he of the "quick eye," who has the power to cover or expose her shame. His response is to disrobe her ruthlessly.

"If I understand you rightly, you had formed a surmise of such horror as I have hardly words to--Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you--Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetuated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing; where every man is surrounded by a neighborhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay every thing open? Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting?" (197-8)

Mark Loveridge sees this verbal "assault" as "closer to bullying," echoing Claudia Johnson's view of the whole novel, but he seems to minimize the damage to Catherine.

She may be an object of burlesque and ironical humor, and she may be the abused and distressed good-hearted heroine; at the end of the previous chapter, abused and distressed by Henry himself.²¹

However, Catherine's purgation of gothic fantasies seems to disguise a text of sexual violence, whose vocabulary intrudes into the civilized discourse. Henry begins his attack with "Dear Miss Morland," a familiarity that degrades her from the

respectful salutation of "Miss Morland," and closes with her further degradation to "Dearest Miss Morland," accused of "admitting," a term with overtones of unchastity, "ideas" which Henry replaces as he assumes possession and authority. Catherine's room is at hand by the end of this assault, to which she flees "with tears of shame," exposed and wounded.

Next to Henry's violation of Catherine, her eviction by the General is minor punishment that leaves her person unscathed. Gratitude succeeds in securing her abuser as her husband, but at the same time seems to validate abuse. Austen's didactic "either-or" question at the novel's end plays on the authority of the morally instructive fable or parable, but it may also reveal that Austen herself is unsure of the true worth of gratitude. Her questioning of gratitude continues in Sense and Sensibility, before she grants it in Pride and Prejudice the positive role for human happiness argued by Francis Hutcheson and Thomas Sherlock. Although gratitude also leads to love and marriage in later novels, it never again serves the ends of sexual oppression.

In Sense and Sensibility²², Jane Austen directly confronts the question of whether firm adherence to the stoical virtues can lead to personal happiness, and her answer to that question is "no." She seems to present a "what if" world--"what if" our lives were ruled by the stoic values, which among eighteenth-century moralists are encoded in the moral philosophy of John Balguy and the so-called "intellectualists." These values seem to offer philosophical support

for the contemporary views of woman's passion and sexuality offered in Dr. John Gregory's 1774 A Father's Legacy to his Daughters.²³ The consequences of Austen's exploration of a stoic world are so grim that she seems to waiver, unable to leave Marianne Dashwood a sacrifice to their logic, and the hurried patching together of relationships at the end of the novel suggest a distancing from the world she has created.

Why, then, do scholars such as Park Honan claim that Jane Austen "absorbed a strict Christian and stoic morality," and that "a stoical Christian faith underlies all of Jane Austen's comedies."²⁴ The reason may be that such readings confuse Austen's moral philosophy with that of Sense and Sensibility's heroine, Elinor Dashwood, who does espouse stoic principles, and who even seems to reach back to early classic stoic ideals that underlie their Christianized adaptation. The well-known model for texts of classical philosophy is that of the master who guides his students in the search for wisdom. This model is particularly apparent in Stoic philosophy, such as Epictetus, and it also characterizes the role and comments of Elinor.

Elinor . . . possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgment, which qualified her, though only nineteen, to be the counsellor of her mother, . . . [H]er feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them: it was a knowledge which her mother had yet to learn, and which one of her sisters [Marianne] had resolved never to be taught." (6)

Elinor's role as "counsellor," supported by the verbs "learn" and "taught," reinforce the narrative stoic model of mentor and students, and anticipate the classroom tone of much of

Elinor's direct commentary.²⁵ Elinor's views closely reflect those implicit in the writings of John Balguy, who in turn is representative of the eighteenth-century "rationalist" or "intellectual" school, which incorporates Stoic absolutism. For the intellectuals, deductive reasoning leads to the proof of absolute moral truth and virtue.²⁶

What the intellectualists want to assert is . . . that there are certain acts, or classes of acts, which are virtuous or vicious in all relations and circumstances. They instance 'keeping faith and performing equitable covenants and equity' [Samuel Clarke], 'making a virtuous agent happy' [Richard Price], and gratitude.²⁷

Elinor demonstrates her wholehearted commitment to all these principles, even when they seem to dash her own hopes of personal happiness.

Selby-Bigge's example of "gratitude" as always "virtuous" for the "intellectualists" is found in John Balguy's The Foundation of Moral Goodness (1728), which is an extended response to Hutcheson's An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good or Evil (1725). Gratitude is a point of controversy between the "intellectualists" and the "moral sense" or "sentimentalist" philosophy championed by Hutcheson. If gratitude is always virtuous, then it must command our responses, even where obeying the dictates of gratitude seems to conflict with personal happiness. This issue is dramatized in Elinor's predicament, and places Austen in the thick of this philosophical controversy.

The opposition implied in the novel's title is misleading. Austen does not personify in Elinor and Marianne "head"

and "heart" alternatives. Rather, "sense" seems to mean "understanding through the senses," and "sensibility" the judgment of emotions that guides understanding. Events of the novel contradict and challenge Elinor's espoused principles, creating a series of paradoxes so incredible that her ideas and principles, however well motivated, ultimately are discredited. I see this conflict of events with Elinor's principles as Austen's dialogue with her heroine, which implicitly affirms that principles must be tested by their contribution to happiness, a central tenet of Francis Hutcheson's "moral sense" philosophy. The verdict of events, then, seems to deny that Elinor's stoic values can heal the troubled soul of her sister Marianne.

Since the dialogue between Austen and her "heroine" picks up a continuing philosophical debate, Honan correctly places Austen in that same Christian-based moral discourse, but he fails to see that the authorial presence distances itself from classic principles which clash with the Christian ethic, even though the debt to classical philosophy is acknowledged. The marriage of Marianne and Colonel Brandon may be seen as Elinor's victory in this debate, but I believe that Austen wishes to show the reader that the victory is a Pyrrhic one, and that Marianne pays a terrible price for Elinor's triumph.

This conflict between Austen and Elinor requires that the reader infer the moral or philosophic authorial point of view from the clash of events with Elinor's principles, un-

like Pride and Prejudice, where I argue that reader, author, and heroine seem to move together, not always in the right direction, but ultimately guided to moral knowledge and a happy ending by the informing presence of Francis Hutcheson and Thomas Sherlock. However, not until Persuasion, the last published novel, is there an explicit statement that suggests consequences may render the final moral verdict on decisions. When Anne Elliot reflects that following the advice to break her youthful engagement may have been "one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides" (246), Austen seems to confirm her commitment to the test of ultimate happiness that Hutcheson urges as the standard of moral evaluation. Hutcheson's philosophy in Sense and Sensibility is less convincing, because the stoic-rationalist school, through Elinor, attacks his "moral sense" and theory of "Affections" where he is most confused and vulnerable.

Instead of the reconciliation of events with principle in Pride and Prejudice through the testimony of disinterested witnesses, Sense and Sensibility relies on complex plots and subplots, as well as the use of "surrogates," to establish the emotional distance necessary for sound judgments of character. Consequently, characters destined for future union are forbidden most direct contact with each other. Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars barely brush each other on their way to the altar, unlike Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy who, although separated for an important interval, nevertheless are joined in a personal history of direct negotia-

tions. The pre-marital relationship of Marianne and Colonel Brandon is even more remote than that of Elinor and Edward, who at least share an unsaid mutual affection throughout. Colonel Brandon's love for Marianne, however, is both undeclared as well as unreciprocated, and ultimately relies on encouraging the latter's "esteem" to bridge the gap.

Marianne's "sensibility," driven only by her emotions, does not represent a philosophical alternative to stoicism. Her headlong plunge toward disaster, however, raises the question of passion's role in love, a question avoided by moralists. Here Austen seems both to acknowledge and challenge the observations of Dr. John Gregory, who argues that passion is both a quality as well as a burden generally afflicting men rather than women. By setting Marianne's tumultuous passion against Elinor's cool, if flawed, philosophy, Austen seems to demand that moral philosophy address, not dodge, woman's passion. The term that links the moral philosophy issues and the gender views of Gregory with the novel is "esteem."

"Esteem" appears to be the product of gratitude and a moral response which may or may not lead to "romantic" love, but if not is offered as an acceptable surrogate. Without esteem, however, no enduring love is possible. Elinor's consistently authoritative and pedagogical voice supports this thesis, which is contested by her pupils, her mother and Marianne, in their discussion of the budding relationship between Elinor and Edward Ferrars. In a conversation organized

like schoolroom instruction, Mrs. Dashwood contrasts him favorably with his miserly sister, Fanny.

"It is enough," said she; "to say that he is unlike Fanny is enough. It implies everything amiable. I love him already."

"I think you will like him," said Elinor, "when you know more of him."

"Like him!" replied her mother with a smile. "I can feel no sentiment of approbation inferior to love."

"You may esteem him."

"I have never yet known what it was to separate esteem and love." (16)

"Love" clearly is the higher valued term and swallows esteem in Mrs. Dashwood's conflation. But the even more impulsively romantic Marianne rejects esteem altogether in condemning Elinor for the inadequacy of her affection for Edward.

"I do not attempt to deny," said she [Elinor], "that I think very highly of him--that I greatly esteem, that I like him."

Marianne here burst forth with indignation--

"Esteem him! Like him! Cold-hearted Elinor! Oh! worse than cold-hearted!" (21)

This issue is played out in the pages of the novel and apparently resolved when Marianne finally is offered as a sacrifice to those principles which Elinor affirms as moral mentor. By word and example, Elinor attempts to rescue Marianne from the nearly fatal enslavement to her passions, but Elinor's instruction proves helpless to convert Marianne and finally irrelevant as well to her own happiness. Instead of learning from Elinor, Marianne gets deathly sick, and Elinor, committed to the mind's transcendence of the body's passions, also fails to recognize the gravity of Marianne's physical afflictions. Her "care" for her sister is really blindness to

the language of the body, which almost causes Marianne's death.²⁸

Elinor's consistent suppression and denial of romantic love seems to reflect the discomfort of the moral philosopher who attempts to deal with the relationship of passion and virtue. Francis Hutcheson finds it necessary to exclude erotic attraction in distinguishing the forms of virtuous love and assigning a place for "esteem."

The Affections which are of most Importance in Morals, are Love and Hatred: All the rest seem but different Modifications of these two original Affections. Now in discoursing of Love toward rational Agents, we need not be caution'd not to include that Love between the Sexes, which, when no other Affections accompany it, is only Desire of Pleasure, and is never counted a Virtue. Love toward rational Agents, is subdivided into Love of Complacence or Esteem, and Love of Benevolence.²⁹

Hutcheson's classifications do little to clarify the ambiguities in this passage. Is "Esteem" an alternative to "Complacence" as the object of the preposition "of," or is it an alternative to "Love?" Further, Hutcheson's introduction of "Complacence" complicates the already murky discussion. The confusion seems to arise from Hutcheson's insistence that all forms of love are broadly included among the "Affections," even though he tries to exclude "that Love between the Sexes."

The "rationalist" John Balguy seizes on Hutcheson's confusion to attack his "moral sense" philosophy in The Foundation of Moral Goodness. Starting from the primacy of reason and the mind, rather than "affections" produced by "instinct," Balguy claims that

we esteem Virtue or moral Rectitude upon its own Account; that our Affection for it [virtue], is not an instinctive Determination, but raised and produced in the Mind by the intrinsick Worth and Goodness of the Object.³⁰

Having made "Affection" a product of, and subject to, reason, he has no trouble locating "Esteem" as an identifiable and separate "Affection" in its own right and not as part of Hutcheson's messy continuum of "instinct," at one end of which is the troublesome "Love between the sexes." Balguy asks rhetorically "whether that Esteem, Admiration, Complacency which Virtue produces, be no Affection?", and concludes that "[a]n Object that is and appears Self-good, or intrinsically excellent, must necessarily produce Esteem and Admiration in all minds capable of perceiving it."³¹ Although he disclaims their influence on his thought, Balguy's elevation of reason as the highest faculty for ascertaining moral truth closely resembles the classical stoic principle of virtue as an end in itself, a guiding principle for Elinor without regard to the conflict of compelling personal self-interest.

Austen, however, widens this debate among moralists into the very nature of love as passion, from which Hutcheson distances himself, but on which Marianne insists, at the greatest peril to her health, virtue, and chastity. But her passion fails to find a philosophical "home," and Marianne's claim for the legitimacy of passion seems denied in the contrived marriage to Brandon. In later novels, Austen salvages and strengthens Hutcheson's philosophy as a modus vivendi, but

here her objective primarily seems to be to expose Elinor's rationalist system as lethal to personal happiness.

Austen must contend, not only with the texts of moral philosophy, but with received wisdom about woman's passion, and its relationship to marital choice, as authoritatively presented by the Edinburgh physician and moralist, Dr. John Gregory, in A Father's Legacy. Gregory bases his observations and advice on perceived emotional differences between men and women.

The natural hardness of our hearts, and strength of our passions, . . . make us less susceptible of the finer feelings of the heart. Your superior delicacy, your modesty, and the usual severity of your education, preserve you, in a good measure from any temptation to those vices to which we are most subjected.³²

Austen seems to offer Marianne as a flat contradiction of Gregory, and even Elinor's outward composure disguises that "her feelings were strong," although "she knew how to govern them." Uncontrolled passions lead to folly and dangerous indiscretions for all principal characters of both sexes, with the exceptions of Elinor and her invidious rival, Lucy Steele.

Given his assumed emotional dichotomy between men and women, Gregory goes on to trace the process of courtship.

Some agreeable qualities recommend a gentleman to your common good liking and friendship. In the course of his acquaintance, he contracts an attachment to you. When you perceive it, it excites your gratitude; this gratitude rises into preference; and this preference, perhaps, at last advances to some degree of attachment, . . .³³

This process by which "gratitude" is the initial "exciting" affection is exactly mirrored in all Austen's works, but where it leads is less clear. Gregory, too, waffles on the results of gratitude and acknowledges only that it leads to "preference," and then to "some degree of attachment." Esteem, however, is recognized as a product of the process for women.

A man of taste and delicacy marries a woman because he loves her more than any other, a woman of equal taste and delicacy marries him, because she esteems him, and because he gives her that preference: . . .³⁴

Gregory, then, recognizes a clear distinction between "love" and "esteem," which is consistent with the difference implicit in the connotation of these terms as deployed by moral philosophy, whether "moral sense" or "rationalist."

Elinor has no problem with the role of esteem that Marianne violently rejects, and for Elinor it is a source of emotional support, while Marianne is drowning in passion. In contrast with her appraisal of Marianne's despair at Willoughby's faithlessness, Elinor's "own situation gained in the comparison; for while she could esteem Edward as much as ever, however they might be divided in future, her mind might always be supported" (179). Italics in the text emphasize that Elinor's esteem succeeds in overcoming her repugnance at the approaching marriage of Edward and Lucy Steele, because it is based on the greater moral value she recognizes in his doing his "duty" by respecting an engagement to a woman Elinor is confident he no longer loves.

It would seem that the novel's task, through its moral mentor, Elinor, is to redirect Marianne's affection to a stronger support through the development of esteem for the worthy Colonel Brandon, a formidable challenge with Marianne's expressed contempt for that affection. The opportunity is what I call the "surrogate" seduction, as Colonel Brandon unveils it in an extended narration (205-10) to Elinor. The story told by Brandon reveals that Willoughby has a prior history as a seducer of Brandon's former ward and daughter of Brandon's once-loved and wayward cousin. In contrast to this convoluted plot and the bathos of Brandon's narration, the "real" seduction of Lydia by Wickham in Pride and Prejudice directly involves the principal players and throws Elizabeth and Darcy together.

Why does Austen choose this roundabout off-stage drama involving Willoughby and two characters who figure only in this subplot? First, it clearly will not do for Marianne actually to be seduced by Willoughby. The experience might be instructive, but her future would be destroyed. The lesson is not lost on Marianne, although she acknowledges to Elinor the danger only in the somewhat tangled syntax of her post-illness discussion: "'--What in a situation like mine, but a most shamefully unguarded affection could expose me to'--" (345). But more important than the lesson in life, learned without personal cost, is that the knowledge not only involves a victim unknown to Marianne, but is imparted to her via Elinor, to whom it is already second-hand information.

Marianne thus is called upon to judge virtue and vice from as disinterested a perspective as Austen can contrive.

Since this knowledge comes to Marianne after she already has learned of Willoughby's marriage, her mental attitude is affected only to the extent of becoming "settled in a gloomy dejection" (212). The plus side of the experience, however, is that Elinor "saw with satisfaction the effect of it, in her no longer avoiding Colonel Brandon when he called, in her speaking to him, even voluntarily speaking, with a kind of compassionate respect, . . ." (212). Marianne is edging closer to "esteem," although she must undergo a symbolic death and resurrection to cast aside her old repugnance, and accept esteem as the basis of a relationship, and the path leads through gratitude.

When Mrs. Dashwood observes the convalescent Marianne as she expresses gratitude to Colonel Brandon for his "fetching her mother" during her illness, the mother "persuaded herself to think that something more than gratitude already dawned" (340). Mrs. Dashwood's ready romanticism, which she shares with Marianne, leads her to impetuous and usually wrong conclusions. Elinor, who also is present, seems only to be analyzing Brandon's motives, and we are not given her thoughts about Marianne, who seems to be emerging from illness with a revised outlook. Filtering an ambiguous observation about the changed Marianne through the unreliable, and scarcely disinterested Mrs. Dashwood, makes any conjectures about meaning almost hopelessly problematic. All can agree on Marianne's

gratitude, since she acknowledges what the circumstances call for. But has "something more than gratitude already dawned?" And if so, what is it? We can be fairly sure that the "something more" for Mrs. Dashwood is her version of love, but it later becomes clear that the "something more" indeed is esteem.

There seems to be no disagreement among Hutcheson, Balguy, and Austen that esteem is highly prized. All would support the idea that gratitude leads to esteem, which Austen sees as a step in the growth of love that must not be bypassed, unlike Mrs. Dashwood, who seems to look on gratitude as more of a hurdle than a stage in a process. But where Austen parts company with moral philosophy, and with Elinor, is on the acceptability of esteem as a "surrogate" for that love on which future happiness depends in marriage. Dr. Gregory, on the other hand, offers physiological support to moral philosophy in suggesting that passionate love such as Marianne's is uncharacteristic for women, and instead claims that "[w]hat is commonly called love among you, is rather gratitude," leading to marriages "with little of either personal esteem or affection."³⁵ Gregory suggests that the relationship may stop at the level of gratitude, and if so the marriage offers little in the way of permanent happiness or satisfaction to the partners. However, if gratitude leads to "personal esteem" or "affection," the physician's prognosis is more favorable, and thus it is not surprising that Mrs.

Dashwood is encouraged to see the growth of "something more than gratitude" in Marianne's feeling toward Colonel Brandon.

As I suggest in my discussion of Northanger Abbey, Gregory's Legacy seems even more overt in Henry Tilney's marriage proposal to Catherine Morland (243). In both novels, Austen reverses the emotions Gregory assigns to men and women. She leaves open, of course, the possibility that "something more" may "dawn" for Henry, as Mrs. Dashwood hopes for Marianne. But to the extent that "passions" and "affection" are linked by Gregory with men, the options for Marianne's response appear limited to "esteem." However, despite Marianne's revulsion at "esteem," there seems to be no philosophical or psychological "space" for woman's passion in love. Cultural attitudes, moral philosophy, and Gregory's medical authority join in a powerful phalanx that eventually crushes Marianne, a conclusion toward which Austen appears reluctantly driven.

She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at seventeen, and with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship, voluntarily to give her hand to another! (378)

The encoded message seems to be "she was born to be hanged," and the term "voluntarily" is subverted and undermined by the determinism of "was born to."

But Austen again seems to be dissatisfied with the way her own story keeps denying Marianne a vital role in her future, and she ends her concluding remarks on the marriage with Brandon by giving us, once again, the old Marianne.

Marianne could never love by halves; and her whole heart became, in time, as much devoted to her husband, as it had once been to Willoughby. (379)

These internal contradictions, which follow each other in closely connected paragraphs, leave the moral meaning ambiguous. The didactic narrator seems to be saying on the one hand, "believe this," and on the other offering contradictory evidence. "Show" fails to confirm "tell," "head" to rule "heart." As I have suggested earlier, this conflict of events with stoic philosophy is Austen's dialogue with Elinor, and the severest commentary on Elinor's stoic moral view is Marianne's victimization. Indeed, she is reduced to the status of a commodity "by general consent, to be the reward of all" in the settling of "obligations" to Brandon (378).

Janet Todd argues that Marianne's fate in marrying Colonel Brandon is itself a kind of death.

Sense and Sensibility, which, in the stories of Marianne and the shadowy Elizas, comes close to invoking the Clarissa plot, mocks and stifles the agony of the female victim: ultimately it socializes the near scream of Marianne into sensible rational discourse.³⁶

Todd seems to read Austen's approval of this ending. Instead, I believe that Austen pleads for Marianne's rescue from the disaster which is facilitated rather than prevented by the faulty principles of Elinor's stoic philosophy, and the rapid narrative reversals on Marianne's later history reflect, if anything, authorial unhappiness at Marianne's victimization.

In a sense, Elinor "wins" the contest of values with Marianne, by seeing her married (after her own, ironically, "romantic" marriage) "with no sentiment superior to strong

esteem and lively friendship." Power, therefore, is on Elinor's side, allowing her and others virtually to "sell" Marianne to satisfy "obligations." However, the body's denial, which the stoic system endorses, not only is reflected in Elinor's blindness to Marianne's near-mortal illness before she is sacrificed in marriage, but also mandates that Elinor sacrifice her own and Edward's happiness to its principles. As in the gratitude that secures Henry Tilney for Caterine Morland in Northanger Abbey, Austen shows that the triumph of virtue can exact a terrible price.

Elinor's self-identification with stoic values is nearly overt in her reflections on Mr. Palmer's snide, affected, and contemptuous manner, who otherwise displayed "no traits at all unusual in his sex and time of life."

He was nice in his eating, uncertain in his hours; fond of his child, though affecting to slight it; and idled away the mornings at billiards, which ought to have been devoted to business. She liked him, however, upon the whole much better than she had expected, and in her heart was not sorry that she could like him no more;--not sorry to be driven by the observation of his Epicurism, his selfishness, and his conceit, to rest with complacency on the remembrance of Edward's generous temper, simple taste, and diffident feelings. (305).

"Epicurism" sums up this catalogue of Mr. Palmer's qualities, and Elinor's "complacency" in noting Edward's opposite qualities, of course, is a refracted endorsement of her own "Stoic" values.

The first instance of Elinor's commitment at all costs to such values is her incredible respect for a "vow" of secrecy, which Lucy Steele deviously extracts from her. Selby-

Bigge calls attention, in the comments at the beginning of this discussion, to "keeping faith" as among "acts which are virtuous . . . in all relations and circumstances" for "intellectualists" such as Balguy. This is also a central stoic virtue, and among those admired by Cicero, who models his De Officiis on the principles and practices of the Stoics.

But in taking an oath it is our duty to consider not what one may have to fear in case of violation but wherein its obligation lies: an oath is an assurance backed by religious sanctity; . . . For the question no longer concerns the wrath of the gods (for there is no such thing) but the obligations of justice and good faith.³⁷

"Religious sanctity" as Cicero uses it is quite different from vows sanctioned by their concurrence with Christian belief, where the nature and subject matter of the vow are subject to their conformity with doctrine. An extreme but familiar example would be the "pact with the devil," but even a vow that conflicts merely with future happiness would have questionable religious authority, so long as the "happiness" pursued was virtuous. For Cicero and the Stoics, no qualifications can mitigate the absolute sanctity of vows, and their model is the story of Regulus, which has an exact parallel in Elinor's promise of secrecy to Lucy.

Cicero offers the story of Regulus as a praiseworthy example of the high value placed by stoicism on fidelity to the absolute virtue of abiding by vows, despite the appeal of "utilitas," translated in the Loeb edition of De Officiis as "expediency" or "best interests." Regulus, whose name echoes the Latin term "regula" or "a rule, pattern, model,"³⁸ as a

prisoner of war is sent by his captors, the Carthaginians, "on parole, sworn to return to Carthage himself, if certain noble prisoners of war were not restored to the Carthaginians," who he knew would punish his failure by death from torture. "His apparent interest was to remain in his own country, to stay at home with his wife and children," either ignoring the vow, or at least using his influence to have the prisoners released. Nevertheless, he refused to do either, holding that "he was not a member of the senate so long as he was bound by the oath to his enemies," and he returned empty-handed to his promised execution at Carthage where he was "slowly put to death by enforced wakefulness."³⁹

Not only does this tale sanctify vows destructive of family ties, it also appears that one can be put under oath to an enemy merely by seeming to permit, through silence, an assumption of compliance. Regulus goes through the motions of his mission, performing the letter if not the spirit of the tacit compliance assumed by the Carthaginians, and he knows that the consequence will be death. Elinor also finds herself drawn into Lucy's confidence almost by default, although she does not as yet know where it will lead. Lucy prefaces her as yet unrevealed disclosures with "I am sure I should not have the smallest fear of trusting you" (128), followed by the revelation of her four-year engagement to Edward, and closes the trap on Elinor by concluding "I never should have mentioned it to you, if I had not felt the greatest dependance in the world upon your secrecy" (129). Lucy recognizes a

stoic character when she sees one, and understands how to manipulate it to the detriment of everyone's best interests and happiness except her own.

Elinor knows that revealing this secret of an engagement repellent to the Ferrars family might well wreck the marriage plans and thus serve her own hopes, as well as rescue Edward from his own unwise and youthful "vow" which engaged him to Lucy. But Elinor seems unmoved by considerations of utilitas in her single-minded commitment to confidentiality. When the secret comes out anyhow because of the indiscretion of Lucy's own sister, Elinor is free to reveal it to Marianne, who has assumed all along the de facto engagement of Elinor and Edward, and who thus finds incomprehensible Elinor's withholding of such information for four months. When Marianne asks wonderingly, "how have you been supported?", Elinor replies:

By feeling that I was doing my duty.--My promise to Lucy, obliged me to be secret. I owed it to her, therefore, to avoid giving any hint of the truth; . . . I have very often wished to undeceive yourself and my mother, . . . but without betraying my trust, I never could have convinced you. (262)

The reader is more likely to share Marianne's incredulity than accept Elinor's extraordinary self-denial on behalf of Lucy, who is quite as deadly an enemy as the Carthaginians.

Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) offers a view of stoic principles which seems generally in accord with Marianne's mystification, as well as representative of eighteenth-century moralist opinion, including Francis Hutcheson, who otherwise more often differed with Clarke.⁴⁰

For though virtue is unquestionably worthy to be chosen for its own sake, even without any expectation of reward; yet it does not follow that it is entirely self-sufficient, and able to support a man under all kinds of sufferings, . . . Here therefore began the error of the Stoics; who taught that the bare practice of virtue, was itself the chief good, . . . And the suitable practice of some few of them, as of Regulus for instance, who chose to die the cruellest death that could be invented, rather than break his faith with an enemy; is indeed very wonderful and to be admired. But yet, after all this, it is plain that the general practice of virtue in the world, can never be supported on this foot.⁴¹

Clarke, also a Christian moralist, even if opposed to "moral sense" philosophy, cannot accept virtue as "entirely self-sufficient," or an end in itself, because it must emanate from God and therefore mirror the Deity. Further, the example of Regulus virtually justifies self-destruction in order to respect the obligation of vows, which is anathema to Christian doctrine, regardless of the sanctity of vows. Elinor's sacrifice of her and Edward's mutual love and future happiness to this same principle, in order to keep Lucy's secret, amounts to self-destruction of the spirit. Interestingly, it is the recovered Marianne who recoils with horror at what she sees as her own flirtation with suicide.

My illness, I well knew, had been entirely brought on by myself, by such negligence of my own health, as I had felt even at the time to be wrong. Had I died,--it would have been self-destruction. (345)

Marianne's confession is laced with religious contrition, remorse, and resolve to lead a more regulated, as well as a Christian, life.

Elinor, on the other hand, appears to look back at pre-Christian values. Indeed, in adhering to her promise to Lucy, she seems to distance herself even from Balguy, who acknowledges that the "Stoicks . . . had noble Ideas of Virtue, . . . but unaccountably forgot, or overlooked the Constitution of Human Nature.":

And hence they fell into great Extravagance, and a kind of Enthusiasm. Wrapt up in Admiration of moral Good, they seemed not to regard any other. Had they considered that they were sensible Beings as well as moral, they could not easily have imagined that Virtue alone was self-sufficient. Their Scheme therefore must be unnatural and indefensible; I mean exclusively of a future State, the only Support of Virtue in Adversity and extreme Cases.⁴²

Considerations of a "future State," of course, are expressly rejected by Cicero when he says, in the passage quoted earlier on the sanctity of vows, that "the question no longer concerns the wrath of the Gods (for there is no such thing) but the obligations of justice and good faith."

Concern with a "future state," however, is central to Judeo Christian belief. Milton presents the conflict between "pagan" philosophy and Christianity in Christ's temptation in the wilderness by the devil, who tries to persuade Jesus to accept into his doctrine the received wisdom of the ancients. Jesus rejects the authority of all these philosophical systems as "Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm," and saves his most explicit rebuttal for stoicism.

The Stoic last in Philosophic pride,
By him call'd vertue; and his vertuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,

Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,
 For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
 Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
 Alas what can they teach, and not mislead;
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,⁴³

Elinor's stoic values appear even before she is made privy to Lucy's and Edward's engagement, when she is disturbed by Edward's "desponding turn of mind" manifested at the unexplained termination of his visit with the Dashwoods, and which

left an uncomfortable impression on Elinor's feelings especially, which required some trouble and time to subdue. But as it was her determination to subdue it, and to prevent herself from appearing to suffer more than what all her family suffered on his going away, she did not attempt the method so judiciously employed by Marianne, on a similar occasion, . . . (104)

This total reliance on her own personal resources suggests the self-referential stoic virtue criticized by Balguy and decried by Milton as "Ignorant of themselves, of God much more." The reference to Marianne's histrionics on Willoughby's departure as "method so judiciously employed" is, of course, ironic, and contrasts with Elinor's successful efforts to surmount her emotion by her combined denial of the passions and fidelity to absolute virtue.

Samuel Johnson offers in his Dictionary an apparently non-committal definition of "Stoick" as "[a] philosopher who followed the sect of Zeno; holding the neutrality of external things," but his example suggests that he too shares a negative view.

While we admire
 This virtue, and this moral discipline,

Let's be no stoicks, nor no stocks, I pray.
Shakespeare.

Johnson's fourth definition for "Stock" is "[a]man proverbially stupid," and he uses the same Shakesperian quotation to illustrate his meaning.⁴⁴

But it could also be argued that Elinor's fidelity to a vow made to her enemy becomes an empty gesture, since events work in her favor with Anne Steele's indiscretion in disclosing the secret, unlike the fated consequences for Regulus. Therefore, Austen devises a second exercise that puts her stoic principles to a more severe test. Elinor is called upon, by the dictates of gratitude to Colonel Brandon, to play a key role in salvaging Edward's and Lucy's marriage, apparently wrecked only a few pages earlier without involving any breach of Elinor's obligation of secrecy. Elinor has just received Colonel Brandon's commission to offer the living of Delaford to Edward Ferrars, which she immediately recognizes will remove the financial impediment to his marriage, due to his mother's earlier threat to disinherit him when she learns of his engagement with Lucy, and so must snuff the remnants of hope for Elinor from postponement of the nuptials. Mrs. Jennings, from another part of the room, observes but does not hear the conversation with Brandon and assumes that Elinor's emotional response is to a proposal of marriage.

Her [Elinor's] emotion was such as Mrs. Jennings had attributed to a very different cause;--but whatever minor feelings less pure, less pleasing, might have a share in that emotion, her esteem for the general benevolence, and her gratitude for the particular friendship, which together prompted Colonel Brandon to

this act, were strongly felt, and warmly expressed.
(283)

This lengthy narrative sentence encapsulates the key principles of eighteenth-century moral philosophy. Brandon's benevolence is "general" because not tainted by "particular" regard or self-interest, since he scarcely knows Ferrars. His friendship for Elinor, however, is allowably "particular," since presumably she is involved only as a messenger of his "benevolence." Further, Elinor's "esteem" reflects the principles of the propagation of virtue in the response of a "witness" to an act of benevolence, even though Brandon's benevolence is at cross-purposes with her own desires. Nevertheless, nothing in this scenario seems to explain why Elinor's "emotion" compels her to be the messenger, whose tidings pass the sentence of death on the messenger's hopes, except the key responses of "esteem" and "gratitude," which overwhelm "whatever minor feelings less pure, less pleasing."⁴⁵

How can gratitude alone propel Elinor to this distasteful mission? Elinor's response here puts her in the camp of the "intellectualists," in particular Hutcheson's critic, Balguy, whose credo is laid down in Part I of his work.

To be determined to the doing a good Action merely by the Reason and Right of the Thing, is genuine Goodness; this is the purest and most perfect Virtue of which any Agent is capable.⁴⁶

Elinor respects this principle in accepting her commission from Brandon, answering in the affirmative Balguy's rhetorical question, "might we not possibly be induced to attempt

the Relief of a Person in Distress, merely from the Reason of the Thing, and the Rectitude of the Action?"⁴⁷ The "inducement," or more properly the "command," is Balguy's key "always right" virtue of gratitude: "Thus a Person obliged acts rightly and reasonably, when his Actions are answerable to the Relation of Gratitude between him and his Benefactor."⁴⁸

Hutcheson finds a complex web of "exciting" or "justifying" "reasons" for actions,⁴⁹ which would tend to interpose the objections of Elinor's and Edward's undoubted love for each other to Elinor's acceptance of Brandon's mission. Balguy takes specific objection in The Foundation of Moral Goodness to Hutcheson's categories of "exciting reasons" by asking "whether that esteem, admiration, complacency which virtue produces, be no affection? and, whatever they may be called, whether they may not excite to election?"

However pleasure may be the consequence or appendage of virtue, yet, strictly speaking, it is not the end of a moral agent, nor the object of a moral affection, but virtue alone, antecedent to all considerations, and abstracted from every natural good.⁵⁰

Elinor's mission is totally alien to her self-interest and can only be explained by an equally total commitment to the imperative virtue of gratitude, as well as to her idea that she is serving the cause of virtue by facilitating Edward's unhappy duty to fulfill his misguided vows to Lucy Steele, despite the endorsement of this ancient stoic virtue by Balguy and other eighteenth-century rationalists.

Thus, Elinor's decisions mirror those "acts, which are virtuous . . . in all relations and circumstances," as Selby-

Bigge describes "intellectualist" principles in the passage quoted at the beginning of this discussion. Since the vow to Lucy Steele, however, goes well beyond "keeping faith and performing equitable covenants and equity," it must be based on pre-Christian stoicism, which Austen seems to argue is at the root of Elinor's philosophy. A slavish obedience to the "always right" virtue of gratitude, and to "making a virtuous agent happy," are the only possible explanations for Elinor's performance as messenger for Brandon (the "virtuous agent") in conveying to Edward the news of the living which seems guaranteed to push him into the marriage with Lucy so painful to both him and Elinor. Austen's "exposure" of Elinor's moral system also incriminates Balguy's absolutism, but Elinor is unchanged at the end of the novel, even if Austen seeks to discredit her stoic values. The conversion of her character, and values, remains unfinished business for the novelist.

Elinor's philosophy reappears in Fitzwilliam Darcy of Pride and Prejudice, whose repellent personality sets him up for the transformation he eventually undergoes, unlike the invulnerable shield of goodwill that preserves Elinor, despite the flaws of her values. But between the acceptance for publication of Sense and Sensibility in 1810, and the revision of First Impressions into Pride and Prejudice which occupied Austen during the following year, it seems that Austen must have made, or greatly improved, her acquaintance with the Hutcheson and Sherlock texts that inform the later novels. These texts offer the philosophical basis for the au-

thority of feelings against Elinor's and Darcy's stoic rationalism. Feelings energize both the resentment that places Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy in hostile opposition, as well as the growth of their mutual gratitude which prepares the way for the novel's happy ending.

Chapter 3 Notes

1 Johnson 36.

2 I rely on Deirdre LeFaye's chronology in William Austen-Leigh and Richard Arthur, Jane Austen: A Family Record (Boston: Hall, 1989) xv-xxiv. LeFaye agrees with most sources that Austen started Susan in 1798, after she completed First Impressions and had begun "converting Elinor and Marianne into Sense and Sensibility" (xviii).

3 Jane Austen: A Literary Life (New York: St. Martin's, 1991) 95.

4 Minor Works, vol. 6, The Works of Jane Austen, ed. R. W. Chapman and B. C. Southam (1954; New York: Oxford UP, 1988) 272. Subsequent citations of works in this volume are parenthetically referenced as "MW (page)."

5 ". . . written mostly in 1793." John Halperin, The Life of Jane Austen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1984) 43.

6 "Of the Rights of Persons," Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765-69), ed. George Sharswood, vol. 1, Bk I (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1875) 453.

7 A Treatise of Human Nature (1739-40), vol. 2, British Moralists, ed. D. D. Raphael 16.

8 "Christian Charity," Sermon XXV, Family Sermons, or Short and Familiar Discourses on the Principal Doctrines of the Gospel. From the Christian Observer (New Haven: Howe & DeForest, 1813) 277-78.

9 A Father's Legacy to his Daughters (1774). In Hester Chapone, Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, (New York: Samuel Marks, 1827) 191. The "Biographical Sketches" prefacing this volume make the following claim:

Mrs. Chapone's Letters on the improvement of the Mind, and Dr. Gregory's Legacy to his Daughters, have so long been standard books in every female library, that it would be quite unnecessary now to offer any other

recommendation than what they derive from the neat typography and convenient size of the present edition. . . . Her Letters were contemporary with the Legacy of Dr. John Gregory, a physician of great skill and eminence, and admired perhaps, yet more as a man of general taste and literature, and a christian [sic] philosopher. (iii-iv).

10 Luke 10:30-37.

11 John Gay, Fables (Barre: Imprint Soc., 1970) 136.

12 "Danger of too refined an Education to Girls in certain Circumstances, in a Letter from Harriet B---," No. 51 (20 July 1779), vol. 1, The Mirror, vol. 28, British Essayists, ed. A. Chalmers (Boston: Little Brown, 1856) 294-300.

13 Johnson 35.

14 Johnson 34.

15 Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries. English Literature and its Background 1760-1830 (New York: Oxford, 1981) 105.

16 "Northanger Abbey, or, Nature and Probability," Nineteenth-Century Literature 46.1 (1991) 8.

17 Loveridge, "Northanger Abbey" 25.

18 Loveridge, "Northanger Abbey" 26.

19 Keener includes both works in his category of the "philosophical tale."

It has not been recognized how much her [Austen's] novels are formed by the philosophical tale. The best evidence for this provenance, my main example in the pages that follow, is Northanger Abbey, a sister of Rasselas and Candide in form, meaning, and conceptual framework: that of eighteenth-century psychology. (249)

20 The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia (1759) Samuel Johnson: Selected Poetry and Prose, eds. Frank Brady and W. K. Wimsatt (Berkeley: California UP, 1977) 73-74.

21 Loveridge, "Northanger Abbey" 21, 23, 24.

22 Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility (1811), The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. R.W. Chapman, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (1933; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988). Page references of citations in the text are given in parentheses.

23 Hester Chapone, Letters on the Improvement of the Mind 155-198.

24 Honan 27, 275.

25 The didactic format of the novel facilitates readings which fall dutifully into the pattern of programmed instruction, but which fail to see that this whole structure is subversive of itself. Philip Drew finds that "[t]he constant endeavor must be to steer a way between Marianne's rash impulsiveness and the sly calculations of Lucy Steele, . . ." "Jane Austen and Bishop Butler," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 35.2 (1980) 144. Drew thus places himself at a student's desk in Elinor's classroom, learning the catechism of virtue and vice, and does not deal with the really hard question of the choice of virtues in the relationship of Marianne to Elinor. In this choice, Elinor as the moral teacher enjoys a privileged position, but ultimately her position is threatened by Marianne's values which drive the novel. Marianne must suffer for challenging the teacher's moral authority and may well be a victim--indeed, a "sacrifice," as I suggest--whose symbolic death makes possible Elinor's romantically happy marriage.

26 As I have discussed, Balguy's commitment to a priori truth revealed by reason is also the basis of his earlier attack on Thomas Sherlock in Silvius's Letter. See Chapter I, page 13.

27 L.A. Selby-Bigge, Introduction, British Moralists, ed. Selby-Bigge, xxxv.

28 "[Elinor] felt no real alarm (307). "Mr. Harris, who attended her every day, still talked boldly of a speedy recovery, and Miss Dashwood was equally sanguine;" (309). On Marianne's apparent improvement "the morning of the third day": Elinor, confirmed in every pleasant hope, was all cheerfulness; rejoicing that in her letters to her mother, she had pursued her own judgment rather than her friend's, in making light of the indisposition which delayed them at Cleveland; and almost fixing on the time when Marianne would be able to travel" (310). On Marianne's relapse: "Her apprehensions once raised, paid by their excess for all her former security;" (312).

29 Vol. 1, Works 127.

30 John Balguy, in Selby-Bigge, ed. British Moralists, vol. 2, 84.

31 Selby-Bigge, ed. British Moralists 86, 93.

32 Gregory 159-60.

33 Gregory 182.

34 Gregory 182.

35 Gregory 191.

36 Janet Todd, Sensibility: An Introduction (London: Methuen, 1986) 144-45.

37 Cicero 383.

38 Cassell's Latin and English Dictionary (New York: Macmillan, 1987) 192.

39 Cicero 377.

40 Hutcheson's particular objection is to Clarke's theory of "Natural Religion." "We come next to examine some other Explications of Morality, which have been much insisted on of late." Footnote: "See Dr. Samuel Clarke's Boyle's Lectures; and many late Authors." Francis Hutcheson, vol. 2, Works, 245.

41 Samuel Clarke, A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation (1705), D.D. Raphael, ed., vol. 1, British Moralists 215-6.

42 Selby-Bigge, ed., vol. 2, British Moralists 92.

43 John Milton, Paradise Regain'd (1674), Bk. 4, lines 300-10, The Complete Poetry of John Milton, ed. John T. Shawcross (Garden City: Doubleday / Anchor Books, 1971) 563.

44 Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language.

45 I have referred to Elinor as Brandon's "messenger," but she might also be considered a "moral agent," according to the views of John Balguy, which follow consistently from the imperatives to virtue set in motion by reason.

What is it then, which as soon as perceived, produces that state of mind which we call obligation? It must be some motive, some inducement, some reason, that is fit to influence and incline the will, and prevail with it to choose and act accordingly.--Is not then interest or pleasure such an inducement? It is in respect of sensible agents, considered as such. And thus it is that men, as sensible agents, are obliged to pursue pleasure or natural good; which as soon as they have experienced, they naturally and necessarily approve; but considered as moral agents, they have no concern with natural good. . . . As [sensible agents] are obliged to pursue . . . interest or pleasure; so [moral agents] are obliged to pursue . . . moral rectitude, reason, or virtue. [Raphael, ed. British Moralists, vol. I, 407.]

46 Selby-Bigge, ed., vol. 2, British Moralists 66.

47 Selby-Bigge ed., vol. 2, British Moralists 63.

48 Selby-Bigge, ed., vol. 2, British Moralists 75.

49 Vol. 2, Works 216-229.

50 Raphael ed., vol. 1, British Moralists, 402-3.

CHAPTER IV

GRATITUDE TRIUMPHANT IN PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Early in Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth Bennet's disdain for Darcy escalates into resentment, when she learns that he has successfully blocked Jane's budding romance with Bingley, and thus is responsible for her sister's unhappiness. Elizabeth's refusal of Darcy's astonishing marriage proposal triggers resentment in him as well, but by the end of the novel, resentment has been converted into gratitude toward each other. This shared "conversion" is a measure of the moral journey both must take to find love, since resentment is the polar opposite of gratitude, although both "arise from the same constitution of the passions," as Samuel Johnson points out in Rambler #4.

Thus men are observed by Swift to be 'grateful in the same degree as they are resentful.' . . . [Yet] it follows not that they [resentment and gratitude] will be equally indulged when reason is consulted; yet unless that consequence be admitted, this sagacious maxim becomes an empty sound, without any relation to practice or to life.

Nor is it evident, that even the first motions to these effects are always in the same proportion. For pride, which produces quickness of resentment, will obstruct gratitude, by unwillingness to admit that inferiority which obligation implies; and it is very unlikely that he who cannot think he receives a favor will acknowledge or repay it.¹

Johnson incisively diagnoses the kind of "pride" that characterizes Darcy, although Elizabeth's resentment is more in

sympathy with the injury to Jane, who herself is a moral paragon, exemplifying the highest standards of benevolence, itself the summit of virtue for Hutcheson as well as most eighteenth-century sentimental moral philosophy.²

Further, Jane's benevolent disposition should make her happy, and Francis Hutcheson contends that it should also be recognized by others with responses of gratitude and approbation.

That disposition therefore which is most excellent, and naturally gains the highest moral approbation, is the calm, stable, universal good-will to all, or the most extensive benevolence. And this seems the most distinct notion we can form of the moral excellency of the Deity.

Another disposition inseparable from this in men, and probably in all beings who are capable of such extensive affection, is the relish or approbation of this affection, and a naturally consequent desire of this moral excellence, and an esteem and good-will of an higher kind to all in whom it is found. This love of moral excellence is also an high object of approbation, when we find it in ourselves by reflection, or observe it in another. . . . This desire of moral excellence, and love to the mind where it resides, with the consequent acts of esteem, veneration, truth, and resignation, are the essence of true piety toward God.³

Yet Jane's demeanor hides heartbreak at the probable end of her growing relationship with Bingley, although she struggles to make her benevolence triumph over personal disappointment. Instead of the "approbation," "esteem," and returns of gratitude such behavior is supposed to encourage, Jane is discarded by the Bingley entourage, with the encouragement of their moral custodian, Fitzwilliam Darcy.

Jane's behavior is analyzed by three close observers, her sister Elizabeth, Darcy, and Charlotte Lucas. A compari-

son of their points of view tends to confirm Francis Hutcheson's sentimental approach to benevolence and gratitude as the novel's moral voice, particularly his 1725 An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil.

For Hutcheson, virtue should manifest itself to an impartial observer through a direct appeal to the "moral sense." The obvious failure of observation as a reliable guide to character assessment of Jane and others in Pride and Prejudice seriously undermines this fundamental principle, by the operation of which virtue is supposed to be propagated and socialized through observation of its workings in others, to the gratitude and happiness of all concerned.⁴ Austen suggests that a principle reason for the failure of observation to give correct readings is that women are not seen as capable of the highest benevolence and thus are denied full participation in the discourse of virtue.

But judgment based on observation is flawed, regardless of gender. The sifting of evidence, particularly as offered by reliable witnesses, must correct the false readings of the senses. The truth of Darcy's benevolence is determined by Elizabeth through a discovery process which simulates a courtroom inquiry into the credibility of witnesses, followed by an evaluation of testimony. Since the testimony of the housekeeper at Pemberley, Mrs. Reynolds, is crucial, the inquiry into credibility also suggests that Austen insists on women's full participation in the discourse of virtue.

Subject to the intrusion of key women, the moral philosophy apparently endorsed in these dramas concurs with the "moral sense" theories of Francis Hutcheson. The exception to this claim is Austen's implied questioning of the reliability of human observations, which must be evaluated by the exercise of reason on the testimony of witnesses. Here the influence of Austen's favorite sermon writer, Thomas Sherlock, is evident, although Hutcheson also acknowledges that reason may have a role, subject to the primacy of the "moral sense," which should otherwise unerringly sniff out the presence of benevolence.⁵ Nevertheless, the role of reason does not undercut the authority of feeling, and does not convert Austen into the "rationalist" found by some scholars.⁶

Both Hutcheson and Sherlock ground their arguments and examples in religious paradigms, which suggests the high seriousness of the moral issues at stake in the novels. However, the idea of benevolence advanced by Hutcheson, unlike that offered later by Bishop Butler and others, requires no overt acts or "capacity," but only a state of mind or "disposition" toward mankind, like God's love for His creation. Nevertheless, this disposition should shine through and be recognized by observers with "approbation." Certainly Jane has minimal opportunity to make a tangible impact with her benevolent disposition. Her virtue, however, goes unrecognized and unrewarded, except by her sister Elizabeth.

"My dear Jane!" exclaimed Elizabeth, "you are too good. Your sweetness and disinterestedness are really angelic; I do not know what to say to you. I

feel as if I had never done you justice, or loved you as you deserve. . . .

You wish to think all the world respectable, and are hurt if I speak ill of any body. I only want to think you perfect, and you set your mind against it. Do not be afraid of my running into any excess, of my encroaching on your privilege of universal good will. You need not. There are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well. The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it; and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense. (135)

Some allowance must be made for Elizabeth's agitated emotions at Bingley's sister's frigid letter, which announces their departure from the neighborhood and dashes Jane's hopes of a growing relationship with the brother, before we identify Elizabeth as a bitter skeptic of human nature. Nevertheless she does, like Hutcheson, see Jane's benevolence as other-worldly ("angelic") and uses Hutcheson's phraseology ("universal good will") to differentiate Jane's character from her own.⁷

If Elizabeth understands Jane's benevolence, Darcy misses it altogether. In his apologia letter to Elizabeth, after she forcefully rejects his avowal of love and implicit marriage proposal, he notes Jane's behavior, but attributes it only to a well-mannered girl disinclined to encourage a prospective suitor.

Your sister I also watched.--Her look and manners were open, cheerful and engaging as ever, but without any symptom of particular regard, and I remained convinced from the evening's scrutiny, that though she received his attentions with pleasure, she did not invite them by any participation of sentiment.--
. . . I shall not scruple to assert, that the serenity of your sister's countenance and air was such,

as might have given the most acute observer, a conviction that, however amiable her temper, her heart was not likely to be easily touched.-- (197)

Although Darcy claims that "the most acute observer" would back him up in concluding that his observations of Jane demonstrated her lack of "particular regard" for his friend Bingley, his claim may testify as much to his own blindness and insensitivity as it does to Jane's effacement of her emotions. Darcy is a stoic, even more than Elinor Dashwood of Sense and Sensibility, and both his self-justification for shielding Bingley from Jane, as well as his recantation at the novel's end, give Austen another opportunity to expose stoic values as destroyers of human happiness.

Darcy does not deny Elizabeth's accusation of his interference between Jane and Bingley, but instead prides himself on his role in obstructing the progress of their relationship.

I have no wish of denying that I did everything in my power to separate my friend from your sister, or that I rejoice in my success. Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself. (191)

The stoic puts aside all merely sensual gratification to pursue what is seen as the course of virtue. Darcy is guided by the central Stoic principle that virtue is its own reward, as expressed by Epictetus.

"Is there no reward then?"
 "Reward! do you seek any greater reward for a good man than doing what is right and just?"

The Harvard Classics editor notes that "Epictetus is a main authority on Stoic morals, [and emphasizes] the importance of

cultivating complete independence of external circumstances."⁸
 Darcy, of course, cares little for the feelings of those injured by his pursuit of what he sees as the greater good, as he makes clear in his explanatory letter, which he delivers to Elizabeth the next day.

If I have wounded your sister's feelings, it was unknowingly done; and though the motives which governed me may to you very naturally appear insufficient, I have not yet learned to condemn them.
 (199).

A 1675 collector of Stoic teaching writes approvingly that "these generous Philosophers" insist that "their wise man" should be "as little concerned for his Neighbors afflictions as for his own disasters," and ask "Can we not be charitable without being afflicted?"⁹ But Darcy's confidence that he can both determine and act for the greater good is, for Milton's Jesus, only "Philosophic pride / By him ['the Stoic'] call'd vertue."

Alas what can they teach, and not mislead;
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,¹⁰

Milton focuses on the preeminence given by the Stoics to teaching virtue, which Jesus condemns as worthless due to their ignorance "of themselves" and "of God." Epictetus states the Stoic position.

He that hath no musical instruction is a child in Music; he that hath no letters is a child in Learning; he that is untaught is a child in Life.¹¹

Austen directs the Stoic reverence for teaching against Darcy himself at the novel's end and thus educates him in the deficiencies of his own Stoic values. She seems to anticipate the lessons he must learn in Elizabeth's early conversation with

him at the piano, where Elizabeth responds to his claim to lack "the talent" for sociability.

"My fingers," said Elizabeth, "do not move over this instrument in the masterly manner which I see so many women's do. . . . But then I have always supposed it to be my own fault--because I would not take the trouble of practising." (175)

Elizabeth seems to adapt Epictetus's mode of argument by analogy, and she even plays with the connection of musical and moral instruction, as she also simultaneously "plays" on the piano and on Darcy.

As yet Elizabeth does not know of Darcy's agency in stifling the budding romance of Bingley and Jane, whose suffering is unseen, even as it is unimportant, to the Stoic Darcy. However, not only Darcy, but a modern critic also sees Jane's behavior as no more than "a struggle to suppress her love for Bingley through many weeks when she believes that it is not returned," ignoring the earlier clear explanation by Elizabeth of Jane's benevolent disposition.¹² But why must Jane signal her partiality so flagrantly to Bingley himself? Elizabeth argues with Charlotte Lucas that "[i]f I can perceive her regard for him, he must be a simpleton indeed not to discover it too." Charlotte counters "that he does not know Jane's disposition as you do" (22). Charlotte has no illusions about the necessity of making one's preference known, regardless of the virtuousness of "universal good will," or the self-protection of emotional privacy.

If a woman conceals her affection with the same skill [as she uses in public concealment] from the object of it, then she may lose the opportunity of fixing him; . . . There is so much of gratitude or

vanity in almost every attachment, that it is not safe to leave any to itself. . . . In nine cases out of ten, a woman had better shew more affection than she feels. Bingley likes your sister undoubtedly; but he may never do more than like her, if she does not help him on. (22)

Charlotte's wisdom seems like a follow-up to Austen's comment at the end of Northanger Abbey that Henry Tilney's "affection" for Catherine Morland "originated in nothing better than gratitude" (243), and the bottom line in Charlotte's utter realism is that self-interest is the only sensible guide for a marriageable woman. Bingley, like Darcy, appears to find it impossible to discern affectionate partiality in a woman who tries to practice the virtue so praised by Hutcheson. Thus Charlotte advocates not hypocrisy but practical wisdom in advising "a woman to shew more affection than she feels."

What Austen seems to be suggesting is that a benevolent disposition in a woman appears only as disinterest, where the range of her allowable responses is acceptance or rejection of an eligible suitor. In the passage quoted earlier from A System of Moral Philosophy, Hutcheson conventionally employs what appears to be the universal "in men" diction, but follows this phrase with the clause "and probably in all beings who are capable of such extensive affection," that is, a "disposition" toward benevolence. Hutcheson does not reveal what "beings" he has in mind, but the addition of this qualifying clause appears to make "in men" no longer a universal, but gender specific. Darcy and Bingley, then, may be excused

by the standards of moral philosophy if they fail to recognize and respond to Jane's benevolence, since a woman may not qualify as a "being" who is "capable" of such qualities.

Jane's stillborn benevolence, then, demonstrates that the moralism which informs this world is gender skewed and excludes women as participants in the process of observation and the judgment central to moralist claims for the propagation of virtue and happiness. For Hutcheson, this process does not work unless benevolence calls forth gratitude, which in Austen's novels requires that men and women participate as full partners in the discourse of morality and virtue. Thus Austen seems to showcase the moral blindness of Darcy and Bingley in order to emphasize that Hutcheson's theories earn their validity only through full gender equity. This gender equity is seen by Claudia Johnson as defiant.

In endowing attractive female characters with rich and unapologetic senses of self-consequence, Austen defies every dictum about female propriety and deference propounded in the sermons and conduct books which have been thought to shape her opinions on all important matters.

But shortly after this claim, Johnson comments on Austen's "device of centering her novels in the consciousness of unempowered characters--that is, women."¹³ Johnson's reading of Austen leads her into contradictions, since it is difficult to polarize Austen in some sort of oppositional role in a presumed "debate" (a term featured in Johnson). Johnson is right, however, that the serious and complex moral issues in these novels have tended to be neglected by critics, since "[t]he fact that Austen is a female novelist has made assess-

ments of her artistic enterprise qualitatively different from those of her male counterparts." Johnson cites as an early example the 1821 review of Archbishop Whately, who "praises Austen for declining the didactic posture-- . . . and for opting instead to hint at matters of serious concern inobtrusively and unpretentiously."¹⁴ More recently, C.S. Lewis speaks up for Austen's moral assertiveness, but interestingly his commendation is also couched negatively in charting the moments of "undeception" for her characters. As I have discussed, his observation that in her novels "[t]he great abstract nouns of the classical English moralists are unblushingly and uncompromisingly used"¹⁵ suggests a presumptuous woman out of her element, and Lewis seems to be endorsing Austen while at the same time claiming masculine prerogative to limit the significance of her presence.

While claiming an equal role for women in shaping the discourse of virtue, Austen does not seem to challenge the discourse itself. For example, Johnson clearly recognizes Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse as "empowered," while Jane Bennet is certainly "unempowered," but these "empowered" women only find happiness, not by distancing themselves, as Elizabeth does from Jane's standards, but by recognizing, accepting and responding to benevolence and gratitude. The process of joining the discourse, as I have suggested, requires learning gratitude, while not rejecting "partiality." This is the shaping of the discourse, because the "unempowered" Jane

adheres to a standard of virtue which insists on "universal good will" and the suppression of partiality.

Hutcheson's system does allow for "partiality" (or "particular regard," as Darcy terms it) as more focused benevolence, so long as the dictates of self-interest are subordinate, and not the "only" motive. Although the successor and defender of Shaftesbury, in permitting partiality Hutcheson allows a latitude in virtue which Shaftesbury rules out in An Inquiry Concerning Virtue (1699).

But lest any shou'd imagine with themselves that an inferior Degree of natural Affection, or an imperfect partial Regard of this sort, can supply the place of an intire, sincere, and truly moral one; . . . we may consider first, That PARTIAL AFFECTION, or social Love in part, without regard to a complete Society or Whole, is in it-self an Inconsistency, and implies an absolute Contradiction.¹⁶

It does appear that Jane aspires to emulate this Shaftesburnian ideal of affectionate feeling for the "species," or "universal good will," which she combines with a sort of stoicism in the suppression of her feelings, seen by Darcy as "the serenity of your sister's countenance and air." These two value systems, sentimental and stoic, usually are presented as incompatible, although each has been indentedified by scholars with Jane Austen's point of view. Hoyt Trowbridge traces philosophical influences, primarily as represented in Pride and Prejudice.

The ethical and psychological premises which order Jane Austen's depiction of character and action are not stoical, for it is assumed that the capacity to think and the capacity to feel are equally human.¹⁷

Yet no definitive conclusion about Austen as "sentimental" or "stoic" can be supported by the interpretations and critique of Jane's behavior offered either by Elizabeth, Darcy, or Charlotte, since the observations of all are unreliable or clouded with self-interest. Jane's predicament does, however, ask the question, can partiality work for personal happiness within a system of virtue? Hutcheson offers an affirmative answer, in which benevolence may be necessarily partial, and surrenders none of its power to generate gratitude and love by being so focused.

But there is nothing will give us a juster Idea of the wise Order in which human Nature is form'd for universal Love, and mutual good Offices, than considering that strong attraction of Benevolence, which we call Gratitude. . . . Now because of the vast Numbers of Mankind, their distant Habitations, and the incapacity of any one to be remarkably useful to vast Multitudes; . . . whose Interests, at vast distances, we could not understand, nor be capable of promoting, . . . NATURE has more powerfully determin'd us to admire and love the moral Qualities of others, which affect our selves, and has given us more powerful Impressions of Good-will towards those who are beneficent to our selves; which we call Gratitude; and thus has laid a Foundation for joyful Associations in all kinds of Business, and virtuous Friendships. . .

This universal Benevolence toward all Men, we may compare to the Principle of Gravitation, which perhaps extends to all Bodys in the Universe; but, like the Love of Benevolence, increases as the Distance is diminish'd, and is strongest when Bodys come to touch each other.¹⁸

Hutcheson is notorious, if not unique, for applying mathematical and scientific analogies to morality, and Newton is a favorite, of course, because of his religious orthodoxy. However, Hutcheson's claim to scientific method introduces a relativism into virtue that "would hardly have satisfied

Shaftesbury's demand for an 'intire, sincere, and truly moral' Affection to counter that 'imperfect partial' variety . . .¹⁹ Further, the scientific calculus of gravitation seems to prove that benevolence and gratitude fuse in a kind of unity when, under their combined pull, "Bodys come to touch each other," without necessarily cancelling each other out. That this is the product of such a calculus is suggested by Hutcheson's inclusion of gratitude among the "nearer and stronger Degrees of Benevolence," and then singling it out for special emphasis in the above passage as "that strong attraction of Benevolence, which we call Gratitude."

The proof of this calculus in Pride and Prejudice is that Elizabeth's awareness and experience of Darcy's benevolence generates gratitude, which in turn is manifested by a desire to return the benevolence,²⁰ and this is the process by which gratitude flourishes into love. Even the hard-boiled Charlotte Lucas recognizes gratitude's role in prefacing her advice with the observation that "[t]here is so much of gratitude or vanity in almost every attachment," although her cynicism cheapens the more worthy sentiment with "vanity" as an alternative motive. But yet, Elizabeth's feeling begins, not in responding to Darcy's direct attentions, but from the correction of her earlier flawed observations through the testimony of witnesses.²¹ Before this process begins, Elizabeth is in the clutches of resentment because of Jane's shoddy treatment by the Bingley swells, aggravated by her learning of Darcy's intervention. Had Jane's true nature been

appreciated, gratitude would be the expected response and would have been shared by an observer.²²

Resentment, as I have suggested, is the basis for Elizabeth's rejection of Darcy's profession of love, even though she recognizes that social convention seems to call for a different response.

In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It is natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could feel gratitude, I would now thank you. (190)

Indeed, Elizabeth's first reaction is that "she could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man's affection," before she is fully "roused to resentment . . ." (189). In rejecting Darcy, and in holding gratitude to the test of her feelings, Elizabeth also claims exemption from "the established mode," which seems to find that the award of "such a man's affection" by itself creates an "obligation" in its recipient.²³

Just as Elizabeth's resentment arose, not from direct offense to herself, but from the injury to her sister Jane's feelings, her eventual conversion to gratitude begins with the evidence of Darcy's kind and benevolent treatment of others, evidence which relies on the testimony of a key witness, the housekeeper at Pemberley. Why does Austen choose this indirect approach, in which the conversion of Elizabeth's feelings is accomplished without any direct contact with Darcy subsequent to her reading his explanatory letter after his

rebuff, until their awkward encounter in company with the Gardiners at Pemberley? That the mind, informed only by the passions of the moment, is an unreliable observer is a commonplace observation on the theme of this novel. Reliable knowledge of truth requires some degree of emotional distance, and the importance of the truth bears a direct relationship to the importance of the testimony of mediating witnesses, particularly where judgment based on direct observation may be skewed by self-interest.

Clearly, "witnessing" is essential to knowledge of the highest "truth." Jane Austen's favorite sermon writer, Bishop of London Thomas Sherlock, wrote an enormously popular mock courtroom drama, The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus. The Trial begins as a group of collegial members of the London bar reflect on the recent conviction of Thomas Woolston for publishing tracts denying the miracles.²⁴ They decide to argue among themselves, according to strict rules of legal procedure, the credibility of the witnesses to the greatest attested miracle, the Resurrection itself.²⁵ While the cosmic importance of this central event for Christians may seem a long stretch from Austen's comedy, there is nothing more central to Pride and Prejudice than the "truth" of Darcy's character, and the penumbra of Christian epistemology shadows the search for this truth.

Witnessing to the events and miracles of Christ's life and death is stressed in the narratives of Christ's apostles, recorded in the Bible as the "Gospels," as confirmation of

their historical authenticity. Jesus himself, at his interrogation by Pilate on the eve of the Crucifixion, also testifies to his role as a witness.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.²⁶

In Sherlock's work, a key argument of counsel defending the witnesses distinguishes the Resurrection of Jesus from that claimed for "Mahomet," on whose own affirmation alone believers in his ascension must rely (349-50). Darcy's testimony in his own behalf, in the letter he hands Elizabeth the morning after her spirited rejection, clearly is subject to similar discounting as self-serving.

She put down the letter, weighed every circumstance with what she meant to be impartiality--deliberated on the probability of each statement--but with little success. On both sides it was only assertion.
(205)

But the substantive details Darcy's letter recites of Wickham's villainy, Elizabeth's inability to recall any positive contradictory information, and his offer of Colonel Fitzwilliam as a corroborating witness, as well as Darcy's own justifications for misreading of Jane's emotions, earn him at least provisional credibility.

Yet even if Colonel Fitzwilliam or other witnesses were to testify in Darcy's behalf, Elizabeth still must accept as believable the possibility of his good character, just as counsel attack the witnesses to the Resurrection by arguing against the very possibility of such an event, so that the defense must establish its consistency with natural law.

And what has the gentleman [counsel] said, upon this occasion, against the resurrection, more than any man, who never saw ice, might say against an hundred honest witnesses, who assert that water turns to ice in cold climates? (395)

Quite clearly, a continued insistence on the impossibility of well-attested fact would require the maintenance of a blind prejudice. Although up to this point in the novel Elizabeth "had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd" (208), there is enough of a residue in her mind of directly gleaned information about Darcy, that she cannot reasonably dismiss testimony which is not inconsistent with her own knowledge.

[I]n farther justification of Mr. Darcy, she could not but allow that Mr. Bingley, when questioned by Jane, had long ago asserted his blamelessness in the affair [of Wickham's money problems]; that proud and repulsive as were his manners, she had never, in the whole course of their acquaintance, . . . seen any thing that betrayed him to be unprincipled or unjust--any thing that spoke him of irreligious or immoral habits. (207).

Here, of course, Bingley is the witness, and his testimony given not to Elizabeth but to her sister, which emphasizes the impartiality of Elizabeth's judgment. Religion rarely is foregrounded in this novel, but finding Darcy free of "irreligious or immoral habits" calls attention to Trowbridge's "Christian coloring," and connects Elizabeth's inquiry with Sherlock's mock investigation.

Elizabeth undergoes no instantaneous reversal of feeling, although, as she reflects further on Darcy's letter, "his disappointed feelings became the object of compassion. His attachment excited gratitude, . . . but she could not approve him" (212). Yet the process of love has begun, because

Elizabeth's compassion is itself a form of benevolence, and evidence of the transformation of gratitude and benevolence found by Hutcheson "when Bodys touch each other."²⁷ The process receives a strong impetus with the visit to Pemberley, and the warm testimony on Darcy's behalf by the housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, who offers unsolicited praise of her master's benevolence, concluding that "[h]e is the best landlord, and the best master . . . that ever lived" (249) Elizabeth evaluates the worth of this testimony highly, since "[w]hat praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant?" (250).

This entire inquiry, since Elizabeth received Darcy's letter, is conducted in his absence, with Elizabeth sitting in judgment on evidence submitted to her. Austen seems to "empower" her, as Claudia Johnson observes, for this judicial role, although Sherlock, not surprisingly for the verisimilitude of his courtroom drama, appoints a male judge to hear the trial of the witnesses to the Resurrection. Austen also "empowers" the housekeeper, whereas the issue of credibility for a female witness remains highly problematic in Sherlock. Counsel attacks the worth of women's testimony that they found Jesus' tomb empty, except for "an angel, or angels" (offered as the first witnesses), who "looked like men to women who saw them," and the barrister attributes the unlikely ability to determine an angel's sex to the women's "superstition, ignorance, and fear."

The next witnesses are the women themselves: The wisest men can hardly guard themselves against the

fears of superstition; poor silly women therefore
in this case must be unexceptionable witnesses; . .
(390)

This heavily sarcastic ad hominem, or rather ad feminem, attack creates some real problems for the otherwise effective defense counsel, who chooses not to address gender and credibility, but to argue that the women's testimony does not affect his case one way or the other.

But for the women, what shall I say? Silly as they were, I hope at least they had eyes and ears, and could tell what they heard and saw. . . . And if men only must be admitted, of them we have enough to establish this truth. (414-5)

This argument rests on the authority that designated apostles were the "men" who were Christ's "chosen witnesses," and this proves persuasive in the summary of the case by the judge, who nevertheless declines to express an opinion on the credibility of the women.

The objection to the women was, I think, only that they were women; which was strengthened by calling them silly women. [But these women] are none of the chosen witnesses; and if they were, the evidence of the men cannot be set aside, because women saw what they saw. (435)

Sherlock, at least, leaves the door open on the admissibility of women's testimony in a legal proceeding on the truth of Christianity's most important mystery, and Austen moves through the opening to set up Mrs. Reynolds as the most reliable of witnesses to Darcy's character.

In many respects, The Trial of the Witnesses shadows the "trial" of Darcy conducted by Elizabeth, and the religious shading can be seen in the reverential approach of Elizabeth and the Gardiners as near-pilgrims in the hallowed precincts

of Pemberley. In a sense, Darcy is "dead," because he has been out of sight since handing Elizabeth the letter, which event has all the aspects of a final separation, particularly since, until Pemberley, she has not "the slightest inclination ever to see him again" (212). But Mrs. Reynolds as an "intelligent servant" has the same status as the apostles who were "chosen witnesses" of the Resurrection, and Austen seems to demand that readers do not discount her authority because of gender. The religious atmosphere is continued with Elizabeth's contemplative study of Darcy's portrait, which has all the aspects of icon worship, including adoration's investiture of the icon with life.

[S]he beheld a striking resemblance of Mr. Darcy, with such a smile over the face, as she remembered to have sometimes seen, when he looked at her. She stood several minutes before the picture in earnest contemplation, and returned to it again before they quitted the gallery. (250)

Absorbed in this meditation, Elizabeth and the Gardiners stroll out in the garden-like grounds of the park, suggestive of the garden location of Jesus' sepulchre after the Crucifixion, where Mary Magdalene (one of the "silly women") encounters Jesus, "supposing him to be the gardener."²⁸ While Elizabeth does not make this mistake about Darcy, his appearance to them on the narrow winding walk in one of Austen's most rhapsodic natural settings, after Elizabeth figuratively has "given him up for dead," partakes of a reincarnation, and is followed almost immediately by what amounts to a religious

conversion, after hearing "testimony so highly in his favour."

But above all, above respect and esteem, there was a motive in her of good will which could not be overlooked. It was gratitude.--Gratitude, not merely for having once loved her, but for loving her still well enough, to forgive all the petulance and acrimony of her manner in rejecting him, . . . He who, she had been persuaded, would avoid her as his greatest enemy, seemed . . . most eager to preserve the acquaintance, and without any indelicate display of regard, was soliciting the good opinion of her friends, . . . Such a change in a man of so much pride, excited not only astonishment but gratitude--for to love, ardent love, it must be attributed; and as such its impression on her was of a sort to be encouraged, as by no means displeasing, though it could not be exactly defined. She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself, and how far it would be for the happiness of both that she should employ the power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on the renewal of his addresses. (265-6)

The elevation of Elizabeth's feelings is certainly appropriate to the close relationship insisted on by Hutcheson between benevolence and "the DEITY" that seems to hover over the conversion of gratitude into benevolence "when Bodies touch each other." Since the novel begins with Elizabeth's "resentment" and her inability to "feel" gratitude, the complete reversal of those feelings confirms, as I suggested earlier, that Elizabeth has completed her moral journey. Further, all this has been accomplished, not by direct benefits to Elizabeth, but by her evaluation of evidence, particularly the testimony of reliable witnesses, of Darcy's beneficence to others. But her "verdict" is not a judicial find-

ing, like the summary of the judge in the Trial, but her "conversion" marked by the "feeling" of gratitude.

Throughout the process of Elizabeth's conversion there is a play between feeling and reason. In my discussion of gratitude in Sense and Sensibility, I contrast Balguy's argument that reason shows gratitude to be "right" in all circumstances, with Hutcheson, who claims that virtue is revealed and encouraged by the feelings or "senses." Bishop Sherlock, however, brings feelings and reason together.

Nor do we teach that nature and reason cannot lead to the speculative knowledge of divine truths; for the evidence of all divine truth resolves itself ultimately into either sense or reason; which are the common gifts of God to mankind, by the principles of which the truth of all things, depending upon the deductions of sense and reason, may be proved and examined.²⁹

I submit that the interplay of sense and reason in Austen reflects their status as "common gifts of God" and is additional confirmation of the "religious coloring" of Pride and Prejudice and, indeed, of all these novels.

Sense and reason, functioning in concert, also make possible the interplay of benevolence and gratitude, "when Bodys touch each other." For all their exchangeability, there is a hierachical relationship which elevates benevolence, as a mirror of God, above the humbler response of gratitude. Therefore, for Hutcheson's "exchange" to take place, there must also be a least a reasonable basis for a leveling of the parties. After Darcy discharges the ultimate in benevolence by arranging and funding Lydia's unlikely nuptials with

Wickham, Elizabeth reflects on Darcy's role, as revealed in her aunt's letter.

It was reasonable that he should feel he had been wrong; he had liberality, and he had the means of exercising it; and though she would not place herself as his principal inducement, she could, perhaps, believe that remaining partiality for her, might assist his endeavours in a cause where her peace of mind must be materially concerned. It was painful, exceedingly painful, to know they were under obligations to a person who could never receive a return. (326)

The crux of Elizabeth's personal predicament is that, if her love is to be received as benevolence by Darcy, then he must be humbled, a requirement not unwelcome to most readers of the novel.

Hutcheson has supplied the moral reasoning, not only to eliminate partiality as the obstacle it presents to Jane and Bingley, but also to feature it in the mutual gravitational pull of benevolence and gratitude. However, the occasion of Darcy's humbling is still wanted. So that the romance doesn't stop in its tracks, Austen has recourse to the hallowed device of the deus ex machina, none other than Lady Catherine De Bourgh, who in her stormy visit with the Bennets forces the very engagement she demands that Elizabeth renounce. The way is cleared, perhaps not too smoothly, for Darcy to confess that Elizabeth has improved his already "good principles." As I have suggested, Austen makes Darcy see himself as the subject of instruction, through his own Stoic commitment to education.

What do I not owe you! You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you I was properly humbled. (369).

The answer to Darcy's rhetorical question is, everything and nothing. The stoic man of reason has learned the understanding that can only be "taught" by the feelings. His unreachable benevolence has been overcome and converted to gratitude, as Elizabeth's gratitude rises to benevolence. Each brings to the other the gifts of themselves and their love in a marriage of equals.

In transforming values and uniting opposites, gratitude in Pride and Prejudice is at its zenith of power. But it could be argued that, by creating assertive and independent characters like Elizabeth and Darcy, Austen endows them with the power to forge their own future by the force of personality, funded by Darcy's bank account, more than through the workings of gratitude. But true virtue cannot depend for its authority on strong characters with the will and capacity to drive their own destinies. Does gratitude also serve the wants and desires for happiness of the weak and powerless? Northanger Abbey suggests that it might be a useful claim for the unempowered Catherine Morland, but the condition precedent seems to be a kind of remorse by Henry Tilney for the combined injuries to Catherine inflicted by himself and his father. What happens when gratitude is urged by unimpeachable authority figures against the wishes of the weak, but uninjured? Austen explores this question in Mansfield Park, and the answer seems to be that personal happiness may require that the manifest duty of gratitude be rejected, or rather that one's own feelings determine where gratitude is to be

placed, not the urgings of external authority. The conflict of gratitude and personal happiness is also examined in Emma, but comically complicated by suggesting that one may interpose one's own plans and desires to block gratitude's operation between others. Both novels, then, represent Austen's exploration of the limits of gratitude, whose power in Pride and Prejudice seems nearly boundless.

Chapter 4 Notes

¹ Samuel Johnson: Selected Poetry and Prose, eds. Brady and Wimsatt 158.

² "The best state of rational Agents, and their greatest and most worthy Happiness, we are necessarily led to imagine must consist in universal efficacious Benevolence; and hence we conclude the DEITY benevolent in the most universal impartial manner. Nor can we well imagine what else deserves the Name of Perfection but Benevolence, and those Capacitys or Abilitys which are necessary to make it effectual; such as Wisdom, and Power: at least we can have no other valuable Conception of it." Francis Hutcheson, vol. I, Works 276. These thoughts conclude Hutcheson's treatise, and the comments about "Capacitys of Abilitys" should not be mistaken as suggesting that such qualities are integral components of benevolence. Hutcheson makes this clear earlier in the treatise: "Nor shall we find anything amiable in any Action whatsoever, where there is no Benevolence imagagin'd; nor in any Disposition, or Capacity, which is not suppos'd applicable to, and design'd for benevolent Purposes" (150). Benevolence limited in extent may be "a smaller Degree of Virtue, unless our Beneficence be restrain'd by want of Power, . . ." (166), although the measure of "moral Importance of any Character, . . . is in a compound Ratio of his Benevolence and Abilitys" (168). Nevertheless, the absence of "Capacitys or Abilitys" may make it difficult to recognize a benevolent disposition.

³ Vol. 5, Works 69-70.

⁴ "And yet as soon as any Action is represented to us as flowing from Love, Humanity, Gratitude, Compassion, a Study of the good of others, and a Delight in their Happiness, . . . we feel Joy within us, admire the lovely action, and praise its Author." "This increase of Love towards the Benevolent, according to their nearer Approaches to our selves by their Benefits, is observable in the high degree of Love, which Heroes and Law-givers universally obtain in their own Conntrys [sic], . . . and in all the strong Ties of Friendship, Acquaintance, Neighbourhood, Partnership; which are exceedingly necessary to the Order of human Society." Vol. 1, Works 110-11, 199. "Since benevolence is motivated, for Hume as for Hutcheson, by the sight of another's benevolence, and it issues in further acts of benevolence, social virtues spread by a kind of contagion." Wills 253.

5 "Our Reason does often correct the Report of our Senses, . . . and corrects rash Conclusions about the Affections of the Agent. . . . But whether our moral Sense be subject to such a Disorder, . . . 'tis not easy to determine." Vol. 2, Works 283.

6 Hoyt Trowbridge qualifies his own argument that "Jane Austen is a rationalist" by adding that "principles are dynamic and effective only when they become an inclination, . . . a sense of duty, a 'something within,' as much a matter of habit and feeling as of reason itself." Trowbridge 281. That Austen sees a valuable role for reason does not make her a "rationalist," particularly in the philosophical sense as opposed to the authority of feelings. See analysis of John Balguy and the "rationalists" or "intellectualists" in my discussion of Sense and Sensibility and note below.

7 The phrase is not unique to Hutcheson and may be considered a generic expression of "the language of virtue," which "just about everybody" spoke in the eighteenth century. See Jack Fructman, Jr., Thomas Paine and the Religion of Nature (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993) 13.

8 "The Golden Sayings of Epictetus" [ca 90 A.D.], trans. Hastings Crossley. In The Harvard Classics, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius (1909; New York: Collier, 1937) 156, and "Introductory Note," 116.

9 Antoine Le Grand, Man without Passion: or, the Wise Stoick, According to the Sentiments of Seneca. Cited in Crane 199-200.

10 The Complete Poetry of John Milton, ed. Shawcross 563.

11 Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius 156.

12 Trowbridge 282.

13 Johnson xxiii, xxiv.

14 Johnson xiv, xv.

15 Lewis, ed. Hooper 178.

16 Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit (1699: rpt. 1732), vol. 1, British Moralists, ed. Selby-Bigge 40.

17 Trowbridge, 284.

18 Works, I, 197-99.

19 Stewart-Robinson 202.

20 Gratitude: "2. Desire to return benefits." Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language.

21 For many readers, Elizabeth seems persuaded rather too easily to forgive Darcy for his role in breaking up the budding love between Jane and Bingley, but Hutcheson would support both Elizabeth's as well as Darcy's motives. Having been convinced of Darcy's basic benevolence, Elizabeth "buys" his explanation that he was entirely motivated by the best of intentions for his friend's happiness, a "partiality" specifically endorsed in Hutcheson's system. Further, Darcy's benevolence is entirely "disinterested," the acid test of benevolent purity, since he has nothing personally to gain. Nor, as Darcy explains, was he at all aware that his benevolently intended acts had the unintended effect of wounding Jane.

22 Adam Smith seems to agree with Samuel Johnson and Swift on the common source in the "passions" of gratitude and resentment, and he finds their kinship in the idea of a "spectator's" "sympathy." Since "[r]esentment is commonly regarded as so odious a passion," people recoil from sympathy with the aggrieved party.

They will be more willing, perhaps, to admit that our sense of the merit of good actions is founded upon a sympathy with the gratitude of the persons who receive the benefit of them; because gratitude, as well as all the other benevolent passions, is regarded as an amiable principle, which can take nothing from the worth of

whatever is founded upon it. Gratitude and resentment, however, are, in every respect, it is evident, counterparts to one another; . . . (The Theory of Moral Sentiments, in British Moralists, ed. Selby-Bigge, 294).

23 The idea that there is a required response of gratitude in this situation can be attributed to the "rationalists," who argue, unlike Hutcheson and other "sentimentalists," that reason alone, not our "moral sense," will show us the course of virtue. John Balguy's The Foundation of Moral Goodness, published three years after the first edition of Hutcheson's An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil (Treatise II of An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue [1725]), specifically disagrees with Hutcheson and argues that even if we have "no kind Instinct toward our Benefactors: Would Gratitude, . . . have been absolutely out of our Power? Might we not nevertheless, by the Help of Reason and Reflection, discover ourselves to be under Obligations, and that we ought to return good Offices or Thanks, according to our Abilities." Later, Balguy returns more firmly to the same idea: "But when a Man compares the Idea of Gratitude with that of a Benefaction received, and examines the Relation between them, he cannot avoid inferring, or concluding that he ought to be grateful." Vol. 2, British Moralists, ed. Selby-Bigge 63, 188. Darcy's offer of his love is the highest beneficence.

24 "Ultimately Woolston was prosecuted for blasphemy on March 4, 1729, before Lord Chief Justice Raymond. . . . He was found guilty on four counts, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. This fine he was unable to pay, and he lingered in prison till his death in 1733." Overton and Relton 38-39.

25 The Trial of the Witnesses went through eighteen separate editions between 1729 and 1830. It was also included with other works published in multiple volumes as Discourses preached at the Temple Church (etc.) in six editions and twelve printings. An 1812 Clarendon Press edition is used in this study and possibly may be the edition referred to by Jane Austen in her letter of 28 September to Anna Austen. Vol. 2, Letters, ed. Chapman 406.

26 Bible, John 18: 37.

27 "Let us next consider another Determination of our Mind, which strongly proves Benevolence to be natural to us, and that is Compassion; . . ." Vol. 1, Works 215-6.

28 John 20:15. A number of readers have commented on the Edenesque quality of the Pemberley park, and it is true that God walks in that original garden, and is encountered by Old Testament prophets in garden settings. Nevertheless, the garden setting in Pride and Prejudice seems more a Christianized version, informed by the Resurrection motif, as Darcy is re-presented to Elizabeth and the reader. I also cannot escape the association of this garden scene with the presence of Elizabeth's uncle and aunt, the "Gardeners," although it would be difficult to establish an intentional connection.

29 Discourse XVII, vol. 1, Discourses, 325.

CHAPTER V

GRATITUDE CHALLENGED IN MANSFIELD PARK AND EMMA

Fanny Price undergoes her most severe personal trial in the extended interview with Sir Thomas Bertram, who accuses her finally of "ingratitude" in her unshakable refusal to marry Henry Crawford. The crushing force of this accusation puts Fanny through an emotional wringer, and it is with relief that she listens to the comforting words of her cousin, Edmund, for whom her true love is a closely guarded secret, who assures her that "[y]ou did not love him--nothing could have justified your accepting him."¹

Although "Fanny had not felt so comfortable for days and days," Edmund is not finished, because he feels this is only a stage in Fanny's emotions, and he urges her to "let him succeed at last, Fanny, let him succeed at last" (347), adding, in surprise at her resistance,

I cannot suppose that you have not the wish to love him--the natural wish of gratitude. You must have some feeling of that sort. You must be sorry for your own indifference. (348)

To Fanny's dismay, after raising her hopes of sympathetic understanding, Edmund also appeals to her sense of gratitude on Henry's behalf, and she again is plunged into despair.

Gratitude seems to be at odds with Fanny's quest for personal happiness, yet she herself on other occasions is its most committed advocate. Her moral education is the record of how

she resolves this conflict between her affections and the dictates of "gratitude," a term crucial to the moral issues of all Austen novels, and whose twenty-six appearances in Mansfield Park alone advertise its central importance.

The relation of gratitude to Fanny Price's moral education, and to the decisions she must make, bear directly on the frequently argued critical issue of whether she demonstrates admirable growth in self-knowledge and moral development, or remains throughout an unchanged and insufferable prig. For Gerry Brenner, Fanny is a "moral monolith, and her failure to "develop" is read ironically by Brenner as Austen's "sustained, oblique rejection of Fanny."² On the other hand, Avron Fleishman and Susan Morgan argue that Fanny indeed does develop, and for Fleishman she "is a more complex and changeful character" than Elizabeth Bennet of Pride and Prejudice, "who merely changes her mind."³ Morgan finds that Fanny's growth process anticipates the nineteenth-century bildungsroman, and that "[w]ithout obvious events, without natural gifts, Fanny still grows. It is the chance Austen offers to us all."⁴

More recently, Nancy Miller has argued that Fanny "shows admirable improvement by the end of the novel: she moves from a passive morality that instructs no one to an active morality that is beneficial to many."⁵ Miller finds the source of Fanny's "improvement" in Austen's commitment to Christian values, as played out in the consequences of the seven deadly sins, particularly sloth, that Miller feels afflict all

Manfield Park characters, except Fanny, in one way or another. Christian values are indeed pervasive in Austen novels, but not as compelled by fear of retributive divine sanctions, which seems implicit in Miller's thesis. Rather, ethical motivation for her characters is more a blend of religious values with a pragmatic and flexible approach to daily life.

Many of these critics, whether admirers or detractors of Fanny, seem more interested in connecting the novel with literary trends or cultural issues than in understanding Fanny's character and development in terms of the interplay of moral dialogue and commentary, particularly discussions of gratitude, with dramatic events. For instance, Morgan sees Mansfield Park as foreshadowing the "bildungsroman," perhaps reflecting the time frame of eight years in Fanny's life, the only Austen novel to stay with a central character from childhood to maturity as a young woman.⁶ Patrick Goold suggests that Fanny suffers at the hands of critics because today "[s]ubmissiveness is . . . quite out of fashion," and that also the "claim" the novel makes "to 'educating the sentiments' offends modern prejudices."⁷ Goold does consider Mansfield Park in the setting of a moral discourse, but the Kantian philosophical / psychological reading he offers has little relevance to Austen's novels.

This chapter will try to show that Fanny indeed does develop morally, and that her educational process reenacts the "moral sense" of Francis Hutcheson, and the practical

Christian ethics of Thomas Sherlock, imbedded in Austen's text. Gratitude is the rock that sustains Fanny from childhood in her unswerving but unrecognized love for Edmund, but she learns to subordinate if not reject this fundamental principle when it is invoked against her in her refusal of Henry Crawford.

Edmund suggests that eventually Fanny must give way to gratitude, because it is a "natural wish," and nothing would seem more "natural" than for Fanny to follow her own "feelings." Where, then, is "nature" to be found, and how do we recognize where it leads us? "Nature" also runs a school Fanny attends in her moral education, but what she learns is that nature is a dangerous and untrustworthy guide. The changing role of gratitude mirrors Fanny's own moral development and reflects the plasticity given this virtue by Hutcheson. Despite appeals to gratitude that seem to threaten Fanny's happiness, and even challenge gratitude's authority, it survives these tests intact as the most important operative virtue in the novel.

For Hutcheson, virtue, measured by the standard of "Benevolence," thrives best in close family relationships, where it becomes identical with "natural Affection and Gratitude; . . ."⁸ He frequently singles out parental affection as exemplifying the "stronger Degrees of Benevolence," and also comments that "there is the same kind of Affection among collateral Relations, tho in a weaker degree, . . ."⁹ In Austen's novels, affection among siblings and cousins often

is stronger than the parental bond, but this distinction for Hutcheson is less significant than that virtuous love differs only in degree, not in kind, between "universal benevolence" and the "natural Affections" uniting close relations. Virtuous love, of course defines the growth of Affection between Fanny and her cousin Edmund Bertram.

Hutcheson's oeuvre does, however, reflect an ongoing struggle to account for and rationalize the influence of sexual love, which clouds our understanding, with the virtuous love which is supposed to transcend passion. In my discussion of Sense and Sensibility, I attempt to show how this novel tests the power of virtue in the presence of physical passion, which Hutcheson tries to write out of his philosophy in An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil.

The Affections which are of most importance in Morals, are Love and Hatred: All the rest seem but different Modifications of these two original Affections. Now in discoursing of Love toward rational Agents, we need not be caution'd not to include that Love between the Sexes, which, when no other Affections accompany it, is only Desire of Pleasure, and is never counted a Virtue.¹⁰

"Affections" is a term carrying a lot of freight in Hutcheson, but in all its various manifestations, it is distinguished from "the Passions," which are further distinguished from "the Appetites," where we encounter sexual love. So long as we form correct "Opinions," we exercise some control over the "Passions," and the virtues are not threatened.

The Government of our Passions must then depend much upon our Opinions: But we must here observe an obvious Difference among our Desires, viz. that some of them have a previous, painful, or uneasy Sensation, antecedently to any Opinion of Good in

the Object; nay, the Object is often chiefly esteemed good, only for its allaying this Pain or Uneasiness; or if the Object gives also positive Pleasure, yet the uneasy Sensation is previous to, and independent of this Opinion of Good in the Object. These desires we may call Appetites. . . . Of [this] kind are Hunger and Thirst, and the Desires between the Sexes; to which Desires there is an uneasy Sensation previous, even in those who have little other Notion of Good in the Objects, than allaying this Pain or Uneasiness.¹¹

But these unruly passions clearly can be exacerbated by the same proximity that also intensifies virtue, benevolence, and gratitude. Hutcheson seems to argue that "nature," in the sense of sexuality, must be kept at a distance if virtue is not to be threatened, and in Mansfield Park, the convergence of nature with virtue and gratitude in the "wilderness" at Sotherton, and in Henry Crawford's direct assault on Fanny in the bosom of her Portsmouth family, prove exceptionally dangerous.

How, then, can the relationship of blood, most conducive to the highest virtue, be protected from the "Appetites" of sexual attraction, which has no respect for virtue? This dilemma has intrigued scholars with the shadow of incest it seems to cast across Mansfield Park, with its marriage of first cousins, who grow up together as devoted siblings. Indeed, Glenda Hudson suggests that Fanny Price marries cousin Edmund as a "surrogate for her beloved brother William toward whom she feels an intense personal attachment."¹² However, Hudson sees Austen endorsing such intimate sibling relationships.

These joint experiences, Austen shows, create a potent and sympathetic love, a commingling of frater-

nal and erotic feelings, which although the emphasis is very much on the former, we must recognize as a kind of incestuous love.¹³

I agree that Fanny's attachment to both brother and cousin must be read as morally constructive, but feel that Hudson has clouded her analysis by defining these loving relationships as "incest," a term used pejoratively, then as now, as legally and morally proscribed.¹⁴ Hudson notes that "there was some sentiment against the practice [of first cousin's marrying] in the eighteenth century,"¹⁵ and supports her observation by citing Hutcheson, whose principal concern seems to be that intra-family marriages work at cross-purposes to the propagation and dissemination of virtue in society.¹⁶ But in the same section of "The Rights and Duties in a State of Marriage," Hutcheson recognizes no adverse evidence against first-cousin marriages.

But it often happens that cousin-germans, and remoter relations, are educated together in the same intimacy [as siblings], and we see no dismal effects from the permission of intermarriages among them.¹⁷

This relationship, of course, parallels that of Fanny and Edmund, as played out in Mansfield Park's plot, but Hutcheson goes further to question cautiously the blanket condemnation of marriage between blood relations.

But that there is not a necessary invariable turpitude or moral impurity in all these marriages ordinarily called incestuous, antecedently to the prohibition of them, must be owned by such as consider that God laid the immediate children of Adam under a necessity of inter-marrying, and for some political reasons ordered such marriages on certain contingencies as were ordinarily prohibited.¹⁸

Clearly, Hutcheson believes that "certain marriages," which would include those of first cousins, are entitled to exemption from the opprobrium associated with the label "incestuous," and the basis for such a claim is the literal reading of biblical scripture. Although Hutcheson argues that close familial relationships offer opportunities for the development of virtue and its propagation, passionate love is certainly implied in the development of Fanny's and Edmund's relationship. The latent eroticism that whispers "incest" creates a tension and ambivalence which implicitly challenges virtue's hold.

Austen seems to address this challenge by introducing Edmund to his cousin when she is at the tender age of ten, and Fanny immediately forges a felicitous bond of gratitude with Edmund, when he alone of the Bertram children undertakes positive acts of compassion and kindness to the homesick waif, soon after her arrival at the Park, in getting her paper and pen to write her brother, and later in providing a docile mare for gentle open-air exercise. "He had never knowingly given her pain, but he now felt that she required more positive kindness" (17). As Fanny matures, the "Appetites" implicitly are acknowledged, but virtue has enjoyed a seven or eight-year head start and is not about to be displaced.

Seven or eight years should be adequate for an educational program in gratitude, but Alistair Duckworth finds that Fanny's own example seems to subvert the moral message of the novel.

How, . . . are we to account for Fanny's instinctive morality, her innate qualities? . . . But when all is said, there is a quality--an impulse--which cannot be contained within the educational hypothesis.¹⁹

Duckworth never successfully explains this "paradox," as he terms it, except as it affirms Austen's belief in "a natural order stemming from God," and that the required "affirmative response" is "in Fanny's nature."²⁰ But "nature," as I have suggested, seems at critical moments to point in directions apparently in conflict with "instinctive morality," and if Fanny urges resistance to nature at Sotherton, she also shows that nature can lead her, and not unwillingly, as well.

Both Hutcheson and Sherlock are in accord on the process of education in virtue, and understanding their approach may clear up some of the mystification in the "paradox" posed by Duckworth about Fanny's apparently "innate qualities." First, Hutcheson specifically insists that his focus on the "moral sense" as an "internal" sense expands on, rather than challenges, Locke, and "no more pre-supposes an innate Idea, or Principle of Knowledge, than the external [sense]."²¹ "Education" may clarify, inform, and direct the "internal sense," but

Education never makes us apprehend any Qualitys in Objects, which we have not Senses capable of perceiving. . . . Education may make an unattentive Goth imagine that his Countrymen have attain'd the Perfection of Archicecture; . . . but he had never form'd these Prejudices, had he been void of a Sense of Beauty.²²

With these somewhat chauvinistic thoughts, Hutcheson wraps up his first Treatise, but picks up the analogy with the Sense

of Beauty in the following An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil.

It remains then, that as the Author of Nature has determin'd us to receive, by our external Senses, pleasant or disagreeable Ideas of Objects, according as they are useful or hurtful to our Bodies; and to receive from uniform Objects the Pleasures of Beauty and Harmony, to excite us to the Pursuit of Knowledge, and to reward us for it; . . . so he has given us a Moral Sense, to direct our Actions, and to give us still nobler Pleasures; . . .

But Hutcheson adds, to make sure there is no misunderstanding, that "[w]e are not to imagine, that this moral Sense, more than the other Senses, supposes any innate Ideas, or Knowledge, or practical Proposition: We mean by it only a Determination of our Minds . . ." Thus, "Perception of moral Good is not deriv'd from Custom, Education, Example, or Study. These give us no new Ideas."²³

Education, which supports and directs the moral sense, enlists the aid of reason, which "does often correct the Report of our Senses,"²⁴ but which is similarly incapable of revealing virtue independent of the moral sense. Thomas Sherlock, writing from the perspective of a practical theologian rather than that of the moral philosopher, holds that both sense and reason function in concert as manifestations of God's grace.

Nor do we teach that nature and reason cannot lead to the speculative knowledge of divine truths; for the evidence of all divine truth resolves itself ultimately into either sense or reason; which are the common gifts of God to mankind, by the principles of which the truth of all things, depending upon the deductions of sense and reason, may be proved and examined.²⁵

Fanny may be considered a composite of the complementary, if not identical, views of Hutcheson and Sherlock. By God's grace, she has a disposition to virtue, which is enhanced by Edmund's personal example and counsel, an exemplary education. In sharp contrast are the Crawfords, whose defective education, and the vicious example of the Admiral, their uncle and guardian, allow vices to get the upper hand, and their better principles to wither in childhood. Sherlock is very emphatic on the widely shared belief in the importance of childhood education, and his views might almost serve as a preface or gloss on the role of education as played out in Mansfield Park.

All wise men, legislators, and princes, have acknowledged, not only the use, but the necessity of an early education to form the mind, whilst tender, to the principles of honour and virtue; . . . Even our unbelievers have seen how far religion depended on this care; and, under a pretence of maintaining the liberty of the human mind, and guarding it against early prejudices, they have endeavoured to persuade the world, that children should be taught nothing of religion, but be left to form notions for themselves. They have had but too great success, and we begin to see the fruits of it. The children of this age grow soon to be men and women, and are admitted to be partners and witnesses to the follies and vices of their parents. Thus trained and educated, . . . they are often a torment to each other, and to themselves, . . .²⁶

Echoes of Sherlock's language resonate in discussions of the Crawfords' education, as well as in narrative commentary on the deficiencies in the education of the Bertram children, such as demonstrated by Julia Bertram's petulance at her "duty" of attendance on Mrs. Rushworth and exclusion from the others' fun at Sotherton.

[T]he want of that . . . just consideration of others, that knowledge of her own heart, that principle of right which had not formed any essential part of her education, made her miserable under it. (91)

The consequence of neglecting such essentials, as Sherlock observes, is that Julia is a "torment to" herself, and presumably to others. Sir Thomas belatedly recognizes the shortcomings of "his plan of education."

He feared that principle, active principle, had been wanting, that they had never been properly taught to govern their inclinations and tempers, by that sense of duty which alone can suffice. They had been instructed theoretically in their religion, but never required to bring it into daily practice. (463)

The "theoretical" instruction in religion proves to be no better than the results Sherlock sees from being "taught nothing," and both Sherlock as well as Sir Thomas cite the lack of education in "principles" as the common failing.

But Fanny's youthful responses at sixteen reflect more her disposition than her later education and demonstrate a kind of tunnel vision about gratitude, which is at war with her own feelings. When Sir Thomas leaves for his West Indies plantations, her reaction is one of "relief" at the removal of his awesome benevolent paternalism, "but a more tender nature suggested that her feelings were ungrateful, and she really grieved because she could not grieve" (33). "Feelings" are distinguished from "more tender nature," which seems rather to be the indoctrinated conscience. This kind of conflict is also recognized by Elizabeth Bennet in Pride and

Prejudice in her acknowledgment of Darcy's unwelcome marriage proposal.

It is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It is natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could feel gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot-- .

. .²⁷

Although the feisty and independent Elizabeth has no problem discarding "the established mode," Fanny senses a flaw in her character, which fails to make emotion subject to the implied a priori virtue of gratitude.

Fanny emphasizes gratitude's morally imperative status in her discussion with Edmund of Mary Crawford's derogatory remarks about "the Admiral," uncle and guardian of Mary and her brother. In a conversation about property "improvements," Mary volunteers that her uncle's improvements ruined the charm of a cottage he had purchased. Later, Edmund asks, "was there nothing in her conversation that struck you Fanny, as not quite right?"

"Oh! yes, she ought not to have spoken of her uncle as she did. I was quite astonished. An uncle with whom she has been living so many years, and who, whatever his faults may be, is so very fond of her brother, treating him, they say, quite like a son. I could not have believed it!

"I thought you would be struck. It was very wrong--very indecorous."

"And very ungrateful I think." (63)

Edmund recoils from Fanny's verdict; "Ungrateful is a strong word," and they wind up their conversation in his scramble to exonerate Mary from ingratitude.

It is quite true that the Admiral "was a man of vicious conduct," who, after his wife's death, "chose, instead of retaining his niece [Mary], to bring his mistress under his own roof" (41), a history of which Fanny is well aware. Yet for Fanny, Mary's duty of gratitude is unaffected by the depravity of her uncle, even though his latest act drove Mary from his house. Although this incident occurs two years after Fanny's remorse at her own feelings on Sir Thomas's departure, her belief in the "stand alone" inviolability of gratitude remains unshaken.

At this point in the novel, Fanny's attitude resembles that of Elinor Dashwood in Sense and Sensibility, an attitude that I have argued eventually is discredited, but Elinor goes so far as to let gratitude dictate that she accept a sort of emotional suicide mission, which facilitates the marriage of her lover to a woman both detest. Fanny has yet to confront such a direct personal crisis, but is brought face to face with the choice between the duty of gratitude and personal happiness when Henry Crawford, his uncle's moral heir, claims her hand in marriage as the reward for his advocacy and the Admiral's influence in securing the lieutenant's commission for her adored midshipman brother, William.

Fanny's astonishing, and un-Elinor like, refusal of Henry, calls forth the formidable persuasive efforts of Sir Thomas, who triggers the emotional crisis of the novel by asking, rhetorically, "But, Fanny, if your heart can acquit you of ingratitude--," an implied sin so appalling that the

italicized incomplete thought testifies to the lack of words to express it. Sir Thomas's lecture, for Fanny, has been "rising in dreadful gradation! Self-willed, obstinate, selfish, and ungrateful" (319), and she twice reflects on the combination, "selfish and ungrateful," but her final thoughts settle on ingratitude as the one truly inexcusable vice. "'I must be a brute indeed, if I can be really ungrateful!'" said she in soliloquy; 'Heaven defend me from being ungrateful!'" (323).

Fanny's interview with Sir Thomas, which culminates in this fervent prayer, takes up ten pages in the Chapman text, surely a measure of her ordeal, and the pain is intensified when her uncle precedes their conversation by expressing surprise at the lack of a fire in her room, followed by his order that one shall be provided from then on. Such a kindness under these circumstances adds to Fanny's burden a further degree of gratitude to him, and intensifies the magnitude of her rebellion when he speaks to her on behalf of Crawford's suit. But even here, at her most ungrateful moment, there is a suggestion that Fanny is growing morally, in Sir Thomas's opening expression of confidence that Fanny will feel no "resentment," the reverse of gratitude,²⁸ at being previously deprived of a fire's comfort.

--You have an understanding, which will prevent you from receiving things only in part, and judging partially by the event.--You will take in the whole of the past, you will consider times, persons, and probabilities. (313)

In the context of what follows, it could be argued that Sir Thomas is only trying to flatter Fanny into accepting Henry Crawford, because his rhetoric and clearly invokes the apostle Paul's famous letter to the Corinthians.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.²⁹

Although Paul seems to refer to a final revelation yet to come, Sir Thomas suggests that Fanny's moral understanding in this life has matured from the "in part" vision of childhood to "tak[ing] in the whole." Further, he allows her the same kind of growth that Paul seems to reserve for one's becoming a "man."³⁰ Sir Thomas may have intended that his appeal, with its imbedded biblical text, would persuade Fanny of the irresistible force of his argument, but what he does is reveal to the reader what the reader already knows, that Fanny sees "the whole" in a different and more complete way than he does.

The forces of gratitude bearing on Fanny in this scene are overwhelming. Not only does she carry the burdens of Sir Thomas's past and present benevolence, as well as of Henry Crawford's successful assistance of the one she arguably loves most in the world, she also must recognize that this success would not have been possible without the willing help of Henry's uncle, the Admiral. Fanny already is on record

that the Admiral's depraved morality is no excuse for the ingratitude Mary Crawford betrays earlier. How can Fanny shelter herself, behind her abhorrence of their combined immorality, from the obligations of gratitude due to both the Admiral and his nephew, not to mention the claims of Sir Thomas, whose perceptions may be faulty, but whose character is unspotted?

The answer seems to be that the duty of gratitude cannot be a "stand alone" virtue, and in the moral conflicts of life may be preempted or overruled when the claimant's character can be condemned, and his motives shown to be ruled, not by benevolence, but by pure self-interest, as Henry's are in his pursuit of Fanny. This admittedly oversimplifies an important philosophical debate, in which the inflexibility of the requirement of gratitude, and of acting accordingly, were staunchly argued by the "rationalist" or "intellectualist" school, as represented by John Balguy in his controversy with Francis Hutcheson, which I discuss in the chapter on Sense and Sensibility. Balguy insists that there are certain fixed principles of virtue, including gratitude, that can be apprehended by reason alone, without regard to Hutcheson's "moral sense." What Hutcheson does is to argue that the moral character and motives of benefactors determine the worth of their benevolence, and that one's "moral sense" of these factors is the best guide to conduct. It is true that "Gratitude arises from benefits conferred from good-will on ourselves, or those we love," but "neither benevolence nor any other affection or

desire [which would include gratitude] can be directly raised by volition."

If they could, then we could be bribed into any affection whatsoever toward any object, even the most improper: we might raise jealousy, fear, anger, love, toward any sort of persons indifferently by an hire, . . . ³¹

Hutcheson, then, is saying that where reason leads is, paradoxically, unreasonable in practical affairs, and he makes his point cleverly, if somewhat deviously, by substituting the term "bribe" for "reason." By attributing to her St. Paul's process of intellectual maturity, Sir Thomas suggests that Fanny's reason should show her the merits of Henry Crawford, but behind the arguments of reason is, of course, the "bribe" of his influence on behalf of William.

Nevertheless, Hutcheson has some trouble proving that his "moral sense" is not a smoke screen for self-love, in which personal happiness, as opposed to his guiding principle of "universal" happiness, justifies moral decisions.

Our Reason can discover indeed certain Bounds, within which we may not only act from Self-Love, consistently with the Good of the Whole, but every Mortal's acting thus within these Bounds for his own Good, is absolutely necessary for the Good of the Whole, and the Want of such Self-Love would be universally pernicious; and hence, he who pursues his own private Good, with an Intention also to concur with that Constitution, which tends to the Good of the Whole; and much more he who promotes his own Good, with a direct View of making himself more capable of serving God, or doing good to Mankind; acts not only innocently, but also honourably, and virtuously: . . . An thus a Neglect of our own Good, may be morally evil, and argue a Want of Benevolence toward the Whole.³²

Hutcheson continues on with this tortuous argument to discuss "when Self-Love breaks over the Bounds above-mention'd," but

his obvious difficulty in articulating a logical and persuasive case is the relativism he tries to incorporate in fixed principles of virtue. His remarks would apply with equal force to gratitude, which becomes synonymous with benevolence in intimate personal relationships.³³ However, the relativism of gratitude which Hutcheson introduces seems to support the latitude Austen allows Fanny to follow her own heart and judgment.

That this kind of moral liberation challenges an accepted order is implicit in Hutcheson's philosophical discourse with Balguy, and the dispute seems to spill over into the popular arena, as suggested by a piece that appeared in Eliza Heywood's, The Female Spectator (1744-46), entitled "Gratitude sometimes a Vice: the hard Fate of Two Sisters."³⁴ In this little fable, a lover, faced with the choice of saving one of two sisters from drowning, rescues out of gratitude the one who had helped him win the affections of the other, who therefore drowns. In despair at his loss, the rescuer commits suicide, and thus is also lost to the surviving sister.

The implausibility of this poignant scenario suggests a tongue-in-cheek authorship, yet the "serious" question, which perhaps could only be floated as a kind of dark humor, is whether the inflexibility of gratitude may work against the interests of women. Certainly this is the road block to happiness that Fanny confronts, and in the January chill of the fire-less East Room, confronted with Sir Thomas's "cold

sternness" (318), she looks gratitude in the eye, and rejects it, even as she prays for heavenly deliverance "from being ungrateful!"

Lurking in Fanny's heart, but revealed to no one, of course, is her love for Edmund, but Edmund helps her plight not at all, by invoking the claim on Fanny that "love" is the "natural wish of gratitude," a claim that Austen herself seems to endorse. Gratitude is the basis of relationships which lead to marriages in Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility, and Pride and Prejudice, and at least in the last novel, the mutual love of Darcy and Elizabeth grows out of experiences that trigger gratitude toward each other. But what actual evidence is there that nature operates in the service of virtue?

Fanny already has had some experience with what looks like the consequences of following a "natural wish," which apparently facilitates the workings of Henry's artful and unscrupulous mind on Maria's unguarded passion in the "wilderness" of Sotherton. Sherlock condemns this evil collaboration of the mind and passion.

Good principles are the seeds of good actions: and, though the seed may be buried under much rubbish, yet, as long as there is life in it, there is a reasonable expectation of seeing fruit from it some time or other: but, when reason and understanding are depraved, and as far corrupted as the passions of the heart; when thus the blind leads the blind, what else can we expect, but that both fall into the ditch?" [emphasis in text]³⁵

The converse of Sherlock's metaphor is that, in nature, bad seed brings forth evil fruit. Austen seems to translate

Sherlock into the language of allegory in Sotherton Park. Fanny is left behind by the explorers Edmund and Mary Crawford to muse in solitude on a bench in "the wilderness" (actually a silvacultured woodland). Her bench is located next to the iron gate and fence which adjoins a ha-ha, and both separate "the wilderness" from the deeper woods of the "park" beyond. "Depraved" Reason, trifling with Passion, appears in the form of Henry Crawford and Maria Bertram, trailed by their dim-witted host and Maria's fiancé, Mr. Rushworth. Finding the gate locked to the true wilderness of the "park," Rushworth, the owner of these vast properties, leaves to get the key, and in his absence Maria frets at the delay.

But unluckily that iron gate, that ha-ha, give me a feeling of restraint and hardship. I cannot get out, as the starling said. (99)

Henry suggests insidiously to Maria that they might circumvent the gate's symbolic authority and constraint.

. . . I think you might with little difficulty pass round the edge of the gate, here, with my assistance; I think it might be done, if you . . . could allow yourself to think it not prohibited. (99)

Others have noted the connotations of Maria's lament in chafing under the burden of her engagement vows,³⁶ but have tended to overlook Fanny's fluttered concern at this scheme. She has, by her solitary occupation of the bench, become a sort of moral woodland sprite.

"You will hurt yourself, Miss Bertram," she cried, "you will certainly hurt yourself against those spikes--you will tear your gown--you will be in danger of slipping into the ha-ha. You had better not go." (99-100)

The small voice of Fanny's distress echoes Sherlock's thunderous denunciation of the alliance of "depraved" "reason and understanding" with "corrupted" "passions." When she warns Maria about the ha-ha, she seems to be seeing the perils of Sherlock's "ditch" that awaits these "blind" adventurers.

The "natural" setting of these escapades suggests that Austen sees in "nature" threats to virtue. But nature at Sotherton is "Appetite," in Hutcheson's taxonomy. The "natural wish of gratitude" implies that nature defers to moral law in guiding the emotions, just as within the enclosed and cultivated grounds one's "natural" desires are, or should be, constrained by the traditional moral order of the ancient Sotherton estate,³⁷ however emptied of content under present ownership. The woods beyond the gate offer the opportunity for Henry and Maria to escape moral confinement, but the escape is illusory, since Rushworth ownership, and the moral authority of the marital engagement, extend even there, however unenforced his proprietary rights. One may lose sight of virtue in nature, but not escape its dictates.

When Fanny sides with Cowper in lamenting the destruction of the "avenue" of oaks to make way for "improvements," (56), she does not embrace raw nature, but rather the mind and hand of the planter, whose legacy is preserved in the ancient trees, which modern taste would cut down. Fanny's comment, on sitting down on the bench to rest, that "to sit in the shade on a fine day, and look upon verdure, is the most perfect refreshment" (96), does imply innocent delight in na-

ture's "smiling scene," as Henry later presents it enticingly to Maria. But Fanny's refreshment turns to disappointment in the negligent selfishness of Edmund and Mary, who desert her, and to horror in the sexual frolic of Henry and Maria. Fanny alone stays completely within the moral limits defined by the bench, fence and locked gate, and the indiscretion of Edmund and Mary lacks the turpitude of Henry and Maria, since they themselves do not pass the boundaries of the fence.

The closest Fanny comes to being in a true state of nature herself is in the environment of her own Portsmouth family. Their covetousness, her siblings' scrambles for food, and fights over possessions, are not far removed from a struggle for survival, and Fanny recoils from the moral vacuum of existence ungraced by gratitude. The most promising child is Fanny's sister, Susan, who is unrewarded for her efforts at order and economy in the family, since her mother dotes on the youngest daughter.

The blind fondness which was for ever producing evil around her, she [Susan] had never known. There was no gratitude for affection past or present, to make her better bear with its excesses to the others. (396)

The economic hardship of the Price family, of course, stands in contrast with the Bertram's affluence, but even here Nature can masquerade its moral poverty and offer a "smiling scene" that also masks the real poverty which stalks the family. In perhaps the novel's most rhapsodic passage, Austen describes the Price family Sunday outing on the Portsmouth ramparts, with Fanny on Henry Crawford's arm.

The day was uncommonly lovely. It was really March; but it was April in its mild air, brisk soft wind, and bright sun, occasionally clouded for a minute; and everything looked so beautiful under the influence of such a sky, the effects of the shadows pursuing each other, on the ships at Spithead and the island beyond, with the ever-varying hues of the sea now at high water, dancing in its glee and dashing against the ramparts with so fine a sound, produced altogether such a combination of charms for Fanny, as made her almost careless of the circumstances under which she felt them. (409). [Emphasis added].

This canvas is anything but Austen's "little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much labour,"³⁸ and seems clearly to invite the reader to share Fanny's pleasure, including the relaxation of her moral scruples against Henry. Like the flood tide that covers Portsmouth harbor's low-tide grime, Henry's character and fortunes are now at their high-water mark. But as the tide falls and nature's smile fades, the stain on his true character is revealed by his moral perfidy with Maria that follows soon after.

Nevertheless, gratitude does seem to possess a power to dominate nature, which suggests that Fanny's rejection of its commands, as voiced by both Sir Thomas and Edmund, might be only a temporary rebellion against its authority. In fact, gratitude's "natural wish" also operates in Mansfield Park and has happened already in the growth of Fanny's secret love for Edmund from her earliest child gratitude. Thus Edmund's affirmation of "the natural wish of gratitude" is an accom-

plished fact, and Henry's claims to gratitude apparently come too late to weaken Fanny's committed love.

Nevertheless, Austen refuses to deny that the power of gratitude ultimately could sway Fanny's affection, had Henry not thrown away his chances by the adulterous seduction of Maria Bertram.

Would he have persevered, and uprightly, Fanny must have been his reward--and a reward very voluntarily bestowed--within a reasonable period from Edmund's marrying Mary. (467)

One might dismiss this "what if" commentary as an example of Austen's penchant for postscripts, except for its echo of Edmund's comments to Fanny, which immediately precede his "natural wish of gratitude" affirmation.

I must hope, however, that time proving him [Henry] (as I firmly believe it will), to deserve you by his steady affection, will give him his reward. (348)

Narrative commentary, by reinforcing the views of the drama's most authoritative male figure, emphasizes that the fortunes of Austen's characters cannot, finally, obstruct the processes of gratitude. "The natural wish of gratitude," therefore, must be strong enough not only to compensate for a life of vice, but also to impose its own imperative on nature's moral untrustworthiness. Despite its power, however, Fanny has refused to be led by gratitude against her own heart and has won her fight. The "what if" narrative commentary must remain, not a prediction but only a hypothetical possibility. Fanny's victory over coercion in the name of gratitude chal-

lenges its ultimate authority, but Austen seems to tell us that it will survive the challenge.

The authority of gratitude in Pride and Prejudice is supremely powerful and drives the novel to a conclusion that promises happiness for all. But in Mansfield Park, gratitude paradoxically threatens Fanny Price, Austen's most grateful character, with a morally and emotionally repellent marriage to the scoundrel Henry Crawford. In Emma, gratitude operates indirectly to threaten Emma with the loss of Mr. Knightley to Harriet. Despite her position in Highbury at the pinnacle of social and economic power, unlike the lowly Fanny at Mansfield Park, Emma must learn the humbling, as well as useful, lesson of gratitude for her own happiness. This learning process must work against the continuing, rather exotic, allure of Frank Churchill, who seems masterfully to accomplish his goals without acknowledging any indebtedness whatsoever to gratitude. But what Emma learns is something Frank can never learn, and the penalty of his failure is eviction from Highbury, as Emma's reward is both happiness and success in achieving her objectives.

Nevertheless, gratitude seems a little sullied by Emma's success in subverting its force, which might have driven Mr. Knightley into the arms of Harriet Smith, and the novel ends with an implied question hanging in the air: Is gratitude at the service of self-interest? Austen does not answer the question, but instead exiles Frank Churchill, whose personal history might support an affirmative answer, and she also

concocts a love-nest for Harriet with Robert Martin among the yeomanry, social eviction if not geographical exile. By distancing Harriet as far as possible, Austen seems to discourage connections that might suggest unfavorable conclusions about her treatment at Emma's hands.

But the first question leads to another, larger question: Is gratitude, perhaps, not the transcendent and powerful virtue celebrated in Pride and Prejudice? If it is restricted to a closed system like Highbury that also evicts nonconformists, then any link with "real" world morality is broken or severely strained. In Persuasion, Austen liberates gratitude from the shackles of class and place and gives it renewed power to work for personal happiness in a future that is shaping itself, freed from a crumbling past.

Emma, however, comically subjects gratitude to its most rigorous critical examination, and if this scrutiny reveals its flaws, it also confirms its strength. Indeed, the moral credibility of Persuasion gains authority by gratitude's acid test in Emma. The test process is the comparison Austen invites between the parallel personal histories of Frank Churchill and Emma Woodhouse, whose characters are similar in many ways. Although their separate interests appear only casually related, their lives do intersect, in ways often not apparent at the time, but which the reader and Emma recognize in retrospect.

Emma reflects on the lessons of their personal histories in her last conversation with Frank before he spirits Jane

Fairfax, his bride to be, away from Highbury forever, and she claims that "I think there is a little likeness between us."

He bowed.

"If not in our dispositions," she presently added, with a look of true sensibility, "there is a likeness in our destiny; the destiny which bids fair to connect us with two characters so much superior to our own." (478).

Frank's bow signals his acquiescence in the "likeness" Emma observes, and the novel's protracted comparison of these two blythe spirits supports the aptness of her observation. A significant "likeness" that emerges in their parallel histories is that gratitude appears to exercise little if any influence on their personal decisions. Emma seems to have no occasion for gratitude, since her wealth and autonomy at Hartfield insulate her from dependence on another's benevolence. Frank, whose independence is more limited, nevertheless rejects the dictates of gratitude, because gratitude acknowledges personal relationships, whose disclosure may threaten the secrecy that shrouds his conduct.

Both Emma and Frank seem to defy the central importance of gratitude to the virtuous life, emphasized by Francis Hutcheson in his A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy. Hutcheson lists the rights which others have to our "beneficence," including "the good offices we formerly received from them."

None of these considerations are [sic] to be neglected, and least of all the last one; since there's no obligation more sacred than gratitude, none more useful in life; nor is any vice more odious than ingratitude, or more hurtful in society. When therefore in certain cases we cannot exercise

all the beneficence we desire, offices of gratitude should take place of other offices of liberality.³⁹

Gratitude mediates between personal happiness and virtue, defined as one's contribution to the happiness of others, and links the individual with society. Hutcheson suggests that gratitude not only is virtuous, but "useful in life." Emma ironically discovers that her protégé, Harriet Smith, already has learned its usefulness, to the peril of Emma's own personal happiness. Links with society, as his plotting reveals, are exactly what Frank seeks to avoid, and it is not surprising, then, that he shuns gratitude altogether.

Emma, however, does not say that she and Frank are "like" each other, but rather that the likeness is "between" them, and the reason for this detachment of image from body is clarified by the conditional, almost hypothetical, explanation she next offers, "If not in our dispositions." Frank could hardly escape Emma's critique implied in suggesting different "dispositions," were it not that she then disavows their personal moral agency by putting their lives, as it were, in the hands of the gods, "the destiny" which will unite them with their respective moral "superiors," George Knightley and Jane Fairfax. Does Emma really believe that "destiny" is in control? Our only clue is the "look of true sensibility" that accompanies her spoken "If" clause.

But what credibility is added by "a look of true sensibility," which had come under attack in the Francophobia of the time as both feminine and "French," in contrast with "the

manlier virtues," as exemplified in the Anti-Jacobin imitation of Pope's The Dunciad.

Next comes a gentler Virtue.--Ah! beware
 Lest the harsh verse her shrinking softness scare.
 Visit her not too roughly;--the warm sigh
 Breathes on her lips;--the tear drop gems her eye.
 Sweet Sensibility, who dwells enshrin'd
 In the fine foldings of the feeling mind;--
 With delicate Mimosa's sense endu'd,
 Who shrinks instinctive from a hand too rude;
 Or, like the anagallis, prescient flower,
 Shuts her soft petals at the' approaching shower.
 Sweet child of sickly Fancy!--her of yore
 From her lov'd France Rousseau to exile bore;⁴⁰

Janet Todd reminds us of commonplace scholarly opinion that "'[s]ensibility' is perhaps the key term of the period," and she includes Jane Austen with Coleridge and The Anti-Jacobin as participants in "the most rigorous conservative attack on sensibility" during "the alarmist and military years in England, when sensibility was felt to be demoralizing, anti-Christian, and childishly French."⁴¹ Todd, however, seems to accept the anti-Jacobin version of the term's meaning, rather than its connotation of understanding mediated by heart and mind working together. Sensibility, as this kind of understanding, is never discredited in Austen's novels, although the reference to Emma's "look" as "true sensibility" implies an awareness of perhaps a false or counterfeit variety.

Emma's "look," however, may well convey a deeper understanding and enlightenment, disguised by her graceful words, than Frank Churchill or even Mr. Knightley can share. There is no need to question her sincerity in acknowledging Mr. Knightley as "superior," but it is Emma's own manipulation of

events, not "destiny," which accomplishes the satisfaction of her heart's desire.

This reading challenges the commonplace interpretation of Emma as the scholar who surrenders her self-regard in exchange for humility and marries the mentor who has brought her to moral maturity. Warren Roberts offers a fairly representative version.

So the story proceeds towards its conclusion, with Knightley assuming an ever more important role, casting his shadow over the woman he was to marry and whose transformation he had effected. By the end of the story . . . she was assimilated by Knightley.⁴²

But feminist scholars consider that critical views which both conclude and approve of Emma's abasement are misreadings. Agreeing that "Mr. Knightley carefully creates a wife for himself in his own image," Jean Kennard argues that, "because of Emma's strengths, not her weaknesses," their marriage is "unsatisfactory."

Jane Austen has suggested qualities in Emma . . . which will find no outlet in this marriage. She looks forward to the same life, even to the same house."⁴³

This marriage, however, is no capitulation for Emma, but rather essential to her objectives of uniting Donwell and Hartfield, and those plans require that Mr. Knightley also live in "the same house," where his status is second to Mr. Woodhouse pending the closer union she eventually contemplates.

More recently, Wendy Moffat echoes similar feminist reader frustration.

And so it is rather unnerving to find this novel repeating the familiar Austen formula of the future husband chastening his mate in preparation for marriage, more unnerving still to find the narrator herself echoing, even amplifying, Knightley's censorious voice.⁴⁴

My main objection to concluding that Emma submits to patriarchy is that her self-love is intact at the end of the novel, despite undoubted humbling experiences, and even survives the deceit she employs to contend with the forces of gratitude working for Harriet which threaten her aims. Robert Uphau marshalls evidence from three novels to challenge the submissiveness of Austen heroines.

Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse are very strong-willed, but even as they later revise their behavior they do not abdicate their will in order to conform to the desires of their prospective husbands. Conversely, Fanny Price is very compliant, and yet she rejects Henry Crawford's marriage proposal, failing to conform to Sir Thomas Bertram's will.⁴⁵

Emma's "true sensibility," feminine or not, gives her a depth of understanding over other characters, which she employs to her advantage.

Although Emma does suggest that there may be some difference from Frank in their "dispositions," their close "likeness" in other respects demonstrates that subtle differences, not stark contrasts, define the choice of virtue or vice, of good and evil. One difference emerges in Frank's totally insincere protest, to Emma's comment on their approaching union with "superior" partners, that she "can have no superior." Frank admits, however, that it is "most true" for him since Jane is a "complete angel." He elaborates with en-

comiums on her physical beauty, to be enhanced with the family jewels set in "an ornament for the head" he plans to commission (479). For Margaret Kirkham, Frank's praise actually "reveals the shallowness of his regard for his future wife" and "that he values her as a beautiful object."⁴⁶ Deliberately or otherwise, Frank misunderstands Emma, and his gloating capture of Jane is confirmed by the crown he will create and set on her head, symbolizing his possession as her "head." Jane becomes his ornament, the reward of the good husband in the Bible's Book of Proverbs.

She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace:
a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee (4:8).

This and related passages are the subject of Sermon VII in James Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women,⁴⁷ the work selected by the sententious Mr. Collins for the unreceptive Bennet sisters in Pride and Prejudice. Frank's character does not gain lustre by his echo of these sentiments. In a sense, the "likeness" Emma finds "between us," Frank finds imprinted on the prize he will carry away.

Emma distances herself from a "likeness" that can be admired and possessed like an ornament. Emma's observations on character address values, not appearance, such as her earlier comparison of Mr. Weston, who cheapens friendship by trying to be friends with all, with her ideal of male character.

General benevolence, but not general friendship,
made a man what he ought to be.--She could fancy
such a man. (320)

Mr. Knightley, of course, is the outstanding figure of "general benevolence" in Highbury. Bishop Joseph Butler, whose

published sermons Hutcheson knew and approved, presents the portrait of the "benevolent man," in which we can recognize the presence of power, and the capacity to exercise it.

The benevolent man . . . will be easy and kind to his dependents, compassionate to the poor and distressed, friendly to all with whom he has to do. This includes the good neighbor, parent, master, magistrate: and such behaviour would plainly make dependence, inferiority, and even servitude, easy. . . . [H]appiness grows under his influence. This good principle would discover itself in paying respect, gratitude, obedience, as due."⁴⁸

With the exception of "parent," Mr. Knightley shines in all these roles, but years of unconscious and deep denial block off Emma's connection of him with the "such a man" she could "fancy," until walls of denial are blown away by the revelation that Harriet Smith not only loves Mr. Knightley, but has persuaded herself that he returns her love. With this shock, the truth "darted through" Emma, "with the speed of an arrow, "that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!" (408). Emma's later musings about her prospective role in the inheritance of Donwell, Mr. Knightley's estate, show that she also plans to add "parent" to complete the his conformity with Butler's list of qualities.

"Fancy" suggests not only the ideal Emma imagines, but the desire to possess as well, and this desire suggests the "likeness" Emma acknowledges with Frank, a similarity implicit in the exclusive claim she stakes to Mr. Knightley.⁴⁹ But although she may assert a claim, she cannot possess him as Frank asserts title to Jane Fairfax, whose financial insecurity almost guarantees that she will be owned, either as a

governess in virtual slavery, or by the man who will save her from this fate. The union of Emma and Mr. Knightley must arise from the interchange of benevolence and gratitude, as it does in all "good" Austen marriages.

Unlike Frank Churchill, Emma does possess real credentials for benevolence, which Austen carefully develops in Emma's charitable visitations to the poor of the parish, with Harriet in tow.

Emma was very compassionate; and the distresses of the poor were as sure of relief from her personal attention and kindness, her counsel and her patience, as from her purse. (86)

But what role can gratitude have, where the two leading characters have no need of each other's benevolence? The problem is, with her social equality and fortune of £30,000, Emma has little occasion to feel, let alone express, gratitude to Mr. Knightley. The chemistry of love, in Austen, must start with some occasion of thankfulness, in which a "benefactor" establishes a claim to gratitude. This chemistry appears to have already started between Harriet Smith and Mr. Knightley, and Emma fears that she must suppress the process to gain Mr. Knightley for herself. Thus, gratitude seems to have the power to frustrate Emma's own objectives as well as her own role as a benefactor.

Harriet demonstrates appropriate gratitude for Mr. Knightley's kindness in dancing with her at the ball, "when Mr. Elton would not stand up with me; and when there was no other partner in the room."

That was the kind action; that was the noble benevolence and generosity; that was the service which made me begin to feel how superior he was to every other being on earth. (406-407)

Until this revelation, Emma mistakenly assumes that Harriet's previous testimony of gratitude was directed at Frank Churchill for his service in rescuing her person and pocket-book from the gypsies, but that her awe and humility at his higher social status precluded any thought of him as a possible marriage partner.

Oh! Miss Woodhouse, believe me I have not the presumption to suppose--Indeed I am not so mad.-- But it is a pleasure to me to admire him at a distance--and to think of his infinite superiority to all the rest of the world, with the gratitude, wonder, and veneration, which are so proper, in me especially. (341)

Such an outpouring would be appropriate to escape from personal danger and is not unlike Harriet Byron's effusive gratitude for her rescue by the hero of Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison from the vile Sir Hargrave Pollexfen's evil designs.

But what shall I do with my gratitude? Oh my dear, I am overwhelmed with my gratitude: I can only express it in silence before them. Every look, if it be honest to my heart, however tells it: Reverence mingles with my gratitude.⁵⁰

Austen would expect her readers to be familiar with Sir Charles Grandison, and Emma's error shows that her idea of Harriet's transcendent gratitude for rescue from the gypsies is the creation of fiction. She now has the shock of learning that, for Harriet, danger to her body is insignificant in comparison with a cruel snub at a ball, which calls attention

to her dependent and socially inferior status. Frank's timely help pales in comparison with her rescue by Mr. Knightley from public humiliation.

Harriet's reversed priorities of importance suggest the immature and shallow values of "the Fair" in Pope's The Rape of the Lock, for whom to "lose her heart, or necklace at a ball" (Canto II, 109) are equivalent disasters. But Austen seems to say that women's feelings are not to be trivialized, because Emma recognizes with horror that she can blame only herself for encouraging Harriet's subservient expression of gratitude to flower into love. The consequences may well be that Harriet's love will encourage the response of gratitude itself from Mr. Knightley, followed by marriage in the pattern of many Austen marriages.

Emma might well have recognized the looming danger of this situation from the observations of Mrs. Selby of Sir Charles Grandison to Harriet Byron, who not surprisingly yearns to marry the novel's hero and her savior.

It is impossible, my dear, to imagine that such a man as Sir Charles Grandison should not have seen the woman whom he could love, before he saw you; or whom he had not been engaged to love by his gratitude, as I may call it, for her love. Has not his sister talk'd of half a score ladies, who would break their hearts for him, were he to marry?--And may not this be the reason why he does not?⁵¹

But Emma cannot rely on competitors in gratitude to forestall marriage between her Harriet and Mr. Knightley, and as yet does not know that he has already "seen the woman he could love," who of course is Emma herself. Commenting later on his

involvement with Emma's childhood moral education, Mr.

Knightley confesses:

I could not think of you so much without doating on you, faults and all; and by dint of fancying so many errors, have been in love with you ever since you were thirteen at least. (462)

Emma's acknowledgment, in the course of this conversation, of his beneficial influence seems to fall somewhat short of whole-hearted gratitude.

"I am very sure you were of use to me," cried Emma. "I was very often influenced rightly by you--oftener than I would own at the time. I am very sure you did me good." (462)

The repeated insistence "I am very sure" suggests just the opposite, and after this hedged assurance, Emma trivializes the subject by introducing the likelihood that Mrs. Weston's new baby will also be spoiled and in need of Mr. Knightley's corrective presence, "except falling in love with her when she is thirteen." Emma is happy to share the benefits of Mr. Knightley's moral instruction, of which she is "very sure," but she stakes exclusive claim to his love.

Gratitude, in fact, is seen by Emma as the enemy in her campaign to win Mr. Knightley, and her only hope may be to block its operation as a contender. That its danger is a real one in Emma as in Sir Charles Grandison is confirmed by the discussion of Mr. Weston's two marriages, the first to Frank Churchill's mother, and the second to Emma's former governess and mentor, Miss Taylor.

In the first marriage, we are told that Miss Churchill "fell in love" with then Captain Weston, "whose warm heart

and sweet temper made him think every thing due to her in return for the great goodness of being in love with him; . . ."

(15). His response, then, and the basis given for his marriage, was gratitude for love. This relationship is reversed in the happier second marriage with Miss Taylor, "a well-judging and truly amiable woman," who "must give to him the pleasantest proof of its being a great deal better to chuse than to be chosen, to excite gratitude than to feel it" (17). The implication is that Mr. Weston feels a love in his second marriage he did not have for Miss Churchill. In addition to his love, "choosing" the "portionless" Miss Taylor, and liberating her from even the gentle captivity of being a governess to Emma, are clearly more than sufficient to "excite gratitude." The example of both of Mr. Weston's marriages, then, supplies a joint affirmative answer to Emma's rhetorical self-question if this process might not work between Harriet and Mr. Knightley: "Was it new for one, perhaps too busy to seek, to be the prize of a girl who would seek him?" (413), even where class inequalities seem both a formidable obstacle for Harriet as well as protection for Emma.

Gratitude is also seen as the enemy by Frank Churchill in the clandestine maneuvering of his secret engagement with Jane Fairfax. Among the chatter before the ball at the Crown begins, Mrs. Elton's voice rises above the others in praise of Frank, so "that Emma could not but imagine he had overheard his own praises." But Mrs. Elton has also been solicitously attending to Jane Fairfax, and in the exchange that

follows between Emma and Frank, he mistakenly assumes that Emma refers to Mrs. Elton's attentiveness to Jane.

"How do you like Mrs. Elton?" said Emma in a whisper.

"Not at all."

"You are ungrateful."

"Ungrateful!--What do you mean?"

Frank fears, as he later reveals, that the suggestion he owes gratitude to Mrs. Elton means that Emma has guessed his intimacy with Jane. But "changing from a frown to a smile," he immediately forces a change in the subject before Emma can answer, and she is left mystified at his "odd humor" (324-25). Later, after the engagement is revealed, Frank returns to this brief conversation in his lengthy letter to Mrs. Weston of explanation and apologia, in which he claims that Emma had suspected the nature of his relationship with Jane.

You will find, . . . that it [the engagement] did not take her wholly by surprise. She frequently gave me hints of it. I remember her telling me at the ball, that I owed Mrs. Elton gratitude for her attentions to Miss Fairfax. (438-9)

In this case, gratitude for Frank seems to mean disclosure, which would rend the veil of secrecy shrouding his conduct. But his "frown" and immediate resistance to the accusation, even if made playfully, of being "ungrateful" suggest a prejudice against gratitude bordering on resentment, which may go well beyond the fear of disclosure.

The acknowledgment of a claim of gratitude means accepting one's subordinate position to another, as Emma does in referring to the "characters" of their respective marriage partners as "superior to our own," but which Frank chooses to

interpret as physical beauty he can effectively purchase with the jeweled hair "ornament." Mrs. Elton, as a character for whom he feels only contempt, could not possibly earn his "gratitude," regardless of what kindnesses and compliments she casts, whether at him or his beloved. Thus, it appears that pride may be at the root of Frank's quick hostility to suggestions of gratitude, which seems to contradict Emma's early appraisal of a buoyant Frank Churchill, throwing himself enthusiastically into arrangements for the Crown Inn ball, and careless of the blurring of class distinctions among the proposed guests.

Of pride, indeed, there was, perhaps, scarcely enough: his indifference to a confusion of rank, bordered too much on inelegance of mind. He could be no judge, however, of the evil he was holding cheap. It was but an effusion of lively spirits. (198)

But Emma's analysis of this master of masquerade's "pride" proves incorrect, as betrayed by the stress of disclosure he sees threatened by Emma's remarks on the gratitude due Mrs. Elton.

Frank may, in fact subscribe to a value system in which gratitude has no part and which invites comparison with the philosophy of William Godwin, to whose adherents Austen applies the adjective "raffish" in a letter to Cassandra.⁵² Godwin's Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (1798) rejects gratitude from his utopian community governed solely by reason.

Gratitude, therefore, if by gratitude we understand a sentiment of preference which I entertain towards another, upon the ground of my having been the subject

of his benefits, is no part either of justice or virtue.⁵³

Godwin amplifies on the exclusion of gratitude from his system by claiming later that it "has already been proved not to be a virtue, but a vice" and his reasoning is that the sole criteria for determining an individual's worth should be usefulness to society and "intrinsic qualities and capacities."⁵⁴

I take these quotations out of context, and it would be a misreading of Godwin to suggest that Frank exemplifies his philosophy in other respects, on the sole basis of apparent similarities in Frank's character to Godwin's thoughts on gratitude. Nevertheless, Godwin's faith in the supremacy of reason to guide an enlightened society of virtue without the need for "governments" identifies him closely with the philosophes of the French Revolution, a connection that intrudes into the argument between Emma and Mr. Knightley over Frank Churchill's moral standards.

When Emma describes Frank as "amiable," Mr. Knightley responds by linking the word's French roots with his character analysis.

No, Emma, your amiable young man can be amiable only in French, not in English. He may be very 'amiable,' have very good manners, and be very agreeable; but he can have no English delicacy towards the feelings of other people: nothing really amiable about him. (149)

Frank Bradbrook argues persuasively that Mr. Knightley's comments are a critique of Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son and quotes Chesterfield that he "wished to make his son 'both respectable et amiable, the perfection of a human character,'" but that the task was difficult since "[t]he Graces

. . . seem to have taken refuge in France.'⁵⁵ Frank's ties to English values do seem weak. Frustrated and distressed at the Donwell outing because of the imminent collapse of his secret engagement with Jane, he raves to Emma, "I am sick of England--and would leave it tomorrow if I could" (365). Mr. Knightley no doubt would agree that France would be a more appropriate home for him.

Mr. Knightley includes Frank's neglect of the "duty" to visit his father in the broader condemnation of his behavior as French. Emma equally consistently opposes the pragmatic reality of Mrs. Churchill's claims on Frank's attendance and his dependence on the Churchill fortune for his financial security (145-46). Contrasting Mr. Knightley's stern dictums with Frank's disadvantaged situation in the Churchill household, Emma objects that he might find it impossible to exercise the independence of action Mr. Knightley would assert in a like situation.

The Churchills might not have a word to say in return; but then, you would have no habits of early obedience and long observance to break through. To him who has, it might not be so easy to burst forth at once into perfect independence, and set all their claims on his gratitude and regard at naught. (147-48)

Emma's preaching of gratitude due the Churchills at the expense of Frank's attendance on his father may be more rhetorical, for the purposes of argument, than sincere, particularly in view of her own steadfast devotion to Mr. Woodhouse, since she makes attention her father's needs a condition precedent to her eventual marriage.⁵⁶ Mr. Knightley, however, dismisses these excuses as "expediency" and insists that

"[a]s he became rational, he ought to have roused himself and shaken off all that was unworthy in their authority" (148).

This position, however, appears paradoxical. Mr. Knightley does not dispute Emma's argument that Frank has a duty of gratitude to his benefactors, but shrugs it off and instead advocates rebellion against "authority." Is Mr. Knightley a Godwinian or a "philosophe"? On the contrary, implicit in his moral position is the superior claim to filial gratitude of parent over guardian, recognized in legal commentary by Blackstone.

For to those who gave us existence we naturally owe subjection and obedience during our minority, and honour and reverence ever after.⁵⁷

Edmund Burke uses the familiar eighteenth-century analogy of parent-child with the relation of subjects to the monarch, which Michael McKeon labels "patriarchalism."

The patriarchal analogy works because it is based on a hierarchical notion of authority that is implicitly analogical: as in the microcosm, so in the macrocosm.⁵⁸

Although allegiance to the monarch is not at issue in the conversation with Emma, Mr. Knightley is firm that duty to a father takes precedence over other claimants such as the Churchills. Burke insists that "revolutionaries are miscreant parricides," which in context with his parallel argument that "ingratitude to benefactors is the first of revolutionary virtues,"⁵⁹ supports Mr. Knightley's priority of claimants to Frank's duty. One would have to say that such views reveal Mr. Knightley as, not surprisingly, a counter-revolutionary and hostile to the example of France.

Mr. Knightley's political contextualizing of Frank seems to feed his scorn for Frank as a letter writer.

He can sit down and write a fine flourishing letter, full of professions and falsehoods, and persuade himself that he has hit upon the very best method in the world of preserving peace at home and preventing his father's having any right to complain. His letters disgust me. (148-49)

How can Mr. Knightley know that Frank's letters are "full of . . . falsehoods?" They reveal no such character defect to other readers. It seems more likely that Mr. Knightley betrays jealousy of Frank, to which he later admits, and by coincidence comes close to the truth. "Disgust" may also reflect Mr. Knightley's later appraisal of Frank's handwriting as "too small--wants strength" and "like a woman's writing" (297), thus joining "French" and "feminine" as does the Anti-Jacobin poem "New Morality," and at the same time suggesting yet another "likeness" between Frank and Emma.

Letter-writing is privileged in most Austen novels, such as the sanctity of Fanny Price's correspondence with her brother, William, in Mansfield Park, where it is closely bonded with gratitude, both in the humility of the letter-writer, and in Fanny's gratitude for Edmund's bringing her the writing materials she lacks. Even Jane Austen's mock gratitude for a long letter from Cassandra, when she misquotes the passage discussed earlier from Sir Charles Grandison, shadows the true gratitude and humility of the act of writing.

Tuesday--Dear me! what is to become of me! Such a long Letter! Two & forty lines in the 2nd Page.--Like

Harriet Byron I ask, what am I to do with my Gratitude?--I can do nothing but thank you & go on.⁶⁰

Patricia D. Davis notes that "Jane Austen's novels are filled with memorable letters," which "do more than serve the plot."

More often than not, the content of a letter, . . . does double or even triple duty in an Austen novel. . . . Often a letter will reveal something of the character of its writer; just as often, a letter will reveal something of the character of the person who reports or discusses its content; and sometimes a letter does both.⁶¹

When mis-used by the venial, letters often reveal the true character they wish to conceal, whereas personal performance in social situations may successfully deceive. Catherine Morland in Northanger Abbey has no difficulty seeing the hypocrisy and double-dealing in Isabella Thorpe's self-serving and craven letter appealing for her restoration to favor, and Fanny Price immediately sees the moral wasteland disclosed by Mary Crawford's letter.

In Emma, however, letter-writing is both more critical to plot, and more problematic in its moral role, than in the other novels. Emma admits that the yeoman farmer, Robert Martin writes "a very good letter" proposing marriage to Harriet, which was "very much to the credit of the writer," and "expressed good sense" (51), but this may be the last letter of the novel to join content unequivocally with the writer's character. Emma, however, attempts to devalue the evidence of merit her own sense confirms in order to discredit the writer and thus prevent an alliance for Harriet contrary to Emma's plans. John Knightley terms letters "a very positive curse" to Jane Fairfax, whose whole life at

this time revolves around the post office in her secret correspondence with Frank, and he further considers "letters of friendship" to be "the worst," because "[b]usiness, you know, may bring money, but friendship hardly ever does" (293), a near paraphrase of Samuel Johnson's observation that in letters of friendship, "[i]t is easy . . . to glow with benevolence when there is none to be given."

Frank's final letter to Mrs. Weston becomes a letter about letters: Jane has written Frank terminating their engagement, after the quarrel at Box Hill.

I answered it within the hour; but from the confusion of my mind, and the multiplicity of business falling on me at once, my answer, instead of being sent with all the other letters of that day, was locked up in my writing-desk; . . . (442)

Two days later, Jane returns all of Frank's letters and asks for hers back. The truth which these letters, emblems of love, should affirm, turns out to be reversible. Lives that are knit through the agency of the post office unravel. Finally, can we believe Frank's story that his conciliatory letter to Jane got lost in the shuffle?

Mr. Knightley's disparagement of Frank's letters as implicitly cursed by French-like qualities may be Austen's suggestion that Frank's letters are as much a mask of character as his behavior has disguised motives and objectives. Frank's letter-writing invites comparison with Samuel Johnson's questioning of letters as a source of truth, which Johnson sees as an outmoded and, perhaps worse, a French convention.

It has been so long said as to be commonly believed that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children.⁶²

Johnson's target here, as George Birkbeck Hill suggests in his note, seems to be Voltaire's opinion that it is in private correspondence, not intended for publication, "that one sees the true feelings of men" [my translation]. By discrediting Voltaire in particular, and French letter writing in general (as he does in The Rambler No. 152),⁶³ Johnson implies that Voltaire's "véritables sentiments" is a sham and pretense. He goes on to make this contention explicit.

There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. . . . [Unlike conversation] a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity, for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep?

To charge those favourable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is none to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.⁶⁴

Frank Churchill's role in *Highbury* is all "performance," including his final letter of explanation and apology to Mrs. Weston. He remains perhaps the most opaque of all Austen characters, but as Johnson suggests, "[t]he writer commonly

believes himself," and there is no reason to doubt Frank's expressed sincerity. Frank himself observes that "[m]y courage rises as I write" (437).

Significantly, there is no explicit statement of gratitude in Frank's letter, except for the hyperbole of "a thousand and a thousand thanks" to Mrs. Weston for past unspecific "kindnesses," multiplied to "ten thousand" for equally unspecific future attentiveness to Jane Fairfax (443), an empty gesture since she and Frank soon are to disappear from Highbury. Further, Emma's argument in her debate with Mr. Knightley that Frank is bound by ties of gratitude to conform with the wishes of the Churchills is undercut by his subsequent precipitate action in publicizing the hitherto secret engagement to Jane Fairfax, upon the sudden and unexpected death of Mrs. Churchill, whose objection to the engagement would have been certain. His deference to the Churchills thus is revealed to have been the moral weakness of acting from "expediency," just as Mr. Knightley labeled it, without a shred of the gratitude claimed for him by Emma.

Not only is gratitude unmentioned in his letter, Frank disavows the humility from which gratitude arises, by citing his good fortune and observing that "[i]t is very difficult for the prosperous to be humble" (437). Professing some "anxiety" for his deception and manipulation of Emma, he comments that "my father perhaps will think I ought to add, with the deepest humiliation" (438). Frank, however, does not say whether he might share such an opinion, and in closing his

letter, he again transfers to another, this time Mrs. Weston, the appraisal of his character: "If you think me in a way to be happier than I deserve, I am quite of your opinion" (443).

This closure may seem like a literary flourish or deferential gesture of humility, but its indirectness contrasts with the playful yet serious remorse of Frederick Wentworth in Persuasion for the pride which caused the "six years of separation and suffering" before being reunited with Anne Elliot: "I must learn to brook being happier than I deserve" (247). Awareness of being, at least to a degree, undeserving of one's good fortune, is essential to the humility inherent in gratitude. Humility and gratitude, in turn are preconditions for self-knowledge. Pride, which prevents humility, thus also prevents self-knowledge. Wentworth knows himself; Frank can only defer to the opinion of others.

Since Frank rejects the way to self-knowledge through gratitude, he cannot even know that he does not know himself. His character, then, is incapable of moral choice. Highbury is a world of moral choice, not of black and white alternatives, but of judging relative values, even to letting dubious means serve the choice of ends. There is a "likeness" between Frank and Emma in that both use deception to their advantage. Emma even continues to deceive Mr. Knightley about Harriet's love, but her choice of deception is nonetheless a moral one, based on the self-knowledge which comes with humility and gratitude.

Emma seems to learn the meaning of gratitude through the experience of pain, an experience unknown to Frank. After being reprimanded by Mr. Knightley for her flip witticism at Miss Bates's expense in the presence of others at the Box Hill picnic, she makes a penitential visit to the modest apartments of Mrs. and Miss Bates, with feelings of humility as she is announced, quite different from her usual self-love.

"The ladies were all at home." She had never rejoiced at the sound before, nor ever before entered the passage, nor walked up the stairs, with any wish of giving pleasure, but in conferring obligation, or of deriving it, except in subsequent ridicule. (378)

"Conferring obligation" arises from the class difference between the Bates and Emma, and the unspoken assumption is that the "obligation" is expressed as gratitude for Emma's condescension in visiting. On this occasion, however, Emma again cannot be "in charity with herself," and thus her self-love is mortified. Her inquiries concerning the welfare of themselves and their niece, Jane Fairfax, prompts Miss Bates to insist that Emma is "[s]o very kind" and "you are always kind." For Emma, "[t]here was no bearing such an 'always;' and to break through her dreadful gratitude" (380), Emma proceeds to ask specific questions about Jane. Why does Emma find Miss Bates's gratitude to be "dreadful?" The answer must be Emma's consciousness that she is unworthy of it, and "dreadful" expresses the pain she feels.

Despite the value of this humbling in Emma's moral education, and the gain in self-knowledge which distinguishes

her from Frank Churchill, Austen's creation of the benevolence-gratitude relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley seems contrived and lacks the affirmative endorsement of the process in other novels, including Persuasion, the next to follow Emma. Gratitude may be inferred in Mr. Knightley's relief from jealousy when he discovers that Emma never has loved Frank Churchill. In their conversation just before Emma gives him the opening to declare his love, Mr. Knightley comments somewhat bitterly on Frank Churchill as "the favourite of fortune" in obtaining the hand of Jane Fairfax.

"You speak as if you envied him."

"And I do envy him, Emma. In one respect he is the object of my envy." (429)

Of course, Emma fears that the "one respect" may be Mr. Knightley's love for Harriet, but the misunderstanding is soon cleared up. However, shortly thereafter Mr. Knightley does confess that, with respect to his consistently unfavorable opinion of Frank Churchill, "I was not quite impartial in my judgment, Emma," an admission of jealousy (445). Envy and jealousy may not be admirable traits, but they bring together the moral worlds of Knightley and Emma, and on Emma's terms.

Even Emma's love for Mr. Knightley is less than explicit, since her interest in him always seems paired with her concern that the Donwell Abbey estate might get diverted from the inheritance of "little Henry," who, as the eldest son of Emma's sister and John Knightley, would be next in line so long as Mr. Knightley remains childless. And this may

be the only benevolence to him of which Emma is uniquely capable; she may present him an heir which will preserve the dynastic union of Hartfield and Donwell. Austen analyzes Emma's musing on her own prospective agency in uniting the estates.

It is remarkable, that Emma, in the many, very many, points of view in which she was now beginning to consider Donwell Abbey, was never struck with any sense of injury to her nephew Henry, whose rights as heir expectant had formerly been so tenaciously regarded. Think she must of the possible difference to the poor little boy; and yet she only gave herself a saucy conscious smile about it, and found amusement in detecting the real cause of that violent dislike of Mr. Knightley's marrying Jane Fairfax, or any body else, . . . (449-50).

The scene suggested here is Emma standing at a mirror with her thoughts, since "the saucy conscious smile" is one she "gave herself." Austen's narrative and implied setting seem designed to call the reader's attention to the "saucy conscious smile," which may reflect a previously sublimated erotic fantasy. But Emma's anticipation of producing an heir, in her dismissal of her nephew's potential interest, seems very clear.

It seems to me that those who write Emma off as submitting meekly to Mr. Knightley's tutelage fail to recognize the control she exercises over disclosures that might be dangerous to her objectives, a control that undermines Knightley's eloquent appeal to "the beauty of truth and sincerity." While Austen singles out Emma's deception only to minimize it-- "Seldom, very seldom, does complete truth belong to any human disclosure" (431)--the fact remains that, after Frank

Churchill's game of deception is revealed, she and not Mr. Knightley is manipulating events.

The benevolent world of Highbury is still a kind of closed system. Harriet eventually earns her place in that world by attaching herself to Donwell's bounty in marrying Robert Martin of Abbey Mill Farm, but Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill are effectively exiled. Many have pointed out the similarity between Frank and Emma, to which Emma herself testifies, and at least part of Austen's reason for evicting him and his bride seems to be that there is room for only one manipulator in town. For Beatrice Marie, Frank Churchill, "not Emma, is the master-manipulator of others' desires."⁶⁵

But Frank's exile, as I have suggested, may also symbolize the ejection of a value system incompatible with the benevolent world of Highbury. Far more than from overt evil or immorality, Highbury is endangered by the moral vacuum created by the absence of self-knowledge. Frank Churchill's opacity finally is seen to screen a vacuum, and he has no future in Highbury. We are left with the felt presence of another outside world, peopled by lawyers and by romantic, selfish, adventurers like Frank Churchill. After Emma consolidates Highbury's internal bastions of power, one still wonders at the continuing strength of its benevolence to resist the world which surrounds it. In Persuasion, Austen seems to suggest that Highbury, as a moral universe, may not be worth saving.

While there is comic pleasure in the duplicity that Emma employs to frustrate the ominous potential of marriage between Harriet and Mr. Knightley, a certain insensitivity is required to accept Harriet's emotional damage from Emma's maltreatment. The inheritance of Donwell, which Emma succeeds in controlling, even if at the likely expense of her nephew, could turn out to be a blighted legacy. Kellynch, Sir Walter Elliot's patronymic estate in Persuasion, may be a shriveled version of Donwell and Hartfield on the verge of moral and fiscal bankruptcy. Like Emma and her father, Anne Elliot's sister presides with Sir Walter over their proprietary estate, but Elizabeth Elliot is Emma with all her vanity and pride, but drained of moral feeling, compassion, and intelligence.

Although the reader may feel (as I do) some moral kinship or sympathy with the deceptions and self-serving machinations Emma employs to achieve her objectives, Austen may feel that too many concessions to human weakness are necessary for the preservation of Highbury and its component estates, and that gratitude is at a dead end if it serves the ends of selfishness and protects a derelict status quo. It is a commonplace that Frederick Wentworth in Persuasion symbolizes the new modern entrepreneurial man, but more importantly Anne's acceptance of him frees gratitude from the limitations of place and ideology, where it seems confined after Emma, and it expands to empower the lovers in an open-ended moral universe.

Chapter 5 Notes

1 Jane Austen, Mansfield Park (1814), vol. 3, The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. R.W. Chapman, 347. Subsequent citations will appear in parentheses in the text.

2 Gerry Brenner, "Manfield Park: Reading for 'Improvement'," Studies in the Novel 7.1 (1975) 29, 25.

3 Avrom Fleishman, A Reading of Mansfield Park: An Essay in Critical Synthesis (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota P, 1967) 73.

4 Susan Morgan, In the Meantime. Character and Perception in Jane Austen's Fiction (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P, 1980) 8, 165.

5 N. W. Miller, "Sloth: the Moral Problem in Jane Austen's Mansfield Park," International Journal of Moral and Social Studies 7.3 (1992)

6 Persuasion picks up the life of Anne Elliot after a lapse of several years, but our only knowledge of that life is through narrative "flashbacks" and Anne's own personal reminiscences.

7 Patrick Goold, "Obedience and Integrity in Mansfield Park," Renascence: Essays on Value in Literature 39.4 (1987) 452-69.

8 Vol. 1, Works 195.

9 Vol. 1, Works 195-6.

10 Vol. 1, Works 127.

11 Vol. 2, Works 89-90.

12 Glenda A. Hudson, Sibling Love and Incest in Jane Austen's Fiction (New York: St. Martin's, 1992): 37. See also Johanna

M. Smith, "'My Only Sister Now': Incest in Mansfield Park,"
Studies in the Novel 19.1 (1987): 1-15,

13 Hudson, 12.

14 "Incest" is defined in Samuel Johnson's Dictionary as
"Unnatural and criminal conjunction of persons within degrees
prohibited."

15 Hudson, 31.

16 Hudson, 31.

17 Vol. 6, Works 171.

18 Vol. 6, Works, 173.

19 Alistair Duckworth, The Improvement of the Estate: A Study
of Jane Austen's Novels (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1971)
72-3.

20 Duckworth, 80.

21 Vol. 1, Works 75.

22 Vol. 1, Works 83-84.

23 Vol. 1, Works 123-24.

24 Vol. 2, Works 283.

25 Sherlock, vol. 1, Discourses 325.

26 "A Letter from Thomas Sherlock, D.D. Lord Bishop of
London, to the Clergy and People of London and Westminster on

Occasions of The Earthquakes in MDCCL," Discourses, vol. 4, 335-36.

27 The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. R. W. Chapman, 3rd ed., vol. 2, 190.

28 "[I]t should be allowed that gratitude and resentment arise from the same constitution of the passions." Samuel Johnson, Rambler 4, Brady and Wimsatt 158. "Gratitude and resentment, however, are, in every respect, it is evident, counterparts to one another." Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759, 1790). See chapter 3 and notes for complete citation.

29 1 Corinthians 13:9-12.

30 Austen here may again be asserting gender equity in virtue against the sexism found in biblical and most moralist texts.

31 An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil, 4th ed. (1738). British Moralists, vol. 1, ed. D. D. Raphael (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969). 274. The language I have quoted does not appear in the 1725 first edition, and may have been added as a rebuttal to Balguy's 1728 attack on Hutcheson in The Foundation of Moral Goodness, possibly first in the 1729 third edition of An Inquiry, which I have not examined.

32 Vol. 1, Works 160.

33 In my earlier discussion of Pride and Prejudice, I focused on Hutcheson's originality in treating benevolence and gratitude as interchangeable "when Bodys come to touch each other" from the force of mutual attraction, and that the highest example of the "universal Love" inherent in "human Nature" is "that strong attraction of Benevolence, which we call Gratitude." However, in order that this love not be dissipated in "a multiplicity of Objects," or "be made useless towards multitudes," with whom we have no contact or communication,

Nature has more powerfully determin'd us to admire and love the moral Qualitys of others, which affect our selves, and has given us more powerful Impressions of

Good-will towards those who are beneficent to our selves; which we call Gratitude; . . . (Vol. 1, Works 197-8).

34 Eliza Heywood, The Female Spectator, "Chosen and edited by Mary Priestly," (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, Ltd., 1929) 34-37.

35 Vol. 2, Discourses 121.

36 "The scene prefigures her eventual flight from Rushworth with Henry Crawford." Goold 466.

37 "For Jane Austen, in Mansfield Park, the estate as an ordered physical structure is a metonym for other inherited structures--society as a whole, a code of morality, a body of manners, a system of language--and 'improvements,' or the manner in which individuals relate to their cultural inheritance, are a means of distinguishing responsible from irresponsible action and of defining a proper attitude toward social change." Duckworth, preface to The Improvement of the Estate, ix.

38 Letter to J. Edward Austen, 16 December 1816, vol. 2, Letters, ed. Chapman 469.

39 Vol. 4, Works 146.

40 Crane, ed., A Collection of English Poems 1660-1800 1114, 1105.

41 Todd 7, 131.

42 Warren Roberts, Jane Austen and the French Revolution (New York: St. Martin's, 1979) 195. Elsewhere, Roberts mistakenly identifies Mr. Knightley or "Knightley" as "John Knightley" (37, 42), rather than by his correct first name of "George" (Emma 99, 462). John, of course, is the lawyer brother married to Emma's sister.

- 43 Kennard 38, 40.
- 44 Moffat 46.
- 45 Uphaus 340.
- 46 Kirkham 141-42.
- 47 Boston: Thomas Hall, 1796. "First Boston Edition."
(American Theological Library Association, 1978) 6.
Microfilm.
- 48 Joseph Butler, Sermons by the Right Reverend Father in God, Joseph Butler, D.C.L., late Bishop of Durham (1729; New York: Robert Carter, 1844). 148-149. See "Comparison with Butler," Thomas Mautner, Introduction, On Human Nature / Francis Hutcheson, ed. Mautner (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 39-42.
- 49 I refer to this character as "Mr. Knightley," since he is so addressed and referred to by all in the novel except the "upstart, vulgar" Mrs. Elton, whose crass familiarity in calling him "Knightley" is deprecated by Emma (279), which reflects, I feel confident, the authorial point of view as well. Further, after their engagement Emma, in refusing his request that "I want you to call me something else," says that "I can never call you anything but 'Mr. Knightley'" (462-3).
- 50 Richardson, Samuel, The History of Sir Charles Grandison, ed. Jocelyn Harris, 1st ed., vol. 1 (1753; London: Oxford UP, 1972) 167. It is well established that Jane Austen was intimately familiar with this work from childhood.
- 51 Richardson 301.
- 52 "The Pickfords are in Bath & have called here.--She is the most elegant looking Woman I have seen since I left Martha--He is as raffish in his appearance as I would wish every Disciple of Godwin to be." Letter 21 May 1801, vol. 1, Letters, ed. Chapman, vol. 1 133.

53 Godwin 170.

54 Godwin 267.

55 Letters 8 Nov. O.S. 1750, 18 Nov. O.S. 1748, in Frank W. Bradbrook, Jane Austen and her Predecessors (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1967) 32.

56 Wendy Moffat incorrectly claims that "at the end of the novel, she [Emma] and Knightley acquiesce in Mr. Woodhouse's plan to live with him and care for him after their marriage" (53). If anything, Knightley offers a plan to meet the conditions clearly stated by Emma: "While her dear father lived, any change of condition must be impossible for her. She could never quit him." (448)

57 Blackstone, vol. 1, Bk I, Ch. 16, 453.

58 Michael McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," Eighteenth-Century Studies 28.2 (1995) 296.

59 "Letter to a Noble Lord," vol. 5, Works, 138, 148-9.

60 Letters, vol. 2. 344. Jocelyn Harris's notes in her edition of Sir Charles Grandison, and again in Jane Austen's Art of Memory (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989, 156) calls attention to Austen's paraphrase of Harriet Byron, but neglects to point out the difference between Harriet Byron's "what shall I do," and Austen's "what am I to do" [emphasis added]. The verb "shall" as used by Richardson and Austen is in the nature of an imperative, denoting an obligation or commitment. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary devotes a lengthy entry on the meaning of "shall," which he derives from the Saxon usage "originally I owe, or I ought."

The explanation of shall, which foreigners and provincials confound with will, is not easy; and the difficulty is increased by the poets, who sometimes give to shall an emphatical sense of will.

Austen's playful "What am I to do," however, does suggest the awkwardness and inconvenience of gratitude that Emma experiences.

61 Patricia Davis, "Jane Austen's Use of Frank Churchill's Letters in Emma," Persuasions 10 (1988) 34.

62 Samuel Johnson, Life of Pope. In Lives of the English Poets (1783) George Birkbeck Hill, ed., vol. 3 (1905; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968) 206-207.

63 The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, eds., vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale UP, 1969) 44.

64 Life of Pope 207-8.

65 Beatrice Marie, "Emma and the Democracy of Desire," Studies in the Novel 17 (1985) 1-13, rpt in David Monaghan, ed., Emma / Jane Austen (New York: St. Martin's, 1992) 57.

CHAPTER VI

TRUSTING PROVIDENCE: GRATITUDE REAFFIRMED IN PERSUASION

The plot of Persuasion seems to turn on critical accidents. As Anne Elliot prepares for the dreaded encounter with Frederick Wentworth after their eight-year separation since she broke off their engagement, her sister's child has "a bad fall." Anne is willingly pressed into service as nurse while the others leave to meet the new tenants of Kellynch, Frederick's sister and her husband, Admiral Croft, whom Frederick is visiting.

The child's situation put the visit entirely aside, but she could not hear of her escape with indifference, even in the midst of the serious anxiety which they afterwards felt on his account. (53)

Later, when concern for the lad has subsided, his grandparents urge Anne to join them, but "both father and mother were in much too strong and recent alarm to bear the thought; and Anne, in the joy of her recent escape, could not help adding her warm protestations to theirs" (55).

The boy's accident may have been bad luck for him, but Anne clearly sees it as good luck for her. In the game of luck, there is a loser for every winner, and the results are morally neutral. But there is a bigger game or contest going on in Persuasion between luck and "Providence" for control of people's lives. Luck's strategy in this game is to delude people into thinking that luck is their slave and that they

deserve their rewards. Wentworth believes he controls luck: "He had been lucky in his profession. . . . He had always been lucky; he knew he should be so still" (27). But his last speech, and the last words of any character in the novel, show that he recognizes this fallacy.

"I have been used to the gratification of believing myself to earn every blessing that I enjoyed. I have valued myself on honourable toils and just rewards. Like other great men under reverses," he added with a smile, "I must endeavour to subdue my mind to my fortune. I must learn to brook being happier than I deserve." (247)

What Frederick's elegant irony discloses is that he has learned gratitude for Anne's love and their reunion, blessings that his own personal success has had no power to command. If he controlled his luck, he would "deserve" his "fortune," and there would be no occasion for gratitude.

Gratitude is at once a more powerful force, but yet more invisible, than in Austen's other novels. The reason is that, in Persuasion, the object of gratitude is "Providence." The linkage of gratitude with a benevolent providence defines a theocentric universe in which religion and morality reinforce each other. Luck defines a deterministic world controlled by "accidents" in which such values are irrelevant. This is the world that Laurie Kaplan sees reflected in Persuasion, where "one's fate (like happiness in marriage), was purely accidental, purely a matter of chance."¹ Kaplan relates the accidents in Persuasion that mark crucial moments in the plot to popular medical texts that address environmental hazards and claims that these accidents teach the actors "that their

sense of power is illusory," and that "life is chaotic and random" (162). But Kaplan fails to recognize the unseen controlling agency of "Providence" in the novel.

On the other hand, Anne's bitterness at the misery she has suffered in her eight years of estrangement from Wentworth does acknowledge "Providence," and she reproaches herself for actions which seem to have denied its promise.

She was persuaded that . . . she should yet have been a happier woman in maintaining the engagement, than she had been in the sacrifice of it; . . . without reference to the actual results of their case, which, as it happened, would have bestowed earlier prosperity than could be reasonably calculated on. . . .

How eloquent . . . were her wishes on the side of early warm attachment, and a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence! (29-30).

The clinching self-accusation seems to be that hesitating to cast their lots together is to "distrust Providence." In other words, Anne sees a "rightness" in marrying Wentworth that "Providence" will somehow bless. Their love should make them specially favored people, a promised future thwarted by "over-anxious caution." But Anne is making a mistake, not the mistake of a false belief in a beneficent universal power, but in feeling that happiness is, or should be, their entitlement, the same mistake that Wentworth recognizes in his final testimonial.

His speech follows a thoughtful and lengthy apologia by Anne which comments on her earlier rueful reflections and, I believe, states the whole moral meaning of the novel. Nevertheless, perhaps no passage in all the novels has been

so misunderstood as this final speech, and, in fact, it does seem internally self-contradictory.

"I have been thinking over the past, and trying impartially to judge of the right and wrong, I mean with regard to myself; and I must believe that I was right, much as I suffered from it, that I was perfectly right in being guided by the friend whom you will love better than you do now. To me, she was in the place of a parent. Do not mistake me, however. I am not saying that she did not err in her advice. It was, perhaps, one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides; and for myself, I certainly never should, in any circumstance of tolerable similarity, give such advice. But I mean, that I was right in submitting to her, and that if I had done otherwise, I should have suffered more in continuing the engagement than I did even in giving it up, because I should have suffered in my conscience. I have now, as far as such a sentiment is allowable in human nature, nothing to reproach myself with; and if I mistake not, a strong sense of duty is no bad part of a woman's portion." (246) [Emphasis added].

After defending as "right" to Wentworth her submission to Lady Russell's wishes, and the termination of their engagement eight years before, "much as I suffered from it," Anne volunteers that "It was, perhaps, one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides; . . ." She adds, parenthetically, her own personal disapproval of such advice, and resumes her defense on the grounds that "I should have suffered more in continuing the engagement than I did even in giving it up, because I should have suffered in my conscience," since Lady Russell has stood in loco parentis for Anne, who considers filial obedience a "duty," and an admirable one at that (246).

The passage has been seized upon by a number of scholars as a credo of a kind of stoic Christianity, which holds

that conduct is judged by moral standards unrelated to its consequences, and which further proves the influence of Joseph Butler on Anne's moral philosophy. However, Anne's apparently digressive aside that their situation may be "one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides" creates difficulties for advocates of a Butlerian theory of stoic Christianity. D. D. Devlin, commenting on the entire passage, claims that "[t]he language shows how close Jane Austen's moral world is to that of Butler and [Samuel] Johnson," but he avoids the problem for his argument of this key clause by omitting it in his quotation of the text.² Philip Drew acknowledges that the clause must be dealt with, but disposes of it briefly.

It is clear that while advice may sometimes, as in this case, be vindicated or condemned by its outcome, conduct must be assessed differently: thus the unhappy outcome of Anne's compliance has no bearing on the moral status of her decision.³

I suggest that nothing is absolutely "clear" in this passage, except its paradoxical ambiguity. Anne's argument is full of qualifications, a consistent refusal to state a firm position on grounds of principle, and finally an appeal that rests on the avoidance of pain. Ultimately, Anne's summation affirms personal happiness as the determinant of moral virtue, not its sacrifice to some more austere concept of Christian duty.

The value system is that of Francis Hutcheson, not Joseph Butler. For Hutcheson, "[T]hat Action is best, which accomplishes the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers."⁴ Virtue is measured by happiness, and thus judgments

of "good" and "bad" depend upon results. Anne's happiness may be virtue on a small scale, but it is still a moral good. Further, she demonstrates, in her intuitive negative feelings about William Elliot, a Hutchesonian "moral sense" which is entrusted with more authority than it is in earlier novels. Persuasion represents, then, a complete commitment to Hutcheson's philosophy, including the religious basis he claims for it.

Hutcheson's system rules out a selfish hedonism, which might justify one's happiness at the expense of others, and moral worth also requires that favorable consequences be supported by virtuous intentions.

[W]e often are conscious of the Desire of the Happiness of others, without any such Conception of it as the Means of our own; . . . The virtuous Benevolence must be an ultimate Desire, which would subsist without view to private Good.⁵

I do not deny that Austen intends us to understand Anne as a person with a "moral faculty," as Butler calls conscience,⁶ or that not "submitting" to the wishes of a surrogate mother would cause her the remorse of disobedience to what she sees as "duty." However, the "event" which "decides" the rightness or wrongness of her compliance is, finally, her reunion with Wentworth, and the quality of happiness they feel on the walk when they renew their vows is enhanced by their personal growth during eight years of separation.

[S]oon words enough had passed between them to decide their direction towards the comparative quiet and retired gravel-walk, where the power of conversation would make the present hour a blessing indeed; and prepare it for all the immortality which the happiest recollections of their own future lives could bestow.

. . . There they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their reunion, 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. (240-41).

Thus Anne's ultimate happiness, not her previous suffering, does seem to be the "event" that stamps approval, both on Lady Russell's advice as "good," not "bad," as well as on Anne's compliance.

It is indicative of Austen's priorities, I think, that the terms "happy" and "happiness" together appear almost a thousand times in the novels, far more than any other value standard, as opposed to the vocabulary of a sterner morality, such as the 115 appearances of "duty," for which Anne acknowledges respect in her compliance with Lady Russell's wishes.⁷ But Lady Russell herself, we are told, "was a very good woman, and if her second object was to be sensible and well-judging, her first was to see Anne happy" (249). Happiness, then, is also Lady Russell's objective, not the satisfaction of making Anne put on the hair shirt of duty, even if her earlier advice seemed to work against it for eight years.

Austen unites past and future with the lovers' reunion and grants "immortality" to the "present hour," projecting into "their own future lives" their "happiest recollections," while they also "returned again into the past." Thus, "as the event decides" seems to have been prefigured in their past history, as well as to foreshadow the future. The immanence of a beneficent providence at work is also evoked in the hush

of the "quiet and retired gravel-walk" and the "blessing" the moment enjoys. The mood represents a complete reversal from the bitterness and remorse of Anne's reflections on past sufferings, when she anticipates Frederick Wentworth's reappearance at Kellynch. Further, Wentworth also refers to his happiness as a "blessing," which suggests the gift of God, the ultimate source of benevolence for Hutcheson.

The best State of rational Agents, and their greatest and most worthy Happiness, we are necessarily led to imagine must consist in universal efficacious Benevolence, and hence we conclude the Deity benevolent . . .⁸

Such transcendent benevolence calls for "a sincere Love and Gratitude toward our Benefactor," which includes "all the rational Devotion, or Religion, toward a Deity apprehended as Good, which we can possibly perform,"⁹ and Hutcheson's successor, William Paley, claims that "[t]he love of God is the sublimest gratitude."¹⁰ After her walk with Wentworth, Anne's emotional state is elation, but her subsequent reflections are more devotional.

An interval of meditation, serious and grateful, was the best corrective of every thing dangerous in such high-wrought felicity; and she went to her room, and grew steadfast and fearless in the thankfulness of her enjoyment. (245)

Anne's gratitude brings strength and makes her "steadfast and fearless," since she recognizes that their destinies are in the hands of a benevolent "Providence," which has proven that it may be "trusted" by results. "As the event decides" is, finally, the only possible proof.

Hutcheson observes, however, that virtue and reward do not march in lock step.

What should engage the Deity to reward Virtue? . . .
 . And what Ground have we from the Idea of a God it self to believe the Deity is good in the Christian Sense, that is, studious of the Good of his Creatures? . . . A Manichean Evil God is a Notion which Men would as readily run into as that of a Good one, . . . unless we prov'd that the happiness of Creatures was advantageous to the Deity.¹¹

This "unless" clause is the challenge of the moral philosopher, and Hutcheson admits that "we shall perhaps find no demonstrative Arguments a priori, from the Idea of an Independent Being, to prove his Goodness." He finally relies on what he sees as the evidence of "vastly prepollent Good" over "casual Evils" to support "the great Agreement of Mankind" on a benevolent "Deity."¹² Hutcheson uses "Manichean" in the Western Christian tradition "as a synonym for 'dualist,' and any teaching that manifested a tendency toward dualism was accordingly called Manichaeism."¹³ William Elliot, the legal heir of Kellynch and promoted by Lady Russell as the best choice of husbands for Anne, is an evil and threatening force, but the frustration of his objectives is evidence that satisfies Hutcheson's criteria of "vastly prepollent Good."

Hutcheson's leap of faith, as rhetorical argument, is not quite so naive as it may appear, because it throws the whole weight of proof not so much on events, as on humanity's collective opinion about events. In a sense, happiness is the judgment of feelings rendered on the evidence and depends on

gaining confidence in how to work with Providence, learning what Providence demands, and what it can do.

For Philip Drew, the author seems to merge with this benevolent providence, and he claims that the ultimate "happy ending" of Persuasion supports his argument that the novel as genre tends to be constructed on a teleology that judges moral choices by their outcomes. The author controls events, and thus by its nature the novel subverts the idea that the morality of decisions is independent of their consequences.

If Jane Austen believes, as I have argued, that right actions are intrinsically virtuous, does she not compromise her entire position by arranging for them to be vindicated by results?¹⁴

Drew's solution to this dilemma is to advance the thesis that "the happiness that follows is not the outcome of their [the characters'] actions, but the gift of the author to the readers."

Jane Austen deliberately gratifies the reader's sense of poetic justice and by the same device brings rather closer together the two ethical systems which have so far, for the sake of clarity, been kept as distinct as possible.¹⁵

Nevertheless, Drew does acknowledge that the novelist's "arranging" of "prosperous consequences" creates a "troublesome" problem in supporting his argument, but he claims that, after all, we as readers are expected to be aware we are reading fiction and "moving in a constructed world."¹⁶ It seems to me that Drew comes close here to writing an implied "real world" ending less frustrating for the theory he advances. However, if the author is the only power that can order events to conform with "the reader's sense of poetic justice," the world

outside the novel is either Kaplan's universe of random accident, or a system in which evidence of virtue or morality is withheld until a final revelation in the hereafter.

Austen, I feel, does not subscribe to either belief. The "Providence" whose presence is evoked in Persuasion works and manifests itself in the world as it does in the lives and comprehension of her characters, and can be understood without concluding that the "happy ending" is the fiction of an omnipotent "author." Instead, the reader is invited to see that "Providence" is manifest in nature through the seasonal imagery of weather and agriculture. On the November outing through the Uppercross countryside, Anne has to endure the flirtation of Wentworth with the Musgrove sisters as well as his distant formality with her.

Her pleasure in the walk must arise from the exercise and the day, from the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges, and from repeating to herself some few of the thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn, . . . [emphasis in text]. (84)

This reverie is interrupted by her overhearing a particularly intimate exchange between Wentworth and Louisa Musgrove.

Anne could not immediately fall into a quotation again. The sweet scenes of autumn were for a while put by--unless some tender sonnet, fraught with the apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together, blessed her memory. (85)

As the party approaches its destination, farming activities intrude on Anne's poetic musings, "where the ploughs at work, and the fresh-made path spoke the farmer, counteracting the

sweets of poetical despondence, and meaning to have spring again, . . ." (85).

Anne has been indulging herself in the fallacy of confusing art and life. Poetry presents a fall that is a permanent loss "of youth and hope," like death. But the farmer is "meaning to have spring again," and fall plowing is an act of trust in "Providence" that spring will indeed return, although there is no indication that as yet Anne shares this insight from nature that corrects poetic art. Later, when she urges the texts "of our best moralists" as a cure for Captain Benwick's melancholia from a surfeit of romantic poetry, she reflects that "she had been eloquent on a point in which her own conduct would ill bear examination" (101), which reveals her own growth in self-understanding.

The cycle of the seasons is Austen's metaphor for "Providence." Many have observed the loss and recovery of Anne's "bloom," her improved appearance to Lady Russell, which encourages hopes of "a second spring of youth and beauty" (124), and the "spring of felicity" deservedly experienced by Anne's mistreated friend, Mrs. Smith, when Anne and Wentworth bring a return of fine weather through his help with her property claims (252). On her way to visit Mrs. Smith, Anne's "musings of high-wrought love and eternal constancy" (at the expense of Frederick's jealousy) were "almost enough to spread purification and perfume all the way" (192). Jacqueline Reid-Walsh "detect(s) through the imagery the figure of Persephone bringing an early spring to the February

streets of Bath."¹⁷ The imagery of seasonal cycles, and their mythical personifications, seem to be Austen's way of diverting attention from the omnipotent author to perhaps the most ancient symbol of a causal and purposeful "Providence," which justifies the "trust" of farmers who plow, "meaning to have spring again."

Jon Spence in a 1981 essay offers a close and perceptive discussion of "Nature" in Persuasion, but declines to follow the logic of his own analysis, which clearly points to nature's metonymic figuration of Providence. Instead, his thesis is that "[n]ature itself, haphazard and incomprehensible, presides over Anne's destiny."¹⁸ Addressing the scene of fall plowing, Spence observes that "[t]he farmers, acting with a knowledge of and trust in dynamic nature, exert themselves in autumn in order to reap the fruits spring will make possible." Contrary to what seems to me the plain meaning of this passage, Spence draws the contradictory conclusion that it conflates nature and "chance" and supports the argument that "Persuasion affirms that chance brings ends that do not result from a rigorously controlled set of causal actions."¹⁹

Spence does not pursue the implications of the farmer's plowing as testimony to confidence in a beneficent providence because, I believe, he chooses not to lift "that veil which Gilbert Ryle suggests Jane Austen draws between her art and her religion."²⁰ But it seems to me that the price of critical reluctance to engage the religious implications of Austen's "creative imagination" is to miss the tension between a

beneficent providence and the role of "luck" that is played out in the novel.

"Luck" is revealed as a kind of temporary possession that deludes its possessors with the false sense of worthiness that Wentworth confesses in his last speech. Unlike the testimony of the seasons to the reliability of Providence, luck betrays the confidence of its believers. However, Wentworth's own personal history does seem to testify that Anne's termination of their engagement flies in the face of fortune's promise.

It seems that Austen wants to fix the reader's eye on "luck" and "lucky," which are mentioned five times in three pages during the conversation about Wentworth's rising career. Admiral Croft claims that his brother-in-law was a "[l]ucky fellow" to get command of the unseaworthy Asp, and Wentworth concurs that "I felt my luck, admiral, I assure you" (65), which is proven by the absence of "foul weather," until he captures and pilots into port "the very French frigate I wanted," just ahead of a storm that "would have done for poor old Asp" (66). Again on the Laconia his "same luck" follows him, and Mrs. Musgrove chimes in that "it was a lucky day for us when you were put captain into that ship" (67), a reference to their son's service as midshipman under Wentworth.

Luck, finally, really is chance, a roll of the dice, a kind of adversarial economic exchange in which someone's loss makes possible another's gain, like the boy's fall early in

the novel that allows Anne to "escape" meeting Wentworth. The losing adversary may be visible, like the French frigate, but the invisible adversary is the approaching storm. Wentworth puts himself in harm's way to win a "prize," and his "luck" holds. Louisa Musgrove puts herself in harm's way in Lyme on the excursion to the Cobb, but her luck, as well as Wentworth's, fails them.

The shadow of some momentous future event for the visitors to Lyme seems cast by "the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements" (95), and the setting itself suggests that this casual excursion is connected with forces, even older than the medieval builders, that still repel the sea and protect the harbor. After a painterly narrative sweep of surrounding attractions, "[t]he party from Uppercross . . . proceeded towards the Cobb, equally their object in itself and on Captain Wentworth's account" (96), since his fellow officer, Captain Harville, had rented a small house for his family nearby. Before leaving Lyme the next day, the group seems irresistibly drawn to the Cobb, where they indulge "a general wish to walk along it once more" (108), particularly since "Louisa soon grew so determined" to do so, and they "proceeded to make the proper adieus to the Cobb" (109). The narrative now moves in to focus on the vertical structure of the Cobb through "antithetical images of high and low, up and down, perfectly summed up in the antithetical image of the 'steep flight' of stairs."²¹

There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb pleasant for the ladies, and they agreed

to get down the steps to the lower, and all were contented to pass quietly and carefully down the steep flight, excepting Louisa; she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth. (109)

Heights are dangerous, but "steps" offer safe passage for those who will "pass quietly and carefully," like pilgrims to a revered shrine, from the perilous altitude of the "new Cobb" to the safety of the ancient structure.

There are no shortcuts in this pilgrimage, but Louisa twice tempts Providence on the Cobb, showing contempt for the hand which, literally, carved the safe passage in stone. Why should she not? After all, Wentworth caught her the first time, but "luck" deserts her second try. Later, Anne resists the even more serious temptation of marriage to William Elliot, and the two "temptations" seem linked by Austen in a modern parable of Jesus' temptation by the devil.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.²²

Luck, in a sense, is the devil's alternative to Providence, and when the two clash, luck is the loser. Even Wentworth seems to have foreboding of this danger, when he tries to dissuade Louisa, due to "[t]he hardness of the pavement for her feet," which the devil assures Jesus that God's angels will protect him against. But no angel intervenes to help Wentworth protect Louisa from her offense.

Paul Zeitlow, whom Spence cites in his essay as arguing "that the novel affirms Providence, the idea that the individual is served out rewards and punishments that are his due,"²³ actually suggests only that this is an incomplete view.

It would seem at least partially valid to claim that behind what appears to be blind luck is the hand of Providence, dealing out just rewards and punishments, bringing good out of apparent evil, and happiness out of suffering.²⁴

Zeitlow, too, stays on the secular side of the "veil" or "curtain" Spence and Ryle see suspended between Austen's religious point of view, and therefore recognizes no significant distinction between "Providence" and "luck." According to this theory, luck becomes merely the instrument of Providence, "bringing good out of apparent evil," a theory that Zeitlow finds "not entirely satisfying." His alternative interpretation is that Austen, by creating "pleasing results" out of situations that seem disasters waiting to happen, "emphasize[s] the dark possibilities of human life," since the reader almost inevitably will contrast the "destinies" of characters "if events took their normal course."²⁵ Zeitlow does not look at nature as metaphor for providence, and Spence, in discussing nature's agency, does not analyze the roles of luck or providence, other than to refer to Zeitlow's article. Each essay, therefore, suffers by its failure to address the linkage of nature with providence and to differentiate the latter from "luck." Consequently, both seem to wind up with the same random, chaotic, and purposeless world that

Kaplan also sees in Persuasion, and in which human decisions about conduct have virtually no bearing on consequences, nor do they justify any trust in "Providence."

The common shortcoming of all these studies, as I have suggested, is their failure to engage the theosophical world of the novel, where providence may be trusted, but personal decisions must also respect, not abuse, the potential of providence for good. Louisa's recklessness contrasts with what appeared to be "over-anxious caution" in the breaking of Anne's engagement with Wentworth, but caution now is shown to be the prudence required of those who would not "tempt" Providence. The lesson of the Cobb also teaches restraint in embracing an alluring future seemingly full of promise, a lesson Anne seems to have learned in rejecting Lady Russell's encouragement of William Elliot's courtship. Anne may not love her cousin Mr. Elliott, but she nevertheless undergoes her own trial of temptation. Since Anne's father, Sir Walter, has no son, the wealthy William Elliot is "heir apparent" to Kellynch, now an impoverished estate from Sir Walter's financial ineptness. Lady Russell plays on the appeal to Anne of succeeding her dead mother as Lady Elliot, presiding over the ancestral home.

Anne was obliged to turn away, to rise, to walk to a distant table, and, leaning there in pretended employment, try to subdue the feelings this picture excited. For a few moments, her imagination and her heart were bewitched. The idea of becoming what her mother had been; of having the precious name of "Lady Elliot" first revived in herself; of being restored to Kellynch, calling it her home again, her home for

ever, was a charm which she could not immediately resist. (160)

There is something sinister in the terms "bewitched" and "charm," which suggests that Anne's mind is preyed upon by dark forces, but the forces may be less personified in the nefarious William Elliot than in the allure of the good "luck" such an alliance might bring. At the time of Anne's youthful engagement to Wentworth, his "confidence" that, since "[h]e had always been lucky; he knew he should be so still" is "bewitching" for Anne. More than its representative, it is luck that bewitches.

Anne's decision against William Elliot, however, is not a knee-jerk rejection and is preceded by a conscious moral choice against the strongest temptation to reclaim the former influence and dignity of the baronetcy. The Bible version of the temptation continues after the devil's failure to persuade Jesus to jump.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.²⁶

With the memorable words, "Get thee hence, Satan," Jesus rids himself of the devil. But Anne's temptation is more persuasive, since it is offered by her loved Lady Russell, who unwittingly serves as the devil's mouthpiece and gives him an advantage he might otherwise have lacked.

Louisa's reckless leap, and Anne's refusal to "leap" into marriage without love, reveal the relationship of pru-

dence and courage to moral values as Francis Hutcheson compares these "cardinal" virtues.

Every Action, which we apprehend as either morally good or evil, is always supposed to flow from some Affection toward rational Agents; . . . Or it may perhaps be enough to make an Action, or Omission, appear vicious, if it argues the Want of such Affection . . . And mere Courage, or Contempt of Danger, if we conceive it to have no regard to the Defence of the Innocent, or repairing of Wrongs, wou'd only entitle its Possessor to Bedlam. When such sort of Courage is sometimes admir'd, it is upon some secret Apprehension of a good Intention in the use of it. Prudence, if it were only employ'd in promoting private Interest, is never imagin'd to be a Virtue: . . . So that these . . . Qualities, commonly called Cardinal Virtues, obtain that Name, because they . . . denote Affections toward rational Agents; otherwise there would appear no Virtue in them.²⁷

In the world of moral philosophy, all people are "rational Agents." Had Louisa loved Wentworth, there might have been something to be "admir'd" in throwing herself at him from the parapets of the Cobb, but subsequent events show her leap to have been simply "Contempt of Danger." Buried in the word "Contempt" is "Tempt," and Louisa's temptation of providence is morally wrong, as her supposed "Courage" is "no Virtue" because not motivated by a worthy "Affection."

Anne contrasts the "persuasion" exerted by Lady Russell against marrying Wentworth with the temptation her pressure aroused in Anne to accept William Elliot.

If I was wrong in yielding to persuasion once, remember that it was persuasion exerted on the side of safety, not of risk. When I yielded, I thought it was to duty; but no duty could be called in aid here. In marrying a man indifferent to me, all risk would have been incurred, and all duty violated. (244)

The key term here is "indifferent," since marriage should be a commitment of the heart, and in a marriage devoid of love,

"all risk" of future misery is "incurred." To love and not to marry for reasons of "safety" may mean unhappiness, but the concerns may also be extinguished, and if the love is still there, then the happiness can follow, as it does for Frederick and Anne. Since there is a "Want of Affection" in Anne toward William Elliot, she can reject Lady Russell's "persuasion" on the grounds that "all risk would be incurred" in the immorality of marriage without love.

Lady Russell might feel that Anne would see the "prudent" advantages of marrying Elliot, but as Hutcheson argues, "Prudence, if it were only employ'd in promoting private Interest, is never imagin'd to be a Virtue." However, "safety" is morally justified as "prudence" in the early separation of Anne and Frederick, a separation that Mrs. Croft unknowingly endorses to Mrs. Musgrove in Anne's hearing.

To begin without knowing that at such a time there will be the means of marrying, I hold to be very unsafe and unwise, and what, I think, all parents should prevent as far as they can. (231)

The rather precipitous courtship and the succeeding happiness of her own marriage perhaps make Mrs. Croft's observations gently ironic, but it is that very happiness which gives authority to her unwitting endorsement of Lady Russell's advice eight years earlier.

What is the source of Anne's misgivings about Elliot? Appearances argue in his favor.

That he was a sensible man, an agreeable man,--that he talked well, professed good opinions, seemed to judge properly and as a man of principle,--this was all clear enough. He certainly knew what was right, nor

could she fix on any one article of moral duty evidently transgressed; . . . (160)

To be sure, there are a few hints about his past, such as the "Sunday travelling" that Anne disapproves, and she senses that his surface manners, "Rational, discreet, polished," may mask a questionable character. His very appearance of being "rational" becomes a warning for Anne, but whatever their mix, "[h]er early impressions were incurable" (161). Her "moral sense" functions as claimed by Francis Hutcheson.

This moral sense from its very nature appears to be designed for regulating and controlling all our powers. . . . Nor can such matters of immediate feeling be otherways proved than by appeals to our hearts.²⁸

Certainly the moral sense never had a greater challenge than to reveal the character of William Elliot, the most evil character in all Austen novels. Like the devil, he operates through persona such as Lady Russell and is glimpsed only in the background, where he seems engaged in surreptitious surveillance and mischief. At Lyme, the party from Uppercross meets him on the steps to the beach, where "he politely drew back, and stopped to give them way. . . . and as they passed, Anne's face caught his eye, and he looked at her with a degree of earnest admiration" (104). A momentary glance, but Wentworth notices it. Another brief encounter in the halls of the inn, a view from the window of a departing curricule, and Elliot is gone. His identity is deduced because he wears mourning black for his deceased wife, as does Anne's immediate family because of their relationship, a connection that Mary Musgrove blurts out: "In mourning, you see, just as our

Mr. Elliot must be" (105). Black, of course, is also associated with the devil, whose evil spirit seems to hover over Louisa's disaster on the Cobb the following day.

Elliot next materializes in Bath to press the claim he has staked by visual possession at Lyme. He has not even the justification of greed in his designs on Anne and the baronetcy, since he has already made his money by swindling Mrs. Smith's dead husband and through his success as a lawyer, that consistently contemptible profession in Austen's novels, with the notable exception of John Knightley in Emma. Further, he will inherit Kellynch, with or without Anne, so she is not potentially useful to him, but Mrs. Smith, who is privy to those in whom Elliot does appear to confide, tells Anne that "he truly wants to marry you" (204). So why does he want Anne? There really is no suggestion of love either way. Elliot never commits himself; his courtship is carried on largely by proxy, and his motives only guessed at through hearsay.

On the other hand, Mrs. Clay, through her stalking of Sir Walter and, if successful, her potential of producing a male heir to Kellynch herself, does represent a threat to William Elliot's inheritance. Whatever motives may be ascribed to his desire for Anne, they become irrelevant when her engagement with Wentworth forces Elliot into what might be called "Plan B," and he joins with Mrs. Clay in a strategic alliance of enemies.

In fact, Kellynch is near bankruptcy, were it not for revenue from the lease to the Crofts. Wickham in Pride and Prejudice and Willoughby in Sense and Sensibility at least have money worries to excuse their infidelity. Even Henry Crawford in Mansfield Park cuts his own throat in seducing a married woman, while his sister seems excused because of an absence of proper guidance and example in her education. All these are only moral jellyfish compared with Elliot's wickedness. But Kellynch offers this viper the respectability and honors of a venerated past, despite its bankrupt present, to grace his career of treachery and deceit.

The warnings flashed by Anne's moral sense are shockingly verified by the subsequent revelations by Mrs. Smith of how Elliot ruined them financially and caused the death of her husband, after they had helped him in his early days of need as an impecunious young lawyer.

It was a dreadful picture of ingratitude and inhumanity; and Anne felt at some moments, that no flagrant open crime could have been worse. (210)

"Ingratitude" and "ungrateful" are not terms used carelessly by Austen. In Mansfield Park Fanny Price, devastated at Sir Thomas' accusation of ingratitude, fervently prays, "[h]eaven defend me from being ungrateful!" (323), and Edmund reacts to Fanny's suggestion that Mary Crawford may be "very ungrateful" by cautioning that "[u]ngrateful is a strong word" (63). The association of ingratitude with criminal behavior has a long history--Squire Allworthy in Fielding's Tom Jones considers it worse than a crime²³--but this seems to be the only

instance where criminality defines an Austen character's ingratitude. Applying this label to William Elliott sets him apart as the most nefarious character in these novels, and his association with the devil that Austen seems to suggest invites comparison with God's accusation of Satan in Milton's Paradise Lost: "ingrate, he had of mee / All he could have; . . ." ³⁰ Certainly Eliot "has it all" and therefore turning on the source of his prosperity also stamps him as the "ingrate" of Persuasion.

Anne's "moral sense" is also akin to the growth of her feeling that she may be reunited with Wentworth: "Surely, if there be constant attachment on each side, our hearts must understand each other ere long" (221). This hope is stimulated by Frederick's emotional affirmation that "[a] man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart," as he had thought Benwick felt toward his dead fiancé: "He ought not-- he does not" (183). Anne reads "his feelings as to a first, strong attachment" as revealing his unchanged love for her. This wholehearted commitment to the power and authority of feeling makes Persuasion unique among Austen's novels and contrasts with the errors in Pride and Prejudice of "first impressions" (its original title), as well as with the reversibility of "first attachments" in Sense and Sensibility.

My discussion has concentrated on the last conversation in the novel, when Anne explains her moral decisions in relation to the standard of personal happiness. Frederick doesn't really respond to Anne's exposition of philosophical belief,

and his own comments reflect his gratitude at the personal happiness he has gained, yet may not "deserve." I read their statements more like soliloquies directed at the audience, in which the didactic moral meaning of what has past is conveyed via the speaking voice of a character.

But between these two soliloquies is one true piece of dialogue. Frederick asks Anne, hypothetically, if Anne would "have renewed the engagement" when Wentworth's earnings and career were assured within two years of their separation. "'Would I!' was all her answer; but the accent was decisive enough." Frederick takes this to mean that "[s]ix years of separation and suffering might have been spared" (247), but I doubt that Frederick's response can be accepted as the interpretation of "Would I!" When truth and confession are laid on the table, so to speak, why would Austen interject a rhetorical question? The answer, I believe, is that the hypothetical event never happened, and in a world where "the event decides," we only know what we do, not what we might have done.

Frederick asks a philosophically unanswerable question, and Anne's rhetorically ambiguous response can only underscore the meaning of "as the event decides." Gratitude for the re-discovered happiness that blesses their reunion permeates the lovers' conversation, and therefore the occasion for happiness also calls forth the response of gratitude. "The event," rather than intentions or motives, creates gratitude, just as past ills vanish in present happiness.

The narrative information that "the accent was decisive enough" to convey some sort of unequivocal meaning seems, to me, to be a sort of joke Austen is playing with her readers and also to contradict Philip Drew's theory about the omnipotent, God-like, author. What Austen is saying, I believe, is that "no honest answer can be given to Frederick's question, and I am certainly not going to supply one." However, to tantalize readers with the desire for that which they cannot have, she adds "but the accent was decisive enough."

There is a peculiar poignancy in this closing conversation, because they are the last words of Austen characters, except for the unpublished fragment, Sanditon, and almost Austen's last words, since she was dead within the following year. Having closed with a mischievous joke to tease her readers, her voice falls silent, and the manuscript of Persuasion was published posthumously, with a title selected by Henry Austen. Who knows what she might have entitled it? Providence would have been unthinkable, because Jane Austen would have shared Samuel Johnson's antipathy to the vulgarization of divinity, but I think that Happiness might not be a bad candidate.

Chapter 6 Notes

- 1 Laurie Kaplan, "Persuasion: The Accidents of Human Life," Persuasions 15 (1993): 158.
- 2 Devlin 74.
- 3 "Jane Austen and Bishop Butler," Nineteenth Century Fiction 35.2 (1980): 132.
- 4 Vol. 1, Works 164. D. D. Raphael notes that "Hutcheson appears to be the first to use this explicit formulation of the Utilitarian doctrine." British Moralists, ed. Raphael, vol. 1, 284n.
- 5 Vol. 2, Works 21.
- 6 Of the Nature of Virtue (1736), British Moralists, ed. Selby-Bigge, vol. 1, 246.
- 7 De Rose, vol. 1, Concordance. "Happy"-555. "Happiness"-383. "Gratitude"-121.
- 8 Vol. 1, Works 276.
- 9 Vol. 1, Works, 151.
- 10 "Gratitude," The Works of William Paley, D.D., with a Memoir of His Life, ed. G. W. Meadley, Chapter 11 (Boston: Joshua Belcher, 1810) 201. Paley's texts on religion and science were required reading at Oxford well into the nineteenth century.
- 11 Vol. 1, Works 139-40.
- 12 Vol. 1, Works 175.

- 13 J. G. Davies, "Manichaeism and Christianity," The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 9, (New York: Macmillan, 1987) 171.
- 14 Drew 147.
- 15 Drew 148.
- 16 Drew 147-8.
- 17 Jacqueline Reid-Walsh, "'She Learned Romance as She Grew Older': From Conduct Book Propriety to Romance in Persuasion," Persuasions 15 (1993): 223.
- 18 Spence 629.
- 19 Spence 629-30.
- 20 Spence 634. See Chapter 1., page 2, note 4.
- 21 Julia Prewitt Brown, "Private and Public in Persuasion," Persuasions 15 (1993): 136.
- 22 Matthew 4:5-7, Bible (King James).
- 23 Spence 631n.
- 24 Paul N. Zeitlow, "Luck and Fortuitous Circumstance in Persuasion: Two Interpretations," ELH 32 (June, 1965): 192.
- 25 Zeitlow 195.
- 26 Matthew 4: 8-10.
- 27 Vol. 1, Works 125-7.

28 Vol. 5, Works 61.

29 Allworthy condemns the gamekeeper, Black George, for the theft of the purse intended for Tom: "Indeed, when I consider the black Ingratitude of this Fellow toward you, I think a Highwayman, compared to him, is an innocent Person. . . . The Dishonesty of this Fellow I might perhaps have pardoned, but never his Ingratitude." Fielding, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol. 2, 968-69. See also Maaja Stewart, "Ingratitude in Tom Jones," JEGP 89 (1990): 512-32.

30 Book III, lines 97-98, Shawcross, ed., 301. Maaja Stewart (above) also observes that, "[f]or Milton also ingratitude, even more than pride, stands at the center of Satan's initial and recurring sinfulness." (513).

CONCLUSION

In all Austen novels, people assert claims and rights, both to property as well as to other people. Mr. Collins introduces himself as the claimant to Longbourn, the Bennet estate, by legal right of entail, and he proposes to extend that claim to include Elizabeth as his prospective wife. Sir Thomas Bertram must travel to Antigua to protect his claim and colonial estates, while at home the alliance of his daughter with the Rushworth family brings to Mansfield Park the even more opulent and desirable Sotherton property. Dynastic plotting is never very far from Emma's mind, and in Persuasion, only the "heir presumptive" rights of the morally corrupt William Elliot can save Kellynch from the claims of creditors, staved off for the time being by surrendering proprietary rights to the Crofts as lessees.

Against legally protected acquisitiveness, the novels offer another kind of exchange based on giving, not taking. Since the benefits are not a matter of right, the beneficiary's response is "gratitude" for happiness that depends on another's "benevolence." This kind of exchange is important in all Austen plots, but in Northanger Abbey and Sense and Sensibility, the first two novels in probable order of composition, there is a certain mechanical quality to the process that appears to reflect a more rigid view of benevolence and gratitude as a kind of moral cement that preserves

a superior-inferior relationship between giver and beneficiary. Catherine Morland does seem to turn the relationship to her advantage, but at substantial personal cost, and gratitude marks the sum of her hopes, as it does for Marianne Dashwood in Sense and Sensibility. However, with Pride and Prejudice, the expression of gratitude, the response itself, becomes a kind of reciprocal benevolence, a dynamic interchange that energizes thereafter all enduring and approved relationships in Austen novels. The power of this dynamic seems limitless in Pride and Prejudice, and although tested and questioned in later novels, survives to become the all-encompassing virtue of Persuasion.

Austen's source for freeing benevolence and gratitude from their traditional hierarchical immobility appears to be Francis Hutcheson's Newtonian model of moral gravitation as developed in early editions of An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, and Mark Loveridge's scholarship, based on evidence in Emma, has established, I feel conclusively, that Austen was well acquainted with this work.¹ My study looks closely at the ideas that underlie the mathematical exercise on which Loveridge focuses and confirms Austen's understanding of Hutcheson, at least as early as the revising of First Impressions into Pride and Prejudice. The "bridge" between philosophic theory and the dramatized world of the novels is provided by the Discourses, or published sermon texts, of the Anglican latitudinarian bishop, Thomas

Sherlock, whose concern is the practical application of virtue to conduct.

The claims and takings in the novels are shadows cast by disputed rights and claims asserted in the world around Jane Austen, including both the military and ideological conflict with revolutionary France. Thus, the disputes concern not only claims to people and property, but also to the moral, ethical, and religious legitimacy of the claimants. Upon his reappearance in Uppercross, Frederick Wentworth bases his right to choose among prospective brides on the wealth he has gained by "taking" French vessels in combat (66). Wentworth, as well as Sir Thomas with his Antigua properties, represent the intersection of real and novelistic worlds, of substance with shadow.

Claims are legitimized by an empowering "system," and therefore challenges to legitimacy also attack the "system" that supports them. The term "system" is used pejoratively by Emma when she labels Frank Churchill's manipulations as "a system of hypocrisy and deceit,--espionage, and treachery" (399), a charge that Mr. Knightley anticipates in his unfavorable contrast of Frank's values as "French" with English standards (149). Churchill himself implies that he has a "right" to Jane Fairfax that justifies his trickery, and therefore both Emma and Mr. Knightley, by challenging his "system," deny Churchill's claim of "right."

Law, specifically the English common law and Constitution, is the "system" that Edmund Burke defends

against the French challenge and would seem included in Mr. George Knightley's sweeping defense of things English, perhaps symbolized by his younger brother's profession as a lawyer. But John Knightley is the only lawyer in the novels to be treated approvingly, and the law as a "system," as well as its practitioners; fare poorly at Austen's hands. Law facilitates claims and takings that impoverish Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters in Sense and Sensibility, and William Elliot, Lucifer himself, is a lawyer who systematically defrauds Mrs. Smith in Persuasion. For Austen, gratitude has no role in such a system of legal selfishness, and yet the systemization of gratitude was very much an issue in the mid to late eighteenth century. Burke accuses French revolutionaries of "ingratitude,"² whereas William Godwin claims that, in his system of universal virtue built on pure reason, gratitude "is no part either of justice or virtue."³

Godwin's principal objection to gratitude is that it is a feeling with no basis in reason, unlike Burke, who defends feelings expressed as reverence for traditional authority, which would include King Lear's "dues of gratitude." But Austen seems to want no part of any "systems," since they either serve to legitimize deception or to enforce inequalities, including institutionalized gender inequality. The novels give full authority to individual feelings, informed by intelligence and not by conformity to the authority of systems, as guides for moral behavior and loving relationships. Feelings are the verdict of the senses, mediated

by the mind, the union of heart and head that Hugh Blair found appealing in Francis Hutcheson.⁴ For Austen, foremost among the feelings is gratitude, supremely powerful as love's herald, but a power with the potential for mischief as well, as Emma discovers in Harriet's designs on Mr. Knightley, and still with the power to oppress when invoked by Sir Thomas against Fanny in Mansfield Park.

The authority of feelings, however, does not mean that the individual is a law unto itself, and feelings are still subject to the test of their contribution to human happiness. Hutcheson's standard of happiness as the test of virtue identifies his philosophy as a precursor of utilitarianism, and Austen's novels also seem to rest on this principle. But Hutcheson's theories are always grounded in Christian doctrine, and he supports the standard of human happiness by arguing that this is also God's wish for His children. Anne Elliot discovers that "Providence" works for happiness, and if it is deferred, it is not denied. Both Anne and Wentworth learn this truth, and their gratitude, ultimately, is for the happiness which is the gift of "Providence."

Conclusion Notes

1 Loveridge 214-16.

2 Vol. 5, Works 138.

3 Godwin 171.

4 The Edinburgh Review 20.

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