

The Nineteenth Century Novel
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Module No # 05
Lecture No # 01D
Jane Austen's Persuasion

Hello and welcome back. In today's session I will discuss Anne's thoughts on the navy and further narrative elements and ideological issues in relation to chapters 1 to 6.

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Anne on the Navy

- "The navy, I think, who have done so much for us, have at least an equal claim with any other set of men, for the comforts and all the privileges which any home can give. Sailors work hard enough for their comforts, we must all allow."

This is what Anne has to say about the Navy after hearing her father's comment on it. She suggests that "The navy, I think, who have done so much for us, have at least an equal claim with any other set of men, for the comforts and all the privileges which any home can give. Sailors work hard enough for their comforts, we must all allow." So Anne is defending the navy, and she says that they have an equal right to all the privileges that the other men from other professions enjoy. And she insists that the sailors do work hard to protect the country, and in order to safeguard the country.

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Mrs Croft

- “a very well-spoken, genteel, shrewd lady, she seemed to be...asked more questions about the house, and terms and taxes, than the Admiral himself, and seemed more conversant with business...”

Further figures from the Navy, and Mrs. Croft is very interesting in the novel for several reasons. She is a very independent minded woman and she is the wife of Admiral Croft, who is going to be the tenant of Kellynch Hall. And the narrator says that “She is a very well-spoken, genteel, shrewd lady. She seemed to be and she asked more questions about the house and terms and taxes than the Admiral himself, and seemed more conversant with business.”

So we get a lot of characteristics about Mrs. Croft. She is well-spoken, she is very sophisticated, she is genteel, and she is from a respectable position. She is very shrewd, and this is an interesting epithet that has been applied to her. She is very perceptive, and if you remember Mrs. Clay is referred to as being very clever, but she is referred to as being very shrewd, very smart and very perceptive and observant than her husband. And she asks more questions about Kellynch Hall, the place that they are going to let, the terms on which they are going to let, the taxes that they are going to pay, and all the other aspects of the financial transaction.

And she seems to be more business minded than her husband. This is noticed by Mr. Shepherd, the lawyer who has been entrusted with the job of, you know, sorting out the affairs of the house.

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Nature of the Romance

Wentworth

- He was, at that time, a remarkably fine young man, with a deal of intelligence, spirit, and brilliancy; and Anne an extremely pretty girl, with gentleness, modesty, taste and feeling. Half the sum of attraction, on either side, might have been enough, for he had nothing to do, and she had hardly anybody to love; but the encounter of such lavish recommendations could not fail."

Now, we are introduced to the past of Anne Elliot. She has had a disappointment in love too, just like her elder sister Elizabeth Elliot. Now what is the nature of the romance and its failure for Anne Elliot? The narrator says that he was, and that he is Wentworth, Frederick Wentworth, the male protagonist of this particular novel. "He was at that time the remarkably fine young man with the deal of intelligence, spirit and brilliancy; and Anne, an extremely pretty girl with gentleness, modesty, taste and feeling.

Half the sum of attraction on either side might have been enough for he had nothing to and she hardly had anybody to love, but the encounter of such lavish recommendations could not fail." So we can see the gentle irony, the slight sarcasm as well in the second half of that excerpt. Wentworth was a fine young man, he was very intelligent, he had a lot of spirit, he was brilliant and Anne was extremely pretty, she was gentle, modest and she was sophisticated with a lot of the right sensibility, and the narrator says that from here, half the attractions that these two people possessed would have been enough for a romance to bloom between the two. So because, you know, why? Because he had nothing to do, that he was on leave, he was on vacation, he had nothing to do, and she had no one to love, there was no suitable young man for Anne Elliot to fall in love with, so they had plenty of time between themselves. So they easily fell in love, you know, but she says that how even though half the accomplishments of either would have done, these lavish recommendations of Wentworth and Anne did not fail to produce a romantic narrative between the two.

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Slight Sarcasm



So, as I just pointed out there was lot of leisure and no other alternative for Anne Elliot to be in love with. So these seems to be the reasons for falling in love for the majority of the folk, for the majority of young men and women. Nothing to do and nobody else to love.

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Reactions to Anne's romance

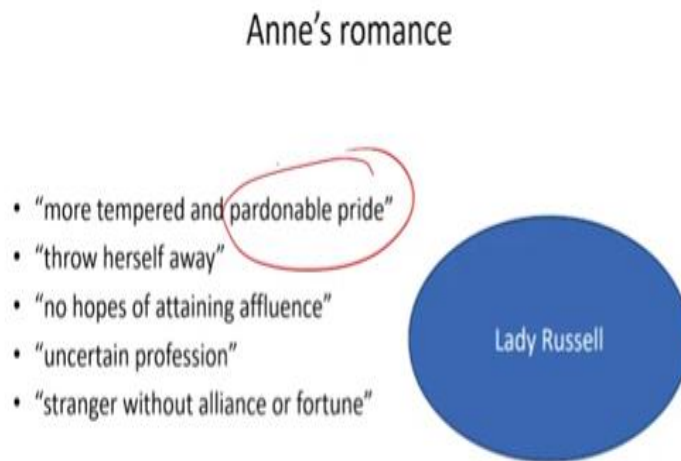


What are the reactions to Anne's romance on the part of Sir Walter Elliot, the father. So when they get engaged, you know, when Anne and Wentworth come to an understanding between themselves and when they inform Sir Walter Elliot as the man is supposed to, as the groom is supposed to, the groom is used to suppose the permission of the girl's father. So when he does that, these are the reactions that the couple receive. There is great astonishment.

Sir Walter cannot believe his ears. He is astonished that these things could happen, that such kind of engagements can, you know, can be formed. There is a great coldness on his part, and great silence too. He is extremely cold, he is extremely silent, and he tells him that he will do nothing for his daughter, he will not offer even a penny as dowry for the daughter. And he believes that this is a degrading alliances for the family, for Anne Elliot.

This will bring down the status, bring down the reputation of the Elliot family. So this is the set of reaction that Anne receives from her own father.

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Now how does Lady Russell react to this romance that took place between Anne and Wentworth eight years prior to the beginning of the novel Persuasion? So this has happened in the past of Anne. So what are the reaction of Lady Russell? She was more tempered, and she was also very proud but it was a pardonable pride. This is a pardonable pride on the part of Lady Russell, and she cautioned Anne not to throw herself away on this penniless young man Wentworth, who had no hopes of attaining affluence. He did not show any promise of becoming rich. And this was an uncertain profession, the naval profession was uncertain according to Lady Russell, and Wentworth is a stranger without any kind of strong alliance, strong alliance in terms of family networks and he has obviously no fortune. So how is he going to be a successful partner for Anne Elliot.

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Lady Russell's Perception

- "rather sunk by him into a state of most wearing, anxious, youth-killing dependence! It must not be, if by any fair interference of friendship, any representations from one who had almost a mother's love, and mother's rights, it would be prevented."

And further objections to this engagement are offered by Lady Russell and she is very very convincing, because Anne Elliot is from a rich family, the family that is, you know, financially strong then, 8 years ago, and then it is from a high status in society, and for this girl from this family to marry a nobody is highly not advisable, and that is what she advises Anne Elliot.

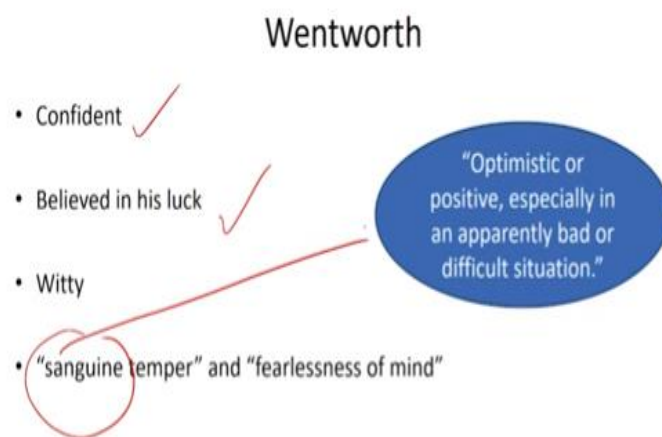
She says that she would be sunk by him, Anne Elliot would be sunk by him into a state of most wearing, anxious, youth-killing dependence. It must not be, if by any fair interference of friendship, any representation from one who had almost a mother's love and mother's rights it would be prevented. So you can see a lot of psychological arguments are also offered in the influence, in the interventions that Lady Russell offers to Anne.

And look at the language. "Sunk by him", the metaphor of the sea, the metaphor of the Navy. Anne Elliot is like a ship that would be sunk by Captain Wentworth's proposal and eventual marriage to her, and she will end up in a state of most wearing, exhausting, anxious, youth-killing dependence. It will kill off her pretty appearance. It must not be, she will not let Anne come to that position, if she had any kind of influence over her, any kind of friendship with her, and in fact Lady Russell occupies the position of a mother in terms of Anne because Anne's mother, biological mother, is no more and Lady Russell acts like a mother for Anne and the other daughters. And she says that I have a mother's rights, and if those rights have any kind of influence, I would prevent this kind of engagement. So what is essentially happening here is that

Lady Russell is thwarting, breaking off a connection between a girl from a high status family to a man from a lower status in society.

So that kind of cross class marriage is broken off by the interventions of lady Russell. She is more effective than Sir Walter Elliot, the father of Anne. Anne gives way to Lady Russell's advice. She is persuaded by Lady Russell, and that connects us with the title of this novel Persuasion. She has been persuaded not to marry Captain Wentworth.

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Wentworth, what sort of a character is he? He is confident, he believed in his luck, and he is witty, he is of sanguine temper, and he is fearless. So all this confidence, trust and implicit trust in his, you know, ability to be fortunate with all kinds of things in the world, his light personality, his witty personality, his sense of humor, and his optimism and fearlessness does not attract him to Lady Russell; it attract him to Anne. Lady Russell is of a different age and from a different class position. She does not get influenced by this spirit of youth and adventure represented by Captain Wentworth, and this is the meaning of sanguine: optimistic or very positive, especially in an apparently bad or difficult situation. And in this moment in the novel he is a man who does not have any fortune but he is optimistic, he is very hopeful that Anne Elliot would marry him. And eventually that optimism is thwarted, but that is the kind of personality that he has.

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Persuasion

- She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing: indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success, and not deserving it. But it was not merely a selfish caution, under which she acted, in putting an end to it. Had she not imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own, she could hardly have given him up.

Anne Elliot was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing: indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success, and not deserving it. But it was not merely a selfish caution under which she acted, in putting an end to it. Had she not imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own, she could hardly have given him up. So once again the third person narrator is evoking the title of the novel, which is the notion of persuasion, and that persuasion prevents people from doing certain things which will have ramification both personal and social.


So Anne Elliot was persuaded to believe that this engagement is an utterly wrong decision, improper, this match is an improper, not a not an eligible match, and it will not prosper, that this match will not prosper. But, despite all the advice that she had received from Lady Russell, Anne Elliot would not have broken off the engagement with Wentworth if she did not think that she was doing the right thing for Wentworth. She imagined that she was consulting his own good.

She believed that she was doing the right thing for Wentworth, the man she was in love with, even more than her own wellbeing. So if she did not think that way, she would not have given him up, she would not have broken that engagement. So she believes that if she marries him, she will become a burden, a dead weight on Wentworth, who will be prevented from concentrating on his professional career. So and again would result in both of personal failure and a professional failure.

So there are several reasons intertwined in Anne's mind when she decides to break the engagement with Wentworth eight years ago.

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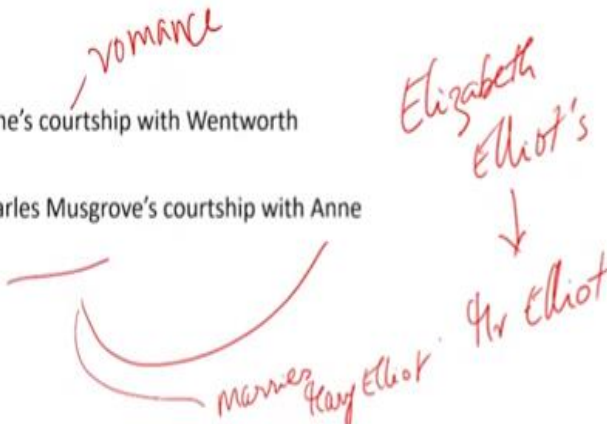
Anne's Romance

- Short romance
 - Almost lasting effects
 - "early loss of bloom and spirits"
- 

So this romance that happened in the past is a short romance, it is a holiday romance to put it very simply, but it has lasting effects on Anne's early loss of bloom and spirits. So now we know why she is no longer pretty, why now she has now we know why she has lost her, you know, attractiveness quite early on. That this romance, this failed romance is the reason behind her lack of attractiveness.

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Failed courtships

- Anne's courtship with Wentworth
 - Charles Musgrove's courtship with Anne
- 

Now let us talk about the failed courtships that happen in the novel, and which are mentioned quite early on in the first 6 chapters. We have, to begin with, Elizabeth Elliot's courtship to Mr. Elliot which fails because Mr. Elliot marries somebody else. And then we have Anne's Courtship. Courtship means nothing but romance. So we have Anne's romance with Wentworth being broken off by the family, and then we have Charles Musgrove, his courtship with Anne Elliot.

So this man Charles Musgrove is the eldest son of a neighboring squire, and he tried to court Anne after her broken romance with Wentworth, but Anne does not accept him, despite the fact that Lady Russell encourages Anne to marry Charles Musgrove. So once Charles Musgrove has been rejected by Anne, Charles Musgrove marries Mary, Mary Elliot, the second daughter of Sir Walter Elliot.

So you can see that there are several splintered courtship, several broken romances at the very beginning of the novel. We have seen some dysfunctional families. Sir Walter Elliot's family is a dysfunctional family, Lady Russell who is kind of influencing the Elliot household, she is also dysfunction in the sense that there is no family for her per se, she is just the one person who inhabits her home Russell's lodge. Her home is called the lodge. And then we have the Musgrove family, which I will introduce quite shortly. So there are plenty of dysfunctional families as well as failed courtships or failed romances.

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Prequel and Sequel

- "She has been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older: the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning."

Failure to be successfully romantic

So the narrator, the third person narrator sums up the status of Anne in terms of romance. Anne has been forced into prudence in her youth. She learned romance as she grew older: the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning. This is what the third person narrator says about Anne. Anne has been forced to be smart. She has been forced into prudence, to think very carefully, to act very, you know, in a mature fashion in her youth when she was young.

And as she grew, she learnt how to be romantic. She learnt romance, the notion of romance came to her when she grew older. And that is the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning, the unnatural being her failure to be successfully romantic. So the sequel, the sequel is the novel Persuasion that we have, and the prequel is that failed romance 8 years ago with Captain, with Wentworth.

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Potentially dangerous courtship

- Sir Walter and Mrs Clay
- "possessed, in an acute mind and assiduous pleasing manners, infinitely more dangerous attractions than any merely personal might have been."
- Anne warns Elizabeth

Now we have seen some failed courtships, now let us have a look at some potentially dangerous courtship plots within quotation that are about to germinate, and that is between Sir Walter and Mrs. Clay who has come home to her father's house with two children.

She has had an unprosperous marriage. And she possessed in an acute mind, Mrs. Clay possessed in an acute mind and assiduous pleasing manners, infinitely more dangerous attractions than any merely personal might have been. Mrs. Clay is seen as a dangerous woman because she is very very sharp and she is also very very pleasing, assiduous. She is consistently, she is working hard at pleasing Sir Walter Elliot, and this combination is deadly. That is what the other character

feel, especially Anne Elliot. Anne Elliot sees what is happening right in front of her. She sees that there is a potential courtship brewing between Sir Walter the widower, the father, and Mrs. Clay. And she tries to warn Elizabeth Elliot, but Elizabeth Elliot would not take the advice. She is very convinced that Mrs. Clay is very unattractive, and her father has been noticing that unattractiveness, say for example the freckles that Mrs. Clay has. And therefore she believes, Elizabeth believes that this courtship will come to nothing, in fact there is no courtship at all.

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Mary Musgrove

- "often a little unwell"
- "always in the habit of claiming Anne when anything was the matter"
- "Then I am sure Anne had better stay, for nobody will want her in Bath"

Let us now look at Mary Musgrove. Mary Musgrove is the second daughter of Sir Walter Elliot. She constantly believes that she is unwell, she is hypochondriac. And whenever she thinks that she is unwell, she was in the habit of claiming Anne when anything was the matter. And Elizabeth Elliot is quite willing to send Anne to help out Mary Musgrove, and she says than I'm sure Anne had better stay for nobody will want her in Bath.

The family is moving to Bath. That is the place of residence for the Elliot family. They are quitting Kellynch Hall and they are going to move to a house in Bath, and they have decided to drop Anne behind because Mary Musgrove is ill and Anne has to look after Mary Musgrove. So you can see one sister ditching and the other claiming Anne for selfish reasons, the other sister being Mary Musgrove.

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Mary Musgrove



And this is the illustration of Anne visiting Mary Musgrove, and Mary Musgrove is lying on the sofa imagining herself to be very very ill. And when she sees Anne she says so you are come at last and she believes that nobody is really looking after her, nobody spends time with her, the husband is away hunting and she seems to be all on her own. And Anne has come to her rescue.

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Mary Musgrove

- "She had no resources for solitude; and inheriting a considerable share of the Elliot self-importance, was very prone to add to every other distress that of fancying herself neglected and ill-used."

Mary Musgrove is a woman who has no resources for solitude, she cannot be on her own, and inheriting a considerable share of the Elliot self-importance, was very prone to add to every other distress that are fancying herself neglected and ill-used. So she has several faults. Firstly she thinks she is always ill and secondly she thinks that people are mistreating her, that she has been

ill used and that she has been neglected by the people around her, and most importantly she has the Elliot self-importance. The Elliot ego is embedded in Mary Musgrove.

And that is the reason behind her imagining others to be mistreating her. Thank you for watching
I will continue in the next session.