



FEMALE CHARACTERIZATION IN *PERSUASION*

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Jane Austen gives us an abundance of character portraits. She shows an acute grasp of the human mind and human motives and reveals these with great skill. She is not only concerned with the externals of character, but also with a psychological portrayal of it. Her characters are true to life. Jane Austen shows an intuitive understanding of human character. She reads the inner minds of her characters as if those were transparent and seize them in their depths. Even though her experience was a limited one, as a novelist of character she ranged widely. She presents adequate capacity for portraying her characters in moments of serious trouble. Her characters are well shaped and have something about them that transcends time and social class, enabling readers of all ages to feel. people have something in common with them.

Persuasion is a very brief novel, a tender wistful tale, more of a love story with a vein of subdued pathos. The characters in the novel are lined in still finer shades than in the other novels. In the novel Austen cleverly shapes the readers opinion regarding the characters through their actions and thoughts, whether they present their vanity and snobbery. Austen manages to create some very memorable characters but it can be said that some of them are flawed. *Persuasion* is a fascinating novel with a heroine whom we watch

growing into maturity. readers see both her weaknesses and strengths. She is simply presented as slightly inferior to her. Despite from the higher position of sisters, Anne is the only sister with whom the reader sympathizes. The portrayal of her sisters is damaging from the outset especially by the manner in which they treat Anne. All of Anne's family is portrayed as being shallow, snobbish and vain. Austen portrays, Sir Walter as a shallow and snobbish character, fortified by his over whelming superior attitude, impressed first and foremost by people's ranks. Lady Russell is presented with considerable respect in the novel. She had a cultivated mind rational and consistent, had a value for rank and consequence. Anne is an almost invisible character, a kind of Cinderella figure. Austen often gives us an insight into the characters, which helps readers to form their own opinions. She uses actions, family life, social status, thoughts and opinions as her tools of characterization. Social status tells us about the characters in her novels. In the novel, the narrative statements play a huge role in delineating the characters. Her characters have depth and there is very little description of their physical attributes.

According to critic Norman there are three groups of characters, whose activities play a vital role in advancing the plot. The Elliot group, the Musgrove and the sea faring group or the naval group. Snobbishness, pride, vanity all appear in the Elliot group, together with flattery and deceit. The sea faring groups is perhaps the most convincing minor characters Austen even drew; they represent vitality, good nature, friendship and loyalty. It is significant that there are no flatters or sycophants among their community. The Musgrove's stand between these two groups, important only in that their family first comes between Anne and Wentworth. The Musgrove's are likeable, warm

and down- to- earth family in the lower class of the gentry. They are rather parochial, but harmless. They represent the transitional nature of society in Jane Austen time.

The characters themselves are always the most important consideration for Jane Austen. She attends less than the most other novelists to scenery, external events and the places where her characters live. The novel shows a new interest in matters which had remained secondary in earlier ones. This new interest is mainly to Jane Austen's way of organizing the characters. Austen depicts certain characters sympathetically and some others whom she portrays ironically.

The minor characters in the novel help to the progression of the novel. They serve as the social context in which the hero is first rejected and then accepted by the heroine. They add to the value of the novel as a picture of social and domestic life in the eighteenth century.

Anne Elliot -She is the protagonist in the novel whom we saw grow into maturity. The second daughter of Sir Walter, highly intelligent, unmarried at 27, having broken off her engagement to Wentworth 8 years previously. She has an elegance of mind and a sweetness of character. But in her family, her word had no value, her convenience was always to give way, because "she was only Anne" to them. The most striking quality of Anne Elliot's character is her constancy in love. She is singularly free from the feeling of jealousy which is an almost universal fault of women. She is a simple minded, warm hearted, accomplished woman with delicacy of feeling and a sense of humor. Anne is completely free from the snobbery which afflicts her father and her sister Elizabeth. She is a complete, a fully human heroine. She is the heroine who judges rightly. She is a heroine

who judges rightly. Her submissiveness to lady rustle at the age of nineteen is perfectly understandable and should not be regarded as a weakness of character.

Frederick Wentworth - He is the hero of the novel. Whom we like an admirer. After a good deal of difficulty and delay, he succeeds in marrying Anne. Eight years ago, he had no fortune. Now he is rich and intense to marry any girl but Anne Eliot. Angry pride is what motivates him in attempting to find a wife prevented from proposing to Anne once more when his fortune improved. He is gravely liked by all those with whom he comes in contact. He is candid in his talk and suffers from no shines or reserve. His general popularity is due to his amiable nature, pleasant manners, considerateness and flair of conversation. Eight years after the termination of his engagement with Anne, he is full of resentment against her for the way she had yielded to the will of her family his love for her has never really diminished or declaimed. He appears to be distant, reserved and indifferent to Anne. As the novel proceeds, we saw the fading angry pride, growing forgiveness and acknowledgement of his love for Anne.

Sir Walter Elliot-He is a self-satisfied complacent sort of man with plenty of leisure, and with little sense of responsibility. His character may be summed up in three words-vanity, self conceit and snobbery. Austen tells us that vanity was the beginning and the end of Walter Elliot's character his ego is more important to him than anything. He is devoted to his eldest daughter, Elizebeth, but cares little for his youngest daughter Marry and even less for his second daughter Ann. Sir Walter is a spend thrift man. He first didn't approve Ann's proposal to marry Frederick Wentworth when Captain Wentworth has now a fortune of 25000 pounds goes in disfavor and Sir Walter now esteems him quiet worthy to marry his daughter

Elizabeth Elliot- the eldest and most beautiful daughter of Sir Walter encourages her father's imprudent spending and extravagance. She is as proud and snobbish as her father. Though her father is in debt, the only economy she can suggest is a reduction in some charities. Elizabeth gives us the impression of being a cold-hearted person. But she has no sisterly attachment either for Marry or for Anne. Although Elizabeth's conceit makes her ridiculous, in her relations with Mr. Elliot and Miss Clay, she is not figure of single comedy. Like Sir Walter she is handled by Jane Austen with straight forwardness moral severity.

Mrs. Marry Musgrove-The youngest daughter of Sir Watershed is married to Charles Musgrove. She is attention seeking, always looking for ways she might has been slighted or not given her full due and often claims illness when she is upset. She believes in the importance of social connection and a dissatisfied and complaining sort of person. She cannot bear to be alone. She is proving to be exaggerated in her indispositions. Marry is a garrulous, fussy person who thinks only of herself and has no consideration for the fallings of others. Marry has been ironically portrayed by the author. Austin has fully exposed her absurdities. Marry is therefore a comic character who provides plenty of humor in the story.

Jane Austen's art of characterization has not been excelled by any other writer. Her special charm as a novelist lies in the impracticality with which she individualizes and differentiates them. Her minute observation of men and women whom she knew imparted life likeness to her characters. She deftly reproduced those men and women whom she found gathering about her tea parties, her church gatherings and balls. She reproduced them for us with an unemotional fidelity, some time very cruel, but never unfair. All her

characters are living, breathing realities she shows them compounded with faults and virtues like real human beings. Her characters expose themselves. Her female characters are more skillfully drawn than her male characters. Her representation of masculine mind is confined to the picturing of men as they appear to women, and not as they appear to men. In her novels, we find ourselves in an intensely feminine atmosphere. Her chief theme is love in the life women. Her female characters are almost unexceptionable in perfection of finish.

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