

“PERSUASION” BY J. AUSTEN AS A SEMANTIC SEGMENT FULFILLING FUNCTION OF LIMITED CLASS PRIDE

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Abstract. In this article “Persuasion” by Jane Austen is analyzed semantically, especially the concept of pride and its meaning throughout the work. Different meanings and features of the concept of pride are learned in terms of characters and context in the work of Jane Austen.

Key words. Persuasion, pride, captain, character, feeling, features, thoughts, arrogance, behavior, wellbeing.

Introduction. The novel “Persuasion” is the last completed novel by J. Austen, written two months before the death of the author. At first glance, the structure of the novel is not different from the rest of the works of J. Austen: all the author’s attention is concentrated on the fate of the main character, Anne Elliot, who, in choosing a life partner, relies on public opinion. Miss Elliot is prejudiced against Captain Wentworth for social reasons. These events are briefly reflected in the novel's exposition, which chronicles the life of the Elliot family over the course of fourteen to eleven years.

Literary review. As the plot develops, we see how Anne realizes her delusion and struggles with it. It lies in the unwillingness to follow the dictates of the heart, which leads to the loss of a loved one. Anne's mistake is not that she listened to the arguments of reason, which said that Captain Wentworth, due to his poverty, could not be her happiness, but that these arguments were formed by society, and not by the heroine herself. Ann's delusion is of an ethical nature: life teaches her to develop and defend her life principles, for which she bears personal responsibility.

One of the brightest characters in the novel is Sir Walter Elliot, Anne's father, who belongs to the old family of barons Elliot. His image clearly represents the features of class pride, shown by Austen in a deliberately grotesque form. From the point of view of V.V. Ivashova, Sir Walter Elliot is “the most satirical of all the images created by Austen” in which she emphasizes “unreasonable narcissism” and “complete parasitism.” Selfish, idly vain, proud of his high position, evaluating his family from the position of material self-interest, he sees in his daughters, first of all, a profitable investment of capital.

Analysis. The apotheosis of Sir Elliot’s baronetcy is the “Book of Baronets,” which defines his attitude to the world: people listed in this book did not exist for him. This book presents a characterological implementation of the concept of “pride” in the meaning of conceit and arrogance. She is an integral attribute of her owner, characterizing his way of life. It is not coincidence that J. Austen begins the story with a description of the “relationship” between the baron and his “favorite”: “For her, he looked for activities in the hour of leisure and distractions in the hour of sadness; in it he looked at a few of the ancient surviving letters, rising in spirit with delight and reverence in it, when all other pages did not help, he could always read his own history with keen interest; at this point the usually favorite volume opened: “Elliot of Kellynch Hall”.

The book was a significant fuel for the “Hellenic vanity” that guided all the actions and behavior of the baron. Despite the threatened ruin, he could not rebuild the once established way of life, befitting a man of his origin, to more modest existence.

159 statement: “Kellynch was a good estate, but it did not quite correspond to Sir Walter’s concepts of a lifestyle befitting its owner. It was absolutely impossible for him to spend less; he

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allowed himself only what was strictly required for Sir Walter Elliot". This behavior is a consequence of the traditional respectful attitude of the British towards material well-being. The result of this upbringing is an awareness of one's own advantage, the need to surround oneself with luxury goods, vanity, arrogance, conscious selfishness - all those qualities that the baron wants and sees in his daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, and does not find in Anne.

The main semantic attribute of the concept "pride" is any advantage that distinguishes a person or phenomenon from a number of others. In this case, Sir Elliot's advantage, in his own opinion, is "the blessing of baronetcy" and "the blessing of beauty". Elliot's vanity, which implies sincere admiration for himself, is the main subject of the author's satirical ridicule. This character complements the gallery of Austen's comical characters, which W. Woolf described as "figures of fools in the rays of beauty". It is vanity that is subject to the author's merciless ironic attacks: "he was the constant object of his own sincere admiration and devotion,"/ "...was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion". Austen's irony is a significant component of the psychological picture and serves as an expression of the author's position, condemning mercantile and morally soulless relations in society. The ironic narration framing the dialogues of the characters creates a certain subtext that expresses the ethical position of the author. As L.V. Sidorchenko notes: "Austen's irony starts from the object creative comedy internal moral, psychological and social character". The character of Ann Elliott, in our opinion, clearly illustrates this idea. Public opinion creates in the heroine a fear of losing her dignity by intermarrying with a person of lower origin, giving rise to a certain kind of snobbery characteristic of the English aristocratic society of the early 19th century.

Anne's fortitude was broken by the opposition she encountered from her relatives and closest acquaintances: "He considered the union unequal and humiliating; and Lady Russell, although her pride was more moderate (...) was also saddened by Anne's choice."/ "I didn't think it was a very degrading alliance; and Lady Russell, though with more tempered and pardonable pride, received it as a most unfortunate one". We are presented with another attributive meaning included in the conceptual field of "pride" in the novel: class pride becomes a limiter on the freedom of any action. Those around her, arguing, explain to Ann why her choice is undesirable: "Anne Elliot, with her glorious name, beauty, intelligence, - and at the age of nineteen, destroy herself (...) connect her fate with a young rake, who there is nothing but his personal merits, not even any prospects for his fortune, the most wrong field, and not even any acquaintances". These arguments are "reasons" defending "Hellenic pride", based on the view that a person's dignity depends on his material well-being and the importance of his figure in society.

Ann, like her entire family, is a bearer of such a quality as pride, but this pride is of a different kind: "It seems to me (...) that I have more pride than all of you; but it annoys me that we are fighting so hard to be recognized as relatives by those who, without a doubt, do not need us at all". This phrase was said by Anne to her cousin, Mr. Elliot, the legal heir to the entire Elliott fortune, and reflects Anne's already established worldview, which understands pride as a sense of self-worth, which is abhorrent to humiliate itself and curry favor with the "right" people, equally least, as well as humiliating subordinates. This feeling is not based on the hierarchy of class relations. Anne divides people into those worthy of her society and those unworthy, but the criterion for division is not social status, but upbringing, education, intelligence, taste, tact, talent: "the art of small talk" / "superiority of manner"; "mental acuity" / "accomplishment"; "subtlety of address" / "understanding".

The problem of finding a good, worthy society concerned many of Austen's heroes (Mr. Darcy, Henry Tilney, Emma Woodhouse). Answering this question, they agreed that a good society depends not so much on the birth of its representatives, but on the presence in them of education, tact, a sense of humor, a critical attitude towards one's own person, everything that characterizes the English mentality as a whole. Austen's heroes note that, predominantly, all these personal qualities are found among the aristocracy. But this is not a consequence of arrogance, but rather evidence of a tactful

position that provides protection from ignorance and rudeness, since education was primarily an attribute of the noble class. Austen only focuses on how heterogeneous the aristocracy can be, depicting in a satirical vein characters in whom “false class pride” predominates (Sir Walter, Elizabeth Elliot, Mr. Elliot).

Mr. Elliot, in a conversation with Anne, insists on the opinion that he and his cousin have the same pride, while he does not even condescend to understand Anne’s pride: “...You say, you are proud; they call me proud (...) and in my pride and in yours, if you think about it, despite all the differences, there are many similarities (...) we agree that whoever completes your father’s circle of superiors and equals will already then one good thing is that his thoughts will be distracted from those who are lower than him”. The basis of his pride, as we see, is the class hierarchy and the exaltation of one person over another, on the basis of the right of birth, that is, pride close to arrogance and vanity. Taking into account Anne’s self-criticism, we see that she is burdened by class pride, which becomes an obstacle to the fulfillment of desires, and Mr. Elliot perceives the epithet “proud”, which was awarded to him by secular society, as a compliment.

In the image of Captain Frederick Wentworth, Anne’s chosen one, romantic traits are noticeable: occupation - sailor, lonely wanderer, faithful to his only love, endowed with traits of romantic pride. This pride stems from a sense of self-worth insulted by Ann’s refusal. Ultimately, this feeling becomes the main incentive to achieve your goal and satisfy your ambitions. The main thematic field that makes up the image of the captain is energy, action, positivity: “a high soul and mind” / “a great deal of intelligence spirit and brilliancy”, “full of fire and zeal I”, / "lucky". However, more significant for secular society was that: “Captain Wentworth had no fortune”. In the original, the writer writes about luck “Captain Wentworth had no fortune”. Austen explains what is meant by fortune in secular society: “had realized nothing”. This characteristic crossed out in the eyes of secular society all the undoubted merits of this hero.

Discussion. The author notes the feeling of offended dignity provoked by the refusal of the beloved girl to recognize the hero as worthy of her love. Such a circumstance can lead to resentment, blindness, the inability to adequately perceive events and cause reciprocal arrogance towards the offender. Realizing this, Captain Wentworth gives his pride the following characteristics: “the efforts of wounded pride” / “the attempts of angry pride”; “the madness of vain insults” I “the folly, the madness of resentment”; “blind pride” I “lamenting the blindness of his own pride”; “...I was too proud, and pride got in my way” / “I was proud, too proud”. Wounded pride becomes an obstacle to a second attempt to win Anne’s favor. Captain Wentworth is tested by pride, from which he is freed by love and a premonition of reciprocity.

Captain Wentworth was also proud of his ships, which were an integral part of his life and ensured his well-being. Just as Sir Elliot revered the Book of Baronets, Captain Wentworth was very reverent about the Fleet Gazette. This journal contained information about many of the ships that he led, which accompanied his luck and numerous victories. The fate of the decommissioned ships, the Serpent and the Laconia, made him realize how many difficulties he had to overcome in the West Indies, how many friends he had lost, before improving his financial situation and becoming worthy of Anne Elliot. The wealth and heroic glory of Captain Wentworth compensates in the eyes of a demanding secular society for the lack of baronetcy in him. The brilliant future that he earned at the cost of all kinds of hardships and unbending fortitude becomes even more valuable for the captain and Anne. Along with wealth and luck, Captain Wentworth comes to a fair awareness of his own importance: “His bright, proud eye spoke the happy conviction that he was sufficiently ennobled”.

In connection with the analysis of the aesthetic principles of J. Austen, the image of Captain Wentworth is interesting, in which the author clearly parodies the traits of a romantic character (in particular, the understanding of pride). This character clearly expresses the features of a romantic hero: tragic love (the beloved has died), passion for romantic poetry, in particular Byron and W. Scott

(“Marmion”, “Maiden of the Lake”), which, according to Austen, takes away from real life and contributes to the hero’s closure on his own misfortune. The author's irony is palpable in listing the constant components of the poetry of the romantics: “sorrowful songs” / “tenderest songs”; “the impassioned descriptions of hopeless agony”; “broken heart”; “a spirit that collapsed under the influence of passions” / “mind destroyed by...”. In the image of Captain Wentworth, Austen emphasizes his rejection of the romantic pathos of alienation, loneliness, awareness of his own dissimilarity, and opposition to the world around him. Captain Wentworth's life position is distinguished by his retreat into the world of his own reflections. He considers himself tragically alone in this world, despite the obvious presence of loyal and devoted friends (Captain Harville and Captain Wentworth).

Romantic individualism in Wentworth's character takes on an egoistic connotation. However, the inconsolable grief about forever lost love, visible in all his words and movements, was forgotten for the sake of the beautiful young extravagant Louise. The artificiality of the captain’s behavior is emphasized by Austen’s caustic ironic comments: “... by his very nature, Captain Wentworth is doomed to suffer inescapably” / “his disposition as of the sort which must suffer heavily”; “...Captain Wentworth’s face was sweet and sad, exactly as it was supposed to be” / “...Didn’t have a pleasing face and a melancholy air, just as he ought to have”. We understand the obviousness of the author's assumption that Captain Wentworth borrowed a model of behavior from “a fair collection of elegantly bound volumes” / “a tolerable collection of well-bound volumes”.

But the captain evokes pity and compassion in the heroine. Anne realizes that he sincerely believes in the saving power of romantic poetry, which in fact plunges his spirit into despair. Austen believes that reading romantic poetry in a state of emotional distress, in caused by some tragic situation in life, can lead to disappointment, loss of meaning in life, which contributes to mental disorder. Behind these words, the voice of the humanist author is certainly heard. Reluctance to come to terms with circumstances, mental struggle that leads far from the truth are evidence of pride.

The antipode of pride is patience, the ability to accept one’s fate with silent dignity and humility, to accept loss, disappointment, boredom, misfortune - everything that fate can test a person with and learn to fight with action, but not with callousness of heart, not with self-elimination from life society, since this speaks of spiritual weakness, but not strength. This is the moral lesson the author exposes his hero to. And it is no coincidence that, in contrast to romantic poetry, Anne advises Captain Wentworth to read: “the works of our moral teachers, those wonderful collections of letters, those memories of worthy people who suffered a lot, which alone, according to her calculation, could strengthen the spirit with nobility of thoughts and an example of mental patience”. As we can see, Austen remains faithful to the ideals of the Enlightenment throughout his entire work. She believes in wisdom, in the strength of the human spirit, which can awaken literary works in a person.

However, perseverance and strength of character, according to the author, are worthy of respect only when they are not the result of stubbornness, a fundamental desire to go against the will of others. An example of such a manifestation is the behavior of Louise on a walk in Lyme. Not giving in to the reasonable persuasion of Captain Wentworth, she jumps from the stairs and crashes on the rocks. It is at this moment that Captain Wentworth questions his uncompromising belief in the benefits of strong character: “If only I had stood up to her at the decisive moment! Why didn’t I act wisely!”. Wentworth recognizes the need for reason to help a person limit the limits of what is permissible in his behavior. Consequently, the arguments of reason contain the condition of the reasonableness and expediency of the decision made in accordance with the prevailing circumstances, and are a standard of assessment that excludes extremes of human behavior.

As we have already noted, in his last completed novel, Austen remains faithful to the ideals of the Enlightenment. It is no coincidence that the title of the novel uses a concept characteristic of the aesthetics of the Enlightenment. “Reason” in this novel correlates with the personal experience of the

characters, formed in opposition to public opinion. Captain Wentworth draws an allegory of the unbending will of a man with a hazelnut: "This nut while most of its fellows have fallen and trampled, still enjoys all the happiness that is intended for a particular hazelnut." According to the captain, only the will of a person can protect him from the destructive impact of public opinion on his life. In this figurative comparison, Austen explains that the biased, conventionally limited opinion of secular society limits the freedom of its representative. And one of the decisive criteria limiting this freedom is class pride, designed to protect aristocratic dignity.

Conclusion. In this novel, the alternative to pride is humility and patience, which distinguish Anne and Captain Wentworth. This patience does not give rise to individualism, but allows you to come to terms with losses and accept life's adversities with dignity. Austen clearly demonstrates this through the psychological parallelism of Anne's state of mind and the autumn landscape of Lyme. Autumn is a special period of a person's life, characterized by comprehension and summing up certain life results. The autumn landscape corresponds to the spiritual mood of Anne Elliot, saying goodbye to her youth, with hopes of regaining the favor of Captain Wentworth. Fading nature and summer houses abandoned for the winter provided a favorable environment for Ann's soul, tormented by jealousy, where she had the opportunity to calm down and rethink her life. It is at this moment that the heroine comes to the conclusion that thanks to the priority of a rational attitude to life, she still stands firmly on her feet. Her unbending life principles, developed by personal experience, console her in bitter moments of disappointment. These reflections by Anne Elliot once again confirm that rationality in the author's artistic picture of the world is an undeniable segment the concept of "pride".

The heroine humbles Hellenic pride. She is ready for the hardships that may befall the wife of a military sailor. Anne Elliot gives up her rightful position in society to appreciate the comfort of her husband's welcoming home. The class contradiction finds resolution in a successful marriage in which the spouses treat each other with love and respect. Austen shows how the wise logic of life puts everything in its place: Sir Elliot's extravagance forces him to leave the family estate of Kellynch Hall and move to a more modest home, and the family of Admiral Croft, who is related to the captain, settles in Kellynch Wentworth.

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