Kinsey Rubio

Dr. Eberle

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*Persuasion* in America: Anne Elliot’s Modern Day Diary Reflecting on Mexican-Americans and Trump

This modern-day diary resituates Anne Elliot from Austen’s *Persuasion* as an American in the United States, and the dates of these entries reflect the election of Donald Trump and the effects this election has on the Chicanx population. She writes not only of her own struggles, but the struggles of a nation as the removal of immigrants affects relations and marriage.

This fanfiction has ten diary entries from the first ten chapters of the novel. I use quotes and phrases from *Persuasion*,and each chaptered diary entry begins with phrases from t the novel. In writing this fanfiction, I close read the first ten chapters pulling quotes and plot points that corresponded to my shifting of the story. Although Austen’s *Persuasion* denies Anne agency in writing, I give her the power to keep a journal in this fanfiction. My reasoning for giving her journalistic abilities is because I wanted to reciprocate the agency that women currently have in the United States (obviously her agency is not boundless, but she has more abilities than many women of Austen’s period).

When reading *Persuasion* I could not help but wonder what political issues drive people within today’s society in America. My interest in focusing on refugees and immigrants from Mexico arises from my own Mexican roots and the current trauma the Mexican community is experiencing from this nationalistic sense of hate. I changed all of the sailor characters to Chicanx refugees. All of the dates refer to events happening in the Trump campaign and administration. The list of what the dates signify can be found at the end of the fanfiction. Since all of the sailors in Austen’s novel become the Chicanx population in America, I shift the names to have Spanish meaning similar to the original characters. For an example, Frederick Wentworth becomes Frederick Poblado, a last name that still has the meaning of “settlement” similar to Wentworth which means “enclosure.” These Chicanx characters are facing similar issues in America today as sailors in England during the Napoleonic Wars in that there is this ability to rise in economics yet a denial of status and power.

This fanfiction is about Anne Elliot looking for peace in the outskirts of Fort Worth, Texas. Her father and sister plan to move to Keller, Texas for financial reasons. The Elliots rent their home to a high-class, legal Chicanx family, the Arte’s (this adopts the name Croft to Arte- both mean “craft”), where Mrs. Arte’s brother Frederick Poblado, an “illegal” Chicanx man who was previously engaged to Anne Elliot returns. Now Anne and Frederick meet again with her increase in age and his increase in economics. The looming threat and persuasions of politics and the Trump administration influence interactions and Anne’s second chance at love as internalizations, agency, and power play an essential role in character advancement and happiness.

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**Chapter I: “Only Anne”**

June 16th, 2015

Dear Diary,

“Thirteen years have shown their blossoms,” and with them I have faded in beauty and spirit (6). I have decided to keep a journal to express myself and all of the misdoings I have experienced in the 13 years since my mother died. It seems as if I am blurring into the background. I cook, I clean, but I am unessential to larger society and the chaos that is going on. I am okay with it though. I find solace in the quiet and the uneventful. So where to begin? Well… My father, Walter Elliot seems to not give me the time day. He upholds the patriarchy and the essentiality of physical beauty more than anything else. Everyone looks at me (when they look at me) as if I am a wilted or decaying flower. I think it depresses or irks them to watch me fade, because they know that they are slowly fading as well. The only maternal figure I have is Miss Elliot, a woman who supports me, but limits me by seeing her actions as the only option for security. She had this perfect, economic marriage before and even after her husband died, so she assumes I can achieve the same satisfaction. Its modern day America though. Women are more than just art, right? Women can be happy without marriage, right? There is a rising feminist movement I hear about so often in conversations. My father says “this movement is full of a bunch of unattractive women. Why must they dress that way? They should be handsomer, right Elizabeth?” It seems that the other voices (presidential voices in particular) incessantly scream vulgar things at me and every other young(ish) girl looking for peace in solidarity. Elizabeth, my faultless sister, seems to flourish in this world. She is beautiful and my father’s prized possession. We are of a higher-class, but it seems that my gender restricts me from escaping oppression altogether. I have read a lot about ‘intersectionality” lately and believe that everyone has multiple sources of oppression. Yes, I am white and upper-class, but I am also female. There is no hierarchy; I still feel the strain of gender. I do not know too much about politics, but I feel like this upcoming election is important. Change depends upon it. There are many moving parts I do not understand, but I think writing will help me and give me solace like the poetry that subsists on my lips and in my head.

**Chapter II: “The Unusual Fate of Anne”**

July 23rd, 2015

Dear journal,

My father is completely broke. Mrs. Russell told me the other day that he had no money and needed to cut back. I offered her some advice as I think there are many probable ways to decrease the amount of money we are spending. It is truly frivolous, but Elizabeth and dad find identity in spending. Mrs. Russell shared my advice anonymously to my father, and he refused to live in his large home that has communal status any less than he has up to this point. I wanted to speak up, I felt an ache in the back of my throat as I held down the thoughts. I wish mom was still here. She knew how to control him in a way that kept us all safe from his obsessive tendencies. I heard that we are to move to Keller, Texas where houses and land are cheaper, but people hold their head high in obliviousness. “Keller is right smack dab in the middle of everything,” father says. But I dread going. I went to school there after my mother’s death and there is nothing there for me but sadness, whiteness, and a magnitude of “isms.” The political realm in Keller is more oppressive than here in the rural surroundings of Fort Worth, because people in Keller seem to perpetuate the views that limit so many. I know Mrs. Russell says it will be good for me, but all I feel is pain for both myself and the country that I am a part of.

**Chapter III: “Cool Air For Her Flushed Cheeks”**

August 6th, 2015

Dear later self,

 Mr. Sheppard, a man looking to help my father let the house, says that there is a Chicanx family looking to stay in our rural New York home. They are of a lower status, but rose to great power and wealth through the “American Dream” (at least that’s what they call it). “They are also legal,” he says as if that shifts their humanity. I overheard Mrs. Clay, Mr. Sheppard’s daughter saying something truly disturbing about the family. She said that Mr. Walter wouldn’t have to worry, because “the gardens and shrubberies would be kept in almost as high order as they are now” (14). She meant well in persuading him to let his house to a Chicanx family, but her stereotypes of that population persisted. My father said that even if Chicanos let the house they would not be allowed full access. This is where I spoke up: “The [Chicanx population], I think, who have done so much for [America], have at least an equalclaim with any other set of [humans], for all the comforts and all the privileges which any home can give. [Chicanos] work hard enough for their comforts, we must allow” (15). I felt that I had to say something for once, because I know that these individuals that come to the United States feel an unbearable weight in their quest for survival. Plus, I also could not help but stand up for him. I remember my father saying that it was offensive, because it is the “means of bringing persons of obscure birth into due distinction, and raising men to honors which their fathers and grandfathers never dreamt of” (15). His views and lack of reading keep him in the dark of the world around him. On a more important note, I found out that it was Mr. Arte (This fan-fiction adapts the Croft family to be Mexican-American, thus the name changes to reflect Spanish origin while still meaning “craft”). With this, I knew that he was going to come at some point, and I swiftly felt the blood rush to my cheeks.

**Chapter IV: “An Early Loss of Bloom” and “The Natural Sequel to an Unnatural Beginning”**

August 19th, 2015

Hello,

I loved Fredrick Poblado (Frederick Wentworth’s name shifts to Chicanx character with the last name Poblado meaning “settlement”) or at least I thought I did until I began to hear the voices. It seems we are constantly being persuaded as a nation to deny the oppression we perpetuate and absorb power for our own benefits. Maybe I turned him away, because I did not want to deal with a marriage of no economics or status. I do not know, but I did it. And now I look for comfort in the absence of him. Fredrick is a handsome Chicano who loved me and who, I know, felt slighted by what I did. Now, I am no longer that nineteen year old girl swayed by others. I instead hide from those persuasions and observe. At twenty seven I feel that if “any young person were, in similar circumstance...they would never receive any of such certain immediate wretchedness,” but I try to remain positive even in my decision to listen to Mrs. Russell and find comfort in reflecting on the small parts of the world that do not cause me pain (22). My current reflections also have the knowledge that Frederick has become very rich, and I assume he is probably married. I felt a pang when I found out that Mr. Arte’s sister is staying at our old house, but am gratified that only a few of my family members and acquaintances know about my brief relations with Frederick. What could have been haunts me.

**Chapter V: “Glad to be thought of as Some Use”**

September 3rd, 2015

Dear diary,

The day that Mrs. And Mr. Arte were to arrive, I fled to the natural world for comfort. To me, nature seems to be both an avoidance of politics and the answer to it. I dread “the possible heats of September in all the white glare of [Fort Worth]” (24). I was ready to leave, when my sister Mary, always a little unwell, persuaded me to stay in her nearby home with the Musgrove’s and her husband. It is a tad bit awkward, because her husband, Charles, first proposed to me, but I did not love him. “Talents and independence” alone do not equal love and desire for me. I am not so easily tempted. I went and found Mary burdened by the weight of the world. It seems as if her marriage only amplifies her inability to cope with existence. I am now, three miles away from my childhood home, in my own sort of “desolate tranquility,” and I am okay with that even if I feel a little disrupted by what is happening in the outside world (26).

**Chapter VI: “This was no New Sensation”**

September 26th, 2015

Hey,

The conversations that had such great importance with my father and Elizabeth are denied importance by Mary and her family. It seems that the Musgroves, now including my sister, largely concern themselves with petty issues and are blind to the society around them. They use these complaints to fill voids, and “being too much in the secret of complaints of each house” was the least agreeable part of my stay. (32). Mary is bringing up a new generation of children, and I continue to hope that they are not corrupted by their upbringing. I overheard that a Mr. Poblado is supposed to return, and just like that the small tranquility that I once had shifted to incessant anxiety. I cannot help but wonder if it is Frederick. They say he is a Chicano man that has been helping out other Chicanx individuals who are struggling coming to the United States. They say he has made lots of money off of this venture. That could be him, Fredrick. I felt my cheeks flush, and they flushed more once I realized I was blushing.

**Chapter VII: “A Thousand Feelings”**

October 3rd, 2015

Dear Anne,

Charles had a terrible fall, and it almost feels as if I have fallen with him. Fedrick is back in Texas after travelling and earning a lot of money as some big “traveler” who keeps majority of the profit he receives. Anyways, I saw him, and “the worst is over” (43)! I have no words to type or write or speak or think. My body feels paralyzed and my mind the same. He was as handsome as ever, and I cannot deny this even after hearing that he found my appearance ever “so altered that he should not have known [me] again” (44). Maybe I have lost my bloom; lost my hope. I was distraught in hearing this, but was able to find peace in the sobering truth. Maybe this is the end of us. Maybe I can be okay with this. Either way, I am uprooted by his return; unable to blossom and unable to grow.

**Chapter VIII: “Perpetual Estrangement”**

December 7th 2015

Dear Diary,

Some time has passed, and I see Frederick to often now. My peace seems to disintegrate with his appearance. Henrietta and Louisa began asking Frederick about his business in an ignorant way that reminded me of how I used to inquire after his Chicanx history. It seems that people are interested in his Mexican identity now that he is making money. They then started talking of politics as I blurred into the background. They spoke of Trump and how bad Mexico was right now. Frederick told the party one night when he was over that he would never bring his future wife back to Mexico, because it was so dangerous and unsafe. Mrs. Arte was offended as she lived in Mexico with Mr. Arte for fifteen years, and enjoyed being with her husband, because “while [they] were together… there was nothing to be feared” (51). All the while Frederick indirectly interacted with me in such a way that “his cold politeness, his ceremonious grace, were worse than anything” (52). I was just there among the politics, among the chaos, among the ignorance, among him.

**Chapter IX: “Perfectly Speechless”**

January 15, 2016

Hello,

Charles is getting much better from the fall on his head, and I am slowly healing from the fall that I felt with Frederick’s first appearance. Well, at least there is a numbing sensation. When caring for Charles Walter, he began to jump on me and embarrass me when I was left alone with Frederick and Charles Hayter. Oh yeah, did I mention that Charles Hayter, a lower-class, white male is back in town? Everyone is playing matchmaker. Anyways, I was so embarrassed and could not control little Charles. It was not until Frederick awkwardly removed him from me that I was left speechless. I can barely take his company anymore. It causes me great distress. “[I] was ashamed of [myself], quite ashamed of being so nervous, so overcome by such a trifle; but so it was; and it required a long application of solitude and reflection” (58). That is why I am in my room writing this note right now. I needed space to think. Why must he have such power and control around me while I remain full of guilt and paralysis? My mind has not completely healed from the fall yet, and I do not know when it shall. Hopefully soon...

**Chapter X: “Compounded of Pleasure and Pain”**

February 19th, 2017

Dear Journal,

I went on a walk with Frederick, Louisa, Henrietta, my sister, and Mr. Musgrove. I, honestly, went out of curiosity. I wanted to know who Frederick was interested in, and found out it was Louisa. My main reason for going was to enjoy nature and turn towards the natural world for answers. It was a way for me to reflect and I believed that “[my] pleasure in the walk must arise from the exercise and the day, from...the tawny leaves and withered hedges” (60). After growing fatigued (mainly fatigued from watching Lousia and Frederick interact), I ended up riding in the Arte’s car back to Mary’s house with the persuasion of Frederick. It is then that I overhead Mr. Arte talking of his marriage to Mrs. Arte as a means to stay in the country, something that Frederick might have to worry about soon. Mrs. Arte feared that I could hear them and did not want me thinking that they did not love each other, but I never questioned that. I thought of Frederick and how he could not forgive me, but could not help feeling worried for his safety and longing to stay in the United States.

**Dates List**

The dates listed in the diary entries refer to the following political events in the Trump campaign:

June 16th, 2015- Trump formally announces his candidacy.

July 27th, 2015- Trump visits the Mexican border and plans to meet with border guards, but his plans fail.

August 6th, 2015- First Republican Primary Debate

August 19th, 2015- In Trump’s first town hall meeting on August 19, 2015 he stated that "Day 1 of my presidency, [illegal immigrants] are getting out and getting out fast."

September 3rd, 2015- Trump signs a pledge promising his allegiance to the Republican Party.

September 26th, 2015- Trump campaign blamed by media for mass violence at rallies

October 4th- Trump continues campaigning and rallying across the United States.

December 7th, 2015- Trump calls for a total shutdown of Muslims entering the United States.

January 15th, 2016: Republican supporters largely ban against Trump.

February 19th, 2016- Trump continues massive campaign rallies (Las Vegas).

Works Cited

Austen, Jane. Persuasion. Edited by Patricia Meyer Spacks, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2013. Print.