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Elizabeth's Mental Growth in *Pride and Prejudice*

By

Akiko TERAMOTO*

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Summary : The heroines of the novels by Jane AUSTEN (1775-1817) can be divided into two types : one is the heroines who have a moral sense and are always conscious of how to behave properly in the society. The other is the heroines who are too confident in discerning people and often make an error in seeing what they really are. AUSTEN, not only a novelist but also a moralist, has a great talent for depicting the latter kind of heroines, especially in works such as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*. When the heroine knows that she has been deceived by a flippant and dissipated man (the false hero), she comes to know how defective her insight into human character is. Such self-awakening is caused by the true hero's appearance. The true heroes share the same function in the above works, that is, the hero undeceives the heroine of her errors. And yet the hero in each work has a characteristic of his own. In other words, the way of committing himself to the heroine gives a peculiar flavour different from the other works. Among the above mentioned, *Pride and Prejudice* seems to be the most attractive in every respect. One of the reasons is that the true hero also experiences his own mental growth, whereas the same kind of mental growth never happens in the other two works. In this paper I will elucidate the human characters of the heroine, the false hero and the true hero in *Pride and Prejudice*, comparing with those of the other two works.

Key words : true hero, false hero, round character, AUSTEN as a novelist (moralist)

I. Introduction

Jane AUSTEN is thought to be one of the most important English novelists. Though she dealt with the everyday life of her society and the various kinds of people whom she was familiar with, her novels show the universal truth about how human beings should live their lives. There are two kinds of heroines in her six novels. One kind of heroine is depicted as exemplary all through the novel. The other is the heroine who has a fallible and defective personality in the beginning but improves it later. In either case, AUSTEN tells how one should act in the society, and this is the reason why she is said to be a moralist. As Budi DARMA indicates, there is a conflict between the moralist and the novelist in AUSTEN¹⁾, and I think her nature as a moralist as well as a novelist blooms when she portrays a heroine who has room for improvement. When compared, such a heroine is more human and attractive than the one who is a paragon of morality. If the heroine is not fallible, the

plot shows only the contrast between her excellence and others' defectiveness. If the heroine herself changes and improves, the story becomes more interesting. For this reason I prefer the novel whose heroine has faults and gets released from them in the end.

The fallible heroines are depicted in *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*.²⁾ In *Northanger Abbey*, the heroine's mistakes come from her obsession with Gothic novels. Catherine imagines that Northanger Abbey is like the one she reads about in the Gothic romance, and through several ridiculous mistakes, she understands that nothing but her imagination has fabricated the mysteries of the abbey. Nevertheless, since AUSTEN devotes her attention to the parody of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, she does not show herself at her best in describing "human beings in their personal relations."³⁾ Unlike *Northanger Abbey*, in *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, AUSTEN's eyes are directed to human nature entirely, and the main plot is connected with the heroine's misjudgment

* Foreign language studies (English), Faculty of Applied Bio-Science, Tokyo University of Agriculture

regarding human beings. Thus AUSTEN's interest in human beings seems to be more active in the latter three than in *Northanger Abbey*.

AUSTEN is said to have a remarkable skill in character painting, and in fact the attraction of her novels lies in the description of characters. E.M. FORSTER commends her character description as "round," opposite to "flat." According to him, "round" characters mean those who are so organized that they seem to be able to act as if they had their own vitality.⁴⁾ FORSTER further insists that, even if AUSTEN labels her characters "Sense," "Pride," "Sensibility" and "Prejudice," they are not tied down by their labels.⁵⁾ The fallible heroines improve and reach self-awakening, putting away their former dishonourable labels.

There are similar patterns in *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. All these stories show the process through which the heroine gets released from her previous misjudgment. Starting from the world of imagination, she gradually approaches that of reality. In each novel, the fallible heroine is deceived by a flippant and dissipated man, and the hero undeceives and marries her. I will call the dissolute man "the false hero," after the example of Darrel MANSSELL.⁶⁾ For the heroine imagines him to be the hero and admires him until he proves to be a villain. In contrast with the false hero, I will call a real hero "the true hero."

AUSTEN aims at the heroine's mental growth, with which both the false hero and the true hero are concerned. The former deceives her, taking advantage of her wrong self-confidence, and the latter undeceives her, drawing out her merits behind her faultiness.

In this way these three novels have similar plots, but it can be said that *Pride and Prejudice* is the most popular of Jane AUSTEN's novels, and it is probably one of the most popular classic novels in the English language. One of the reasons for this is Elizabeth's attractive character. As Francis Warre CORNISH says, "Jane AUSTEN liked Elizabeth the best of all her heroines."⁷⁾ AUSTEN herself says in her letter to Cassandra, her sister, "I must confess that I think her [Elizabeth] as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print."⁸⁾ I think the biggest reason for its popularity is the relationship between the heroine and the true hero, which is a little different from that in the other two novels.

In this thesis I will study the heroine, the false hero, the true hero and their mutual relationships in *Pride and Prejudice*. My approach to *Pride and Prejudice* depends upon the inductive method of analysis, taking account of the fact that the logical plot and the emotional plot of the story are connected with the inductive way. In such a method, the work itself consists

mainly of typical English people and their own everyday incidents in the latter half of the 18th century, even though they belong to the upper-middle class.

First I will make a study of Elizabeth's natural defects and good quality, which promote her misjudgment and self-discovery respectively. In the next chapter is studied her association with the false hero, Wickham, that is, how she gets deceived by him, promoted by her own imagination. Then I will examine Elizabeth's undeception, in which the true hero, Darcy, plays a big role.

II. Heroine : Elizabeth Bennet

Like Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*, Elizabeth has pride, especially pride in discerning human nature, which she is often likely to misjudge. However, the defectiveness of her pride is not clearly shown in the work because this story is told through Elizabeth's point of view. Concerning this, Budi DARMA says that Elizabeth is not "a means of expressing her [AUSTEN's] moral values" like Marianne, but "a complex person who has many weaknesses."⁹⁾

Elizabeth not only has pride but also shows it openly. The reason why she repulses Darcy at first sight is also connected with the issue of pride. She cannot endure his pride and says, "I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine" (*PP*, p. 20). According to Charlotte, a friend of Elizabeth's, his pride is excusable because it is based upon his large fortune and high rank. Elizabeth, however, does not admit such reasons. She ignores his material abundance and confronts him on an equal footing as a human being. For she is an advocate of "individualism against the old social order."¹⁰⁾ She values inner ability highly, and she believes that she has such ability, namely, discernment.

Elizabeth's discernment is featured by quick observation. The word "quickness" appears in her father's praise of her: "They [his daughters except Elizabeth] have none of them much to recommend them...but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters" (*PP*, p. 5). Elizabeth actually penetrates the human nature of Mr. Bingley's sisters "with more quickness of observation...than her sister [Jane]" (*PP*, p. 15). Mr. Bingley's sisters behave gracefully and show consideration for Jane ostensibly, but they sometimes expose their superciliousness and indifference. When Jane is sick with a heavy cold upstairs, their condolence downstairs is not quite sympathetic:

The sisters, on hearing this [that Jane was by no means better], repeated three or four times how much they were grieved, how shocking it was to have cold, and how excessively they disliked being

ill themselves ; and then thought no more of the matter.... (PP, p. 35)

Such superficial politeness deceives Jane easily and it does not make a good impression on Elizabeth.

It is, however, important to know that quickness of observation cannot always be praised, as is apparent in her estimation of Darcy. When she meets Darcy for the first time, she is unfavourably impressed by him. As Darcy shows his pride openly, “[h]is character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world....” (PP, p. 11), which leads to a misunderstanding of him. This narration reflects Elizabeth's own feelings about him, considering that this story is mostly told through her eyes. The same kind of Elizabeth's determination appears in the scene of assembly at Longbourn : “Mr. Darcy with grave propriety requested to be allowed the honour of her [Elizabeth's] hand ; but in vain. Elizabeth was determined...” (PP, p. 26).

Such a quick judgment as above mostly works towards negative tendency, that is, she has “the enjoyment of all her original dislike” (PP, p. 35). As she herself confessed later, she has an interesting philosophy of dislike :

“...I meant to be uncommonly clever in taking so decided a dislike to him [Darcy], without any reason. It is such a spur to one's genius, such an opening for wit to have a dislike of that kind. One may be continually abusive without saying any thing just ; but one cannot be always laughing at a man without now and then stumbling on something witty.” (PP, pp. 225-26)

Elizabeth not only judges confidently in her estimation of people but also continues to hold it, because she is so proud of her discernment. Such a pride is based on her self-consciousness—self-confidence—that she always observes people minutely and correctly. She is much interested in human beings, and Mr. Bingley calls her “a studier of character” (PP, p. 42). She surely directs her curious eyes to people anytime, and such an attitude has something in common with that of AUSTEN herself. Elizabeth's words that “people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them for ever [even in a country neighbourhood]” (PP, p. 43) seem to refer to AUSTEN, the author, who treats the variety of characters in a very restricted society, saying, “3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on....”¹¹⁾ Concerning AUSTEN, it is said that “[t]he life in which she moves is real, not ideal, lived among moderate hills and valleys ; for summits and abysses we must go to greater writers.”¹²⁾

I agree with Marvin MUDRICK, who thinks that Eliza-

beth divides people into two categories in her way of estimation ; the simple and the intricate, just as Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility* discriminates between the sensible and the sensitive.¹³⁾ Elizabeth is not attracted by a simple person such as Mr. Bingley, and her statement that “I understand you perfectly” (PP, p. 42) is the first and the last evaluation of him. The simple person represents a fixed concept and takes only one kind of role in the development of the plot. Such people never betray readers' expectation. Mr. Collins always expresses a mixture of conceit and humbleness ; Lady Catherine de Bourgh never shows her kindness without disdain ; Mr. Bingley is amiability itself. Thus they do not have anything mysterious or complicated, and for this reason Elizabeth is not attracted by them. She is rather interested in intricate characters, namely, those whose true personality she cannot understand easily. She says, “...intricate characters are the most amusing. They have at least that advantage” (PP, p. 42), and the story goes with the mistakes which she makes in judging such people with her quick observation.

As is clear in the fact that Elizabeth's father, Mr. Bennet, values her “quickness,” his favourite in his family is Elizabeth. They are similar to each other, and they always form an alliance. For example, when Mr. Collins comes for the first time to visit the Bennets and they listen to his absurd speaking, Mr. Bennet gives a glance at Elizabeth, looking for a “partner in his pleasure [in deriding him]” (PP, p. 68).

Mr. Bennet's character is described as “so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice” (PP, p. 5). Here the word “quick” is conspicuous, because it is related to Elizabeth's way of observing human beings. He also judges people rashly, paying attention to their defects chiefly, proud of his discernment secretly. He always sneers at surrounding people except Elizabeth. In his opinion, all of his daughters but Elizabeth are silly and ignorant. As for Charlotte, when she marries Mr. Collins, it gratifies him “to discover that Charlotte Lucas, whom he had been used to think tolerably sensible, was as foolish as his wife, and more foolish than his daughter” (PP, p. 127). Though he judges such people to be foolish in his mind, he never helps or advises them, but only enjoys their folly.

Mr. Bennet's sarcasm is directed especially to his wife, “a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper” (PP, p. 5), who once captivated him by her “youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour, which youth and beauty generally give” (PP, p. 236). In AUSTEN's opinion, there are some men who are blinded by silly women's beauty and external charm, and marry them. AUSTEN also depicts some girls

who are attracted by men's youthful agreeableness and handsomeness, and one of them is Elizabeth. Thus she resembles her father in this respect, too. For she is almost deceived by Wickham's seeming fascination.

As for Elizabeth's attitude towards her father, she perceives the defects in his character, and here her discernment is reliable. She, however, tries in her mind to cover his defective part with his other merits. She declares that, despite of some peculiarities, he has abilities and respectability as well. Since Elizabeth has much in common with him, her justification of him seems to equal her self-defence.

Though Elizabeth makes many mistakes in her estimation of others due to her rash judgment and belief in its rightness, she also has praiseworthy qualities which lead her to reformation. There are three merits which are striking in her character.

Firstly, she alone has a sense of responsibility as one of the Bennets, that is, only she endeavours not to expose her family's disgrace. Though Mr. Bennet also knows his family's absurdity, he merely enjoys it without remonstrance or advice, and it is the greatest difference between him and Elizabeth. It is not commendable that such solicitude is derived from her sense of superiority to the rest of her family, and yet her intention is good. Mrs. Bennet worries Elizabeth most. For example, Mrs. Bennet is so vulgar and so thoughtless that her dislike of Darcy is too direct, unlike Elizabeth's veiled detestation, and she is always opposed to his opinion openly, only to show her own silliness. Therefore Elizabeth tries to make up for her mother's rudeness towards Darcy. Besides, Mrs. Bennet treats Charlotte uncourteously. When Elizabeth knows Charlotte's engagement with Mr. Collins, she tries to cover her mother's ill-mannered exclamation of astonishment in her congratulations. Also when Charlotte leaves Hertfordshire to wed Mr. Collins, Elizabeth addresses her tenderly, being "ashamed of her mother's ungracious and reluctant good wishes" (*PP*, pp. 145-46).

There are many occasions in which Elizabeth feels ashamed of her family's improper speech and action, and her relatives' various shameful behaviours intensively appear at the opportunity of the Netherfield ball. To begin with, Mr. Collins, seeing Darcy, his benefactress' nephew, suddenly decides to introduce himself to him. In spite of Darcy's contempt for him, Mr. Collins continues to speak to him with humility and a triumphant air as usual. Next, Mrs. Bennet is puffed up with the prospective marriage between Jane and Mr. Bingley, and she shows a defiant attitude towards Darcy. After that, Mary perplexes Elizabeth with her poor musical performance which she begins with very little entreaty

and will not end. At last Mary gets prevented by her father's too ironical commendation from continuing any more, and then Mr. Collins begins his usual fruitless public speaking, and concludes it with his flattery to Darcy. Consequently Elizabeth thinks that "had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as much as they could during the evening, it would have been impossible for them to play their parts with more spirit, or finer success..." (*PP*, pp. 101-102).

It is important that she not only feels ashamed of such incidents, but also tries to hide her relatives' folly in this scene. As to Mr. Collins, she "tried hard to dissuade him from such a scheme" (*PP*, p. 97). She also remonstrates with her mother about her conduct. Then it is Elizabeth that asks Mr. Bennet secretly to interrupt Mary's performance, though she later feels sorry for her father's severe irony, which does not show his responsibility but his ridicule upon others' fatuity. Thus Elizabeth's remonstrance is limited to her relatives, but it is certain that she has a will to correct mistakes, and her father's irresponsibility shows off her responsibility, all the more because of the similarity of their pride in discernment.

Secondly, Elizabeth can control herself before others. It is connected with her courtesy and her social position which is not so high. She enjoys her application of her sense of values only on the psychological level, not on the practical. This is, as Yasmine GOONERATNE says, "polite disguise,"¹⁴ namely, "a means of venting irritation or administering a rebuke without transgressing the rules of decorum and convention."¹⁵ Such a character makes Elizabeth more real and more intricate than Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*, who feels triumphant in violating decorum. Though Elizabeth does not like the Netherfield party except Mr. Bingley, during her stay to nurse Jane there, when it appears to her "rather right than pleasant" (*PP*, p. 37) that she should join the rest of the party downstairs, she does so. At Rosings even to Lady Catherine's presuming questions, she answers composedly and politely, though superficially. When she is astonished at Charlotte's engagement, Elizabeth, after receiving Charlotte's blameful words for the astonishment, "had now recollected herself and making a strong effort for it, was able to assure her with tolerable firmness that the prospect of their relationship was highly grateful to her, and that she wished her all imaginable happiness" (*PP*, p. 125). As is clear from these examples, she can control her feelings to some degree and such an ability seems to prompt her self-reflection later.

Lastly, Elizabeth's liveliness contributes to her un-deception. As symbolized in her musical performance,

she is characterized as “pleasing, though by no means capital” (*PP*, p. 25). As one instance of her liveliness, she does not stick to disappointing incidents, which is apparent at the Netherfield ball. To her great disappointment, Wickham does not come there, but “Elizabeth was not formed for ill-humour ; and though every prospect of her own was destroyed for the evening, it could not dwell long on her spirits...” (*PP*, p. 90). Even when the plan of trip to the Lakes is changed, she conquers her disappointment. She has an ability to find something comfortable even in disappointing circumstances. For instance, though it is regrettable for her that she cannot take a trip with Jane, she thinks over as follows :

“But it is fortunate...that I have something to wish for. Were the whole arrangement complete, my disappointment would be certain.... A scheme of which every part promises delight, can never be successful ; and general disappointment is only warded off by the defence of some little peculiar vexation.” (*PP*, pp. 237–38)

These characteristics of Elizabeth's liveliness serve to brighten the whole story, and they seem to play a role so that she will guide the story to a happy ending, by obtaining good results from her failures without adhering too much to the fact that she made errors.

III. False Hero : George Wickham

The false hero in *Pride and Prejudice* is Wickham, whose role in the story is similar to Willoughby's in *Sense and Sensibility*, and Churchill's in *Emma*. Like Willoughby, Wickham appears before the heroine without any warning. When the Bennet sisters walk to Meryton, they find an unfamiliar young man “of most gentlemanlike appearance” (*PP*, p. 72). It is Wickham, who came one day before he joins the same corps as Mr. Denny, Lydia's favourite. On the first introduction everyone is attracted by his agreeable appearance :

His appearance was greatly in his favour ; he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure, and very pleasing address. The introduction [made by Mr. Denny] was followed up on his side by a happy readiness of conversation—a readiness at the same time perfectly correct and unassuming.... (*PP*, p. 72)

Such admiration is also found in the case of Willoughby and Churchill, and while his appearance is praised persistently, his character turns out to be wicked.

Elizabeth herself is attracted by Wickham, and the commendation of him in the narration as well as in Elizabeth's sentiment escalates more and more. This shows that mostly Wickham is depicted through her stand-point. Wickham is the best among the officers of

so-and-so-shire who are gentlemanlike mostly, and superior to them in “person, countenance, air, and walk” (*PP*, p. 76). No emphasis is placed on anything but his seeming appearance, as if AUSTEN wanted to avoid revealing his internal truth which is different from his superficial agreeableness.

Wickham likes society, which is essential for the false heroes. For they must dissimulate their true selves, and society is indispensable for that purpose. He likes to attract everybody, trying to win general popularity. It is declared that he is “universally liked” (*PP*, p. 90) among ladies as well as officers. He is always ready to talk so friendly, behave so favourably that he becomes very popular in Meryton.

However, Darcy and his company in Meryton exist as an eyesore to him. Wickham is embarrassed to know that Darcy stays in Netherfield, not far from Meryton. For Wickham once tried to get the inheritance of Darcy's father unreasonably, and, afterwards, to deceive Darcy's sister. For this reason it is natural that Wickham firstly inquires of Elizabeth whether Darcy is estranged or not. As soon as he knows that Darcy is in general disliked there, he begins to make up fictional rumours, to plunge Darcy into difficulties. Wickham is so cunning that he plans to do wrong to Darcy only when his own fame is assured. On the other hand, Darcy will not reveal Wickham's wrong deeds at first. Darcy knows well that the exposure of Wickham's human nature is equal to the disclosure of Darcy's sister's defects, her attempted elopement with Wickham. Darcy tries to hide his sister's rashness. In addition, he does not like to reveal someone's wrong publicly.

Elizabeth's preoccupation against Darcy as well as Wickham helps Wickham's fictional rumour arouse prejudice in her, and augment her dislike towards Darcy. Like the case of Brandon and Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility*, the detestation towards one promotes the favour towards the other, and vice versa. Besides, Elizabeth loves Wickham because he supports her preconception that Darcy is detestable. She regards Wickham's judgment as proper and becomes more confident in her discernment.

Wickham explains that he is forced to belong to the military because Darcy robbed him of a living which was bequeathed to him by Darcy's father, Wickham's godfather. Wickham feigns several episodes, and declares that Darcy's bad treatment of himself must be from his jealousy concerning his father's love. Thus Wickham tries to hurt Darcy's reputation, while he admits that Darcy is not despised by all the people :

“...with *him* [Darcy] I believe it [that one is not estimated beyond one's deserts] does not often

happen. The world is blinded by his fortune and consequence, or frightened by his high and imposing manners, and sees him only as he chuses to be seen." (*PP*, p. 78)

And then, Wickham, in spite of himself, gives recognition to Darcy's respectability. Wickham says that Darcy shows hospitality to his tenants, and assists the poor, giving money generously, though Wickham does not forget to add it is from Darcy's "family pride" and "filial pride" so that he should not disgrace his family. Wickham also says Darcy cherishes and takes care of his sister from "brotherly pride." Though Wickham exemplifies Darcy's good deeds, it is clear that Wickham does not intend to praise Darcy here, for Wickham connects all of Darcy's deeds with pride, saying that it is his "best friend" (*PP*, p. 81). Telling Elizabeth that Darcy's virtue comes from nothing but his pride, Wickham pretends to penetrate the seemingness of Darcy's goodness, and Elizabeth agrees with such a judgment.

Elizabeth's reaction towards Wickham's story is completely on his side. Her detestation towards Darcy escalates. She dares to say that Darcy "deserves to be publicly disgraced" (*PP*, p. 80), and she seems to believe what Wickham says; "I [Elizabeth] had not thought Mr. Darcy so bad as this. ... [I] did not suspect him of descending to such malicious revenge, such injustice, such inhumanity as this!" (*PP*, p. 80). Then she concludes as "[h]is [Darcy's] disposition must be dreadful" (*PP*, p. 80). In this way she is similar to Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*, in drawing a conclusion from limited and poor information. Elizabeth admires Wickham when he says that he will not defy Darcy because he cannot forget Darcy's father's kindness, being unaware of the fact that he indeed speaks ill of him to such a new acquaintance as herself: "Elizabeth honoured him for such feelings, and thought him handsomer than ever as he expressed them" (*PP*, p. 80).

This is how Elizabeth begins to love Wickham. On her way home from the party at the Philips where she listens to his story, her mind is full of him. Wickham catches Elizabeth's heart by his deceitful amiableness. In her mind, "[w]hatever he said, was said well; and whatever he did, done gracefully!" (*PP*, p. 84). Since these words make it clear that Elizabeth loves Wickham, I do not agree with W.A. CRAIK, who says that "Elizabeth sensibly refuses to be involved with Wickham," as Darcy escapes from Miss Bingley's schemes wisely.¹⁶⁾ Consequently I approve of Darrel MANSELL's opinion that Elizabeth is fascinated by Wickham's agreeableness.¹⁷⁾

Elizabeth believes in every word of Wickham's story. The fact that Darcy associates with such a respectable

man as Mr. Bingley does not serve to defend his personality. When Jane insists that it is impossible for Darcy to treat Wickham so cruelly, and for Darcy's friends not to penetrate such a character as his, Elizabeth retorts as follows:

"I can much more easily believe Mr. Bingley's being imposed on, than that Mr. Wickham should invent such a history of himself as he gave me last night; names, facts, every thing mentioned without ceremony. ... Besides, there was truth in his looks." (*PP*, pp. 85-86)

Here Elizabeth's approval of Wickham is based on his appearance. There is no evidence but amiableness about him. She sees things as she likes. Therefore I think that Norman SHERRY is wrong in his insistence that Elizabeth appeals to "common sense and reason" in her retorts.¹⁸⁾ Here Elizabeth disregards the reason of Jane's statement and depends on her personal impressions.

Meanwhile the Netherfield ball is planned, which pleases all the daughters of the Bennets for their own reasons respectively. Elizabeth looks forward to dancing with Wickham a great deal, and winning his whole heart in the course of the evening. At the party, however, she finds that he is not there. Mr. Denny informs that Wickham has gone to town on business, and "with a significant smile" (*PP*, p. 89) adds that he must have done so because he does not like to meet Darcy. Wickham's deed is not consistent with his words, "It is not for me to be driven away by Mr. Darcy. If he wishes to avoid seeing *me*, he must go" (*PP*, p. 78). Elizabeth does not notice the inconsistency between Wickham's words and action, together with Mr. Denny's derisive smile at Wickham's cowardice. She gets angry with Darcy's presence itself. She decides never to become intimate with Darcy, for "[a]ttention, forbearance, patience with Darcy, was injury to Wickham" (*PP*, p. 89). These two men form a striking contrast to each other in her mind, and now she "is determined to hate" (*PP*, p. 90) Darcy. Later Darcy applies for Elizabeth's hand at a dance, which she somehow accepts, and then she injures him by taking sides with Wickham.

There are three kinds of comments on Wickham, at the ball. The first is Darcy's comment that Wickham is so amiable that he is good at making friends, but that it is not certain whether he can retain them. This turns out to be true later, but Elizabeth is now attracted only by his ability of making friends. The second is Miss Bingley's comment which testifies to Darcy's kindness towards Wickham, who returns evil for it. It also includes some facts, and yet Elizabeth thinks that it shows only Miss Bingley's "wilful ignorance and the

malice of Mr. Darcy" (*PP*, p. 95). Mr. Bingley's assurance of Darcy's goodness towards Wickham is the third. These three comments all reveal Wickham's injustice, but Elizabeth cannot, or will not, admit the truth of the matter in them. She is so confident in her discernment that she does not dare to face reality, for fear of shaking her self-confidence. Though she acknowledges herself to be "a studier of character" (*PP*, p. 42), she is too sensitive about trifling information and likely to be possessed by a preconceived notion without any inspection. She teases Darcy just because he never talks to any incompatible person, but, ironically enough, Elizabeth herself has about the same obstinate nature as Darcy.

At the next opportunity to see Wickham, Elizabeth feels a deeper affection for him, hearing his excuse for not having come to the ball. He shows his usual consideration for others, making an apology that he was afraid that his attendance together with Darcy might create an unpleasant atmosphere to the rest of the party. Naturally Elizabeth admires his tender consideration for others. Besides, the more attention Wickham pays to her, the more affection she feels for him.

Wickham easily manipulates her mentality, as if he were a puppeteer. Elizabeth must have forgotten Jane's advice that "[i]t is very often nothing but our own vanity that deceives us" (*PP*, p. 136). Unfortunately she feels happy while Wickham makes much of her, and her vanity surely helps his design of getting her good will. In fact, he wants to keep her on his side only in order to establish his good reputation against Darcy. Every reader knows well from Wickham's view of marriage that he doesn't feel much interest in a marriage without any benefit.

The intimacy between Wickham and Elizabeth is so plain that Mrs. Gardiner, Mrs. Bennet's sister-in-law, perceives it and admits its rashness, for neither he nor Elizabeth has fortune. Mrs. Gardiner warns Elizabeth against falling in love with him, and Elizabeth, saying that she will do her best to follow the advice, does not promise not to fall in love with him. Elizabeth even asks her whether it is wise to reject a proposal of marriage which is based upon affection. She surely values love more than property, because Wickham can offer only love.

He himself, however, detests poverty and tries to attract a woman who has ten thousand pounds. Knowing this, Elizabeth, far from blaming him, takes it for granted: "...Elizabeth, less clear-sighted perhaps in his case than in Charlotte's, did not quarrel with him for his wish of independence. Nothing, on the contrary, could be more natural..." (*PP*, pp. 149-150). Concerning

Charlotte, Elizabeth thinks that she "sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage" (*PP*, p. 125) in marrying Mr. Collins. On the other hand, as for Wickham's intention to marry a woman of fortune, Elizabeth regards it to be even prudent, not mercenary. This shows that her reactions are apparently based on her prejudice, for she classifies those who act similarly into two categories; Wickham into the admirable or the tolerable, and Charlotte into the contemptible.

Even after breaking with Wickham, Elizabeth regards him in her mind as "her model of the amiable and pleasing" (*PP*, p. 152). When Colonel Fitzwilliam, Darcy's cousin, reminds her of "her former favourite George Wickham" (*PP*, p. 180), she concludes that Wickham is more fascinating than Colonel Fitzwilliam. Thus she is easily deceived by Wickham who combines complexity with a pleasing manner, as MUDRICK points out.¹⁹⁾

IV. True Hero : Fitzwilliam Darcy

Darcy's character is more impressive, as compared with that of Brandon in *Sense and Sensibility*. Brandon discloses an episode concerning Willoughby's true character to realize Marianne's self-awakening, and in this respect he resembles Darcy, but he is different from Darcy, who affects the heroine directly by his speech and action.

When Darcy appears before readers for the first time, he is admired for "his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien" (*PP*, p. 10). And yet such admiration lasts only a short while, till he is "discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased" (*PP*, p. 10). Since Darcy shows his pride disgustingly, even his large estate cannot be his merit to keep his popularity.

Darcy makes a strong contrast with his friend, Mr. Bingley. Mr. Bingley likes balls, and at his first ball at Hertfordshire, he speaks to anybody agreeably and enjoys dancing with Jane very much, and also makes friends with anybody. On the other hand, Darcy will speak to or dance with nobody but his few acquaintances. When Mr. Bingley tries to encourage Darcy to dance with Elizabeth, Darcy says, "she is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men" (*PP*, p. 12). He speaks insultingly of Elizabeth within her hearing. At the ball Darcy is detested by all of his new acquaintances except Jane and Charlotte; Jane cannot hate anybody from her weak character, and Charlotte admits his pride because of his blessed circumstances.

In spite of such bad impressions there are some hints that suggest unknown merits in him, showing that he

has an intricate character. The author describes as follows: "On the strength of Darcy's regard Bingley had the firmest reliance, and of his judgment the highest opinion. In understanding, Darcy was the superior. Bingley was by no means deficient, but Darcy was clever" (*PP*, p. 16). Moreover Darcy himself declares that the rumours about him often vary greatly. This statement suggests that some people like him.

In connection with his merits, here it seems necessary to examine his defects again, for his pride cannot be only referred to as his flaw. Charlotte admits his pride as the result of his ancestral privileges, and even Wickham recognizes some indications of Darcy's pride which often leads him to good deeds. Darcy himself, after he admits that "vanity" is a weakness which invites Elizabeth's ridicules, retorts that pride can be "under good regulation" by "a real superiority of mind" (*PP*, p. 57) based upon the spirit of "noblesse oblige." From such various opinions concerning pride, Darcy's pride seems excusable. The reason why some people of Hertfordshire hate him must be some other quality in connection with his "pride."

Many people outside Hertfordshire esteem Darcy highly, and they deny his pride itself. In his housekeeper's eyes, he isn't so proud, and she thinks that some people regard him so "only because he does not rattle away like other young men" (*PP*, p. 249). According to Mrs. Gardiner, he may be called proud by "the inhabitants of a small market-town, where [his] family did not visit" (*PP*, p. 265).

Then what makes Darcy unpopular? I think that there are three causes. One derives from his shyness which appears to be pride and incurs others' displeasure. At the first ball at Hertfordshire, he talks only with the members of his own party. He detests dancing, unless he is particularly acquainted with his partner. We can imagine, from his popularity among his servants and tenants, that his very shyness hides his true value outside his estate. When Darcy says that he lacks "the talent which some people possess...of conversing easily with those [whom he has] never seen before" (*PP*, p. 175), Elizabeth remonstrates with him, mentioning her own poor musical performance. According to her, it is not the lack of talent but the negligence of practising that causes Darcy's lack of sociability and Elizabeth's unskilful performance. It seems that Darcy's "negligence of practising" is related to his shyness.

Darcy's obstinacy with regard to his judgment of people is his defect, too. Once he feels resentful towards others' follies, vices, offences against himself, he never forgives them, and his "good opinion once lost is

lost for ever" (*PP*, p. 58). Though he is certainly cautious in estimating people, and the result of it is hardly incorrect, as in his estimation of Wickham, his sticking to his judgment seems to need flexibility. For his declaration of his obstinacy in his estimate sounds like his self-confidence that he is always right. In this respect he is similar to Elizabeth, who is confident in her discernment, though his discernment is superior to hers.

And also his frankness often works to his disadvantage. He says straightforwardly what he thinks. Though his speech is not flippant but sincere, he is too candid for others to communicate with him in a friendly way. Even when he can't but tell the truth of the matter, he is likely to make a very bad impression on the party. Such candidness is seen in both his speech and action. Darcy professes his dislike for hypocrisy; "...there is meanness in *all* the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation. Whatever bears affinity to cunning is despicable" (*PP*, p. 40). This remark is extended to put the blame upon Miss Bingley, who pretends to share the same taste as Darcy's, in order to approach him.

I will return to the scene of the ball where Darcy ignores most of the guests and neglects Elizabeth herself. Though the first encounter with Elizabeth is not so happy, Darcy feels love for her earlier than she does for him. At the ball he does not admire her for her beauty, and yet it is not long before he comes to recognize "the beautiful expression of her dark eyes" which makes her face "uncommonly intelligent" (*PP*, p. 23), that is, the real dignity of a woman equipped with both beauty and intelligence. His estimation of her has changed rapidly, and she has become "an object of some interest in the eyes of [Darcy]" (*PP*, p. 23) without her knowing. Admitting Elizabeth's many faults, feeling pain in his unexpected love for such a girl as her, he cannot but recognize her good points increasingly. He is "forced to acknowledge" her "light and pleasing" figure, and the "easy playfulness" of her manner" (*PP*, p. 23).

Elizabeth shows her dislike for him and behaves rudely towards him as ever, whereas he is attracted by her more and more. Even if she intends to insult him, it seems to him that "there was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody" (*PP*, p. 52). Darcy has never been so fascinated by a woman.

While telling Miss Bingley about his "very great pleasure which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow" (*PP*, p. 27), he is candid enough to mention the name of the "pretty woman" openly. Af-

terwards, when Elizabeth visits Jane, who is sick with a heavy cold at Netherfield, Darcy as well as good-natured Mr. Bingley stands by Elizabeth, while Mr. Bingley's sisters speak ill of her. Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst despise Elizabeth for her reckless behaviour. For she walks alone in the dirty weather to the Netherfield early in the morning. Darcy, showing kind consideration for her, admires "the brilliancy which exercise had given to her complexion" (*PP*, p. 33). As soon as Miss Bingley asks him if his admiration of Elizabeth's eyes is decreased by her such rudeness, he retorts: "Not at all...they were brightened by the exercise" (*PP*, p. 36).

Meantime Darcy is faced with the troubles between his affection and his reason. There are some hindrances to his marriage with Elizabeth; inferiority of the Bennets in social rank and vulgarity of their everyday shameful conduct. And so Darcy tries to restrain his emotion, and "wisely resolved to be particularly careful that no sign of admiration should...escape him, nothing that could elevate her with the hope of influencing his felicity" (*PP*, p. 60).

On the other hand, Elizabeth will not admit that she is loved by Darcy. She denies Charlotte's opinion that Darcy loves Elizabeth. Elizabeth's dislike of Darcy is based on her conviction that he has cruelly treated Wickham, who depends on him, and that Darcy is a confederate in separating Mr. Bingley from her beloved Jane. As Budi DARMA says, readers are favourably disposed towards Elizabeth even in her hatred against Darcy, for her detestation shows such "humanity" and "familial responsibility" as above.²⁰⁾

Elizabeth, however, begins to wonder about Darcy's behaviour. She cannot understand why he often comes to the Parsonage where she stays, for he only sits and talks as seldom as he can. She also wonders why she often sees him in her walk in the Park:

She felt all the perverseness of the mischance that should bring him where no one else was brought; and to prevent its ever happening again, took care to inform him at first, that it was a favourite haunt of hers.—How it could occur a second time therefore was very odd!—Yet it did, and even a third. It seemed like wilful ill-nature.... (*PP*, p. 82)

This passage shows his love for Elizabeth clearly, though she is not aware.

Darcy at last confesses his love to Elizabeth when she is alone at the Parsonage. The proposal ends in failure. For he is upright (should I say arrogant) enough to mention the damage which this marriage is supposed to cause to him. The anxiety is related more intensely than the love, and "with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding" (*PP*,

p. 189). Though at first Elizabeth feels sorry for the pain which he will receive from her rejection, before long she feels angry with his insolent way of proposal, and with his confidence that he will get her favourable answer. Ultimately she refuses him flatly, and he also loses his temper. Since he values frankness, even after he knows that his candidness incenses her, he says to her, "...disguise of every sort is my abhorrence. Nor am I ashamed of the feelings I related" (*PP*, p. 192). Seeing that Darcy will not deny the blames he put upon Wickham and Jane, and that he is even proud of his insistence, Elizabeth detests him increasingly. They split up.

The next day, this situation develops into an unexpected direction. When Elizabeth takes a walk alone in the morning, she is handed a letter by Darcy, who followed her. Out of curiosity she immediately opens and reads it. In this letter Darcy explains the truth of the matter related to the two offences with which she charged him the day before. Firstly, though it is true that he tried to separate Mr. Bingley from Jane, in cooperation with Mr. Bingley's sisters, he can vindicate such a conduct because he has definite reasons against this marriage. They are the impropriety of the Bennets except Jane and Elizabeth, and the Bennets' inferiority in a social position, which also refers to the case of Darcy and Elizabeth. According to Darcy, he believes that he has not injured Jane. He is convinced that, though Jane feels happy to get Mr. Bingley's attentions, she does not return her affection for him. Darcy declares that even the keenest observer would think so, due to the serenity of her countenance and air. Here readers should be reminded of Charlotte's warning that Jane is too careful to make her affection known to anybody, and that Mr. Bingley's liking for Jane might not develop into a sincere love in case she does not show her affection. In spite of Elizabeth's opposition to such an opinion, Charlotte turns out to be right.

Secondly, Darcy disproves the blame which Wickham puts on his personal character. He cannot but explain their relation reluctantly. As Wickham concealed his "vicious propensities" (*PP*, p. 200) in front of Darcy's father, who cherished him, Darcy's father left him a precious family living by will, on condition that Wickham would take orders. After his death, Wickham claimed money instead of a career in the church, and after using up his money on "a life of idleness and dissipation" (*PP*, p. 201), he requested the clerical position again. Since Darcy rejected it, Wickham was estranged from him. After failing to get the profession, Wickham tried to elope with Miss Darcy, who was only fifteen years of age. He planned the elopement so that he could get her

fortune of thirty thousand pounds and revenge himself on Darcy, and yet Wickham failed in the attempt, for Miss Darcy confessed all of the circumstances to her respectable brother before the performance. Wickham disappeared soon and had been away until he met Darcy at Meryton.

In speaking of the truth of the matter, Darcy shows his consideration for Elizabeth. He says to her, "It pains me to offend you" (*PP*, p. 198). He also says that it is excusable that Elizabeth was deceived by Wickham because she knew nothing about Darcy or Wickham.

Mary LASCELLES comments about this letter that it is not plausible because such a proud and reserved man as Darcy would hardly tell "so much, and such, information" voluntarily, "unless under pressure from his author, anxious to get on with the story."²¹ On the other hand, according to Douglas BUSH's interpretation, Darcy's letter seems credible because "most of its points" have already been "lodged in our minds by casual evidence or strong hints" before we reach this scene.²²

It is natural for Elizabeth to feel very angry at Darcy's letter, reading it for the first time, for he "expressed no regret for what he had done...; his style was not penitent, but haughty" (*PP*, p. 204). In reference to Wickham, she cannot but cry, "This must be false! This cannot be! This must be the grossest falsehood!" (*PP*, p. 204). But she reads it again with composure, and gradually she comes to see Darcy's sincere heart through his explanation. This is the climax, or turning point of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Elizabeth begins to feel suspicious of Wickham. On reflection, he himself offers only his personal history after he entered the so-and-so-shire Militia. According to the author's description of Wickham, "[h]is countenance, voice, and manner, had established him at once in the possession of every virtue" (*PP*, p. 206). It is natural that Elizabeth feels attached to him, but she cannot remember his "substantial good" (*PP*, p. 206) except his agreeableness. She remembers Wickham's impropriety of telling his personal history to such a stranger as Elizabeth at the dinner at the Philips, and also his inconsistency between speech and behaviour when he was absent from the Netherfield ball as if he escaped Darcy's eyes. In this way Elizabeth gradually takes sides with Darcy and begins to recollect and admit the testimonies of Darcy's good qualities which she formerly overlooked. Here is Elizabeth's self-awakening :

"How despicably have I acted!" she cried.—"I, who have prided myself on my discernment!—I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or blamable dis-

trust.—How humiliating is this discovery!—Yet, how just a humiliation! ... Till this moment, I never knew myself." (*PP*, p. 208)

She comes to recognize her mistakes, saying that she was prepossessed with prejudice from the beginning of her acquaintance with Darcy and Wickham. Darcy provoked her by disregarding her on the one hand, and Wickham pleased her by making much of her on the other.

Now Elizabeth is wise enough to approve Darcy's explanation about Jane. Besides, there seems to be justice in what he says about her family's defects. Elizabeth finds herself faced with the truth of the matter, which she did not, or, would not, confront.

While Elizabeth walks reading Darcy's letter, he leaves the estate of Rosings. Lady Catherine, Darcy's aunt, suggests his attachment to Elizabeth, without knowing it herself: "Darcy seemed to feel [sorry to go] most acutely, more I think than last year. His attachment to Rosings, certainly increases" (*PP*, p. 210). Then Elizabeth also leaves for her home, where she can confirm whether Darcy's opinion about her family is true or not. Hearing her mother, Kitty and Lydia make a fuss about the move of the regiment from Meryton, Elizabeth cannot be diverted by their lamentations as before, "but all sense of pleasure was lost in shame" (*PP*, p. 229). Now she admits a blot even in her father clearly. She has dared to forget his impropriety of behaviour as a husband so far, apart from his abilities and affection towards her, but now she is "fully aware of the evils arising from so ill-judged a direction of talents" (*PP*, pp. 236–37).

These incidents stir Elizabeth's feelings towards Darcy. While she still feels disgusted at his insolent manner of proposal, she feels gratitude for his attachment. As she gradually comes to believe in Darcy's true heart, her heart is unconsciously estranged from Wickham. What seemed Wickham's gentleness is now abhorrent to her. Whenever he shows his favour to her, she feels mortified by his "frivolous gallantry" (*PP*, p. 233) and his self-confidence. When she converses about Darcy with Wickham, she tells him indirectly that she penetrates his disguise with the help of Darcy's information.

It is at Pemberley that Elizabeth meets Darcy again. In her trip with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner to Derbyshire, she visits Pemberley, expecting that Darcy is absent. The beautiful nature of Pemberley is not distorted by any artificial skill, and she appreciates the taste reflected in it. Similarly, the interior of the house, which is "neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with [little] of splendour, and [much] real elegance" (*PP*, p. 246), reflects the

proprietor's good taste. Darcy's unaffectedness in behaviour is shown in his possessions, too. Elizabeth thinks, "[T]o be mistress of Pemberley might be something!" (*PP*, p. 245) According to Marilyn BUTLER, Elizabeth thinks so because she is struck with Darcy's spiritual excellence reflected in the nature and the house of Pemberley, not with his worldly advantage.²³⁾ Similarly R.W. CHAPMAN rejects the view that Elizabeth is attracted by Darcy's wealth and status, saying that it is "grotesque."²⁴⁾ G.E. MITTON also points out that, if Elizabeth had been "liable to any undue influence of that sort," she should have accepted Darcy at their first meeting, for she knew about his fortune and position from the beginning.²⁵⁾

In the house, Mrs. Reynolds assures Elizabeth of Darcy's respectability and Wickham's wrongness. In front of Darcy's portrait in the gallery, Elizabeth recognizes "such a smile over the face, as she remembered to have sometimes seen, when he looked at her" (*PP*, p. 250), and her heart is occupied with a "gentle sensation towards the original" (*PP*, p. 250).

When Elizabeth and her relations walk outside with the gardener, Darcy suddenly appears. His behaviour, which is different from his previous one, is a little awkward, but tender and civil. She finds her impression of him changing gradually. In fact, Darcy is even friendly with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, her relations whom he must have disdained as a whole. Elizabeth hesitates about her visit to Pemberley on the one hand, and feels gratified with his complaisance on the other. Hatred towards him disappeared long ago in her, and she even feels gratitude for his love, especially for continuing the love despite "all the petulance and acrimony of her manner in rejecting him" (*PP*, p. 265). Now Darcy and Elizabeth are approaching each other.

As Reuben A. BROWER notes, such a development is not abrupt. For there are some hints which suggest the possibility of her revising her assessment of Darcy, in ambiguous remarks at earlier stages in the novel. For instance, Elizabeth's ironical remark, "Mr. Darcy is all politeness" (*PP*, p. 26), shows faintly that Darcy's behaviour should not be taken in only an unpleasant sense, and that Elizabeth may actually admit more pleasant interpretation of his behaviour in the future.²⁶⁾

Then a serious incident happens. It is Lydia's elopement with Wickham. When the regiment to which he belongs left Meryton, Lydia followed after it, and the two suddenly disappeared. Elizabeth laments such a scandalous incident, for fear that it should give a bad impression about her family to Darcy. At the same time, this is a hard trial of Darcy's affection for her :

She [Elizabeth] became jealous of his [Darcy's] es-

teem, when she could no longer hope to be benefited by it. She wanted to hear of him, when there seemed the least chance of gaining intelligence. She was convinced that she could have been happy with him ; when it was no longer likely they should meet. (*PP*, p. 311)

On the contrary Elizabeth is far from estranged from Darcy. In other words, that disgraceful incident makes both of them attracted to each other. Darcy "generously imputed the whole to his mistaken pride" (*PP*, p. 322). That is, he admits it was his fault that he did not declare the shame of his family. He thinks he should have revealed Wickham's personal history to prevent such an incident as Lydia's elopement. Similarly Elizabeth reproaches herself for having concealed Wickham's true character to others. If she had not concealed, she could have prevented him from doing any more wrong. Both of them feel a great deal of responsibility. Then Darcy makes an effort to marry Lydia to Wickham, who otherwise does not intend to do so.

Afterwards Elizabeth knows Darcy's great efforts in marrying Lydia to Wickham, and feels happy to think that Darcy did it for herself. The Netherfield people return from London, and Elizabeth meets Darcy again, but this time his attitude towards her is so polite, so modest, so kind, and so reserved.

After Darcy leaves for London, Lady Catherine, his aunt, comes to meet Elizabeth, in order to inform her that Darcy will not marry her. In the interview Elizabeth stubbornly resists Lady Catherine. According to MUDRICK, "[Elizabeth] set[s] her own proud value upon herself as an individual."²⁷⁾ Besides, she indirectly admits her affection towards Darcy. This incident, contrary to Lady Catherine's intention, destroys a wall between Elizabeth and Darcy, and makes them ascertain their mutual affection.

Darcy confesses his love which has never changed through Lydia's elopement. At long last Elizabeth accepts his proposal. Now they acknowledge the error of their judgments mutually. Elizabeth is undeceived of her wrong confidence in discernment. Darcy admits that there is also disgrace to his family : his aunt's as well as his sister's. Eventually they come to love each other, which leads to their marriage :

It was a union that must have been to the advantage of both ; by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved, and from his judgment, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance. (*PP*, p. 312)

This is in contrast with Jane and Mr. Bingley, who attract each other by their similarity.

Ultimately three daughters marry happily. Among those three marriages, Lydia's is a disgraceful one, which connects Wickham to Elizabeth and Darcy. Elizabeth, however, admits Wickham as a brother. This shows that she now fixes her eyes upon reality, trying to accept it. She does not avoid Wickham, who reminds her of her former wrong assessment of people. Now she does not divert her attention from her mistakes, which means her reformation.

V. Conclusion

Compared with the works written by T.S. ELIOT and James JOYCE nearly one hundred years later, those of Jane AUSTEN are not elaborate but far more natural. One of the reasons may be that AUSTEN was not a professional author. It is supposed that she was inspired to depict the things of the routine lives around herself. Her works, which consist of the essential and minimum elements of the novel, should be revalued now, after we appreciated various types of modern novels.²⁸⁾ She showed herself a genius in the field of the prose-fiction (or the novel), like Mozart in that of music, and Shakespeare in that of drama.

Pride and Prejudice is so perfect that we are moved to know its main structure. From a bird's-eye view, the work is composed of three levels—the material level, the form level and the theme level. That is, *Pride and Prejudice* is comprised not merely of the phases of the Bennets' marriages from a viewpoint of the material level, and the inductive approach to those around the Bennets from the viewpoint of the form level, but also the spiritual awakening of Elizabeth and Darcy from the viewpoint of the theme level. Those three elements are so tightly united in the work of art that it is referred to be a classic work in the good sense of the word.

In depicting the fallible heroines, Jane AUSTEN is apparently interested in their mental growth. In her basic view, a person who recognizes his/her own errors can improve the human character mentally in the course of time, however serious they may be. The author never blames the heroines bitterly for their follies. On the contrary she always gives tender eyes towards all the characters in her works.

What she regards as the heroines' defects comes from their excessive self-confidence. Each heroine in *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* is too confident to recognize the merit or demerit of her own human character, and is not ready to see herself as she really is. Once the heroine is inflamed with the false hero's flattery, she is ready to show shamelessly her self-respect which often leads to her misjudgment. Conse-

quently her behaviour seems to be ridiculous from the readers' standpoints.

It is by the true hero that the heroine is awoken from her misunderstanding incurred by self-confidence. Even though he tells the misunderstanding to her, she is not wise enough to approve his remarks and often refuses them at first. At the beginning of their meeting she has an instant liking for the false hero because of his seemingly agreeable and amiable nature, and yet soon she comes to know what he really is. The true hero takes part in the exposure of the false hero's hypocrisy.

Each novel has its own respective characteristics. We can make a comparison among the three novels from the viewpoint of the story, the quality of the heroine's self-awakening and the true hero's human character. As to the point of view, the stories of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* are told mostly through the heroine, and *Sense and Sensibility* through the heroine's sister. The author shows her sense of values (the way of life as a moralist) by means of such a method, whether the viewpoint is the heroine's or not. In *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, because of such a point of view, the fallibility of the heroine is hardly clarified for the readers in the beginning and her self-confidence is convincing in its own way. Hence the general readers never notice the heroine's fallibility often resulted from her self-confidence in the beginning, but gradually come to know it as it is, partly through the development of the story, partly through the characters' statements whatever their intentions may be. John ODMARK describes it as AUSTEN's strategy—"challenge to the reader to make his own evaluations."²⁹⁾ Such a method, which urges the readers to know the heroine's misunderstandings, makes the story and plot more interesting, and also shows us AUSTEN's techniques as a novelist. Robert GARIS also points out that *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* are successful "when she [AUSTEN] is looking directly at the learning character and the learning experience, and seeing the rest of the action from this perspective, through this experience," and that *Sense and Sensibility* is rather unsuccessful, judging from the critical criterion of the heroine's mental growth.³⁰⁾

Concerning the quality of the heroine's self-awakening mainly encouraged by the true hero, *Sense and Sensibility* is likely to give a rough and crude impression to the readers. Its true hero is not so influential upon the heroine's mental growth as the other two. One of the reasons is that he tells the false hero's wrong deeds not to the heroine herself but to her sister. In addition, the heroine's illness is used as the chance for her introspection, which leads to the heroine's self-awakening. This way of proceeding with the plot is not persuasive but

rather unsatisfactory for the readers. I agree with Darrel MANSELL, who explains that AUSTEN “snatches at an unlikely but handy plot device to further her psychological plan,” though I do not quite accept his critical way to apply this interpretation to all the other episodes in AUSTEN’S works.³¹⁾

Both the true heroes and the heroines in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* share the mutual understanding and mental growth with each other. The true hero in *Emma*, who has been familiar with Emma since her childhood, gives some hearty advice to her and encourages her to awaken herself. Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* receives a letter from Darcy, for whom she had felt an instant dislike. She is shocked to read the letter from him, because it says that Wickham is really a scoundrel who had attempted to seduce Darcy’s sister and to get her money. Elizabeth begins to suspect that she had misjudged Darcy. When she realizes the truth of the matter, that her misjudgments come from her own self-confidence, she is prepared to love Darcy. In other words, Elizabeth almost loses the true love, when ironically she notices Darcy’s love for her. However, the story ends with a happy marriage between Elizabeth and Darcy. This is nothing other than the result caused by the power of love. According to AUSTEN’S philosophy, “Love prevails over prudence, family feelings, social conditions, worldly propriety.”³²⁾

The heroine’s realization that she is short of her insight into other people is the turning point towards her introspection. Elizabeth as well as Emma comes to know herself by the help of the true hero.

One of the characteristics in *Pride and Prejudice* is that not only the heroine but the true hero acquires his mental growth and gets matured as the story goes on. In other words, the true hero in *Emma* is reliable from the beginning, whereas Darcy first appears in the story as a person who is very proud and estranged from many people. In fact, he himself is at first depicted as a man of defective human character, and yet he gradually comes under the influence of Elizabeth and realizes his mental growth. They seem to be mutually dependent upon each other and complementary. Darcy seems to be not merely a mentor but a comrade who agonizes to grow mentally and gets to the same goal together with Elizabeth. Both the heroine and the true hero overcome their flaws of human character after many and various experiences. Consequently, *Pride and Prejudice* may well be said to be more profound and attractive than AUSTEN’S other works. Francis Warre CORNISH says, “She [AUSTEN] is as benevolent as she is satirical; she feels, and makes her readers feel, affection for the imperfect creatures of her fancy....”³³⁾ Judging that AUSTEN

is always interested in the mental growth of human character, I am convinced that *Pride and Prejudice* is the work to which AUSTEN was above all attached.

Notes

The primary source :

Jane AUSTEN, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. R.W. CHAPMAN, 3rd ed. (London : Oxford Univ. Press, 1932) The abbreviation of *PP* is used in citations.

Secondary source :

- 1) Budi DARMA, *Character and Moral Judgment in Jane Austen’s Novels* (Indiana : Indiana Univ. 1980), p. 330.
- 2) There are some critics, such as MANSELL and WRIGHT, who regard both Marianne and Elinor as heroines, while MORGAN and TAVE insist that Elinor be the heroine of the story. I agree with DARMA’S idea that Marianne is the central figure because her improvement is treated chiefly in the story. cf. Susan MORGAN, *In the Meantime : Character and Perception in Jane Austen’s Fiction* (Chicago : Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980) ; Stuart M. TAVE, *Some Words of Jane Austen* (Chicago : Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973)
- 3) Lord David CECIL, *Poets and Story-Tellers : A Book of Critical Essays* (London : Constable, 1949), p. 100.
- 4) E.M. FORSTER, *Aspects of the Novel* (London : Edward Arnold, 1927), p. 72.
- 5) FORSTER, p.74.
- 6) Darrel MANSELL uses this designation in his *The Novels of Jane Austen : An Interpretation* (London : Macmillan, 1973). Besides, the dissipated man is called “villain” in Andrew H. WRIGHT’S *Jane Austen’s Novels : A Study in Structure*, 2nd ed. (London : Chatto and Windus, 1961), and “anti-hero” in Robert LIDELL’S *The Novels of Jane Austen* (London : Allen Lane, 1974).
- 7) Francis Warre CORNISH, *Jane Austen* (“English Men of Letters”) (London : Macmillan, 1926), p. 98.
- 8) Jane AUSTEN, *Jane Austen’s Letters to Her Sister Cassandra and Others*, ed. R.W. CHAPMAN, 2nd ed. (London : Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), p. 297
- 9) DARMA, p. 15.
- 10) Marilyn BUTLER, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford : Clarendon, 1975), p. 202.
- 11) *Jane Austen’s Letters*, p. 401.
- 12) CORNISH, p. 115.
- 13) Marvin MUDRICK, *Jane Austen : Irony as Defense and Discovery* (Berkeley : Univ. of California Press, 1968), pp. 94–95.
- 14) Yasmine GOONERATNE, *Jane Austen* (Cambridge : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), p. 95.
- 15) GOONERATNE, p. 86.
- 16) W.A. CRAIK, *Jane Austen : The Six Novels* (London : Methuen, 1965), p. 81.
- 17) MANSELL, p. 85.
- 18) Norman SHERRY, *Jane Austen* (New York : Arco, 1969), p. 125.
- 19) MUDRICK, pp. 109–110.
- 20) DARMA, p. 184.
- 21) Mary LASCELLES, *Jane Austen and Her Art* (London : Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 162.
- 22) Douglas BUSH, *Jane Austen* (London : Macmillan, 1975), p. 96
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『高慢と偏見』におけるエリザベスの精神的成長

寺本明子*

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要約：ジェイン・オースティン（1775-1817）の小説のヒロインは、二種類に分けることができる。一方は、道徳的に優れ、社会において人がどのように振舞うべきかを示すお手本となる人物である。もう一方は、自分には人を見る目があると思ひ込み、その過度の思ひ込みによって、数々の失敗を引き起こすタイプの人物である。小説家であるだけでなく、道徳家でもあるオースティンは、後のタイプの人物達に鋭い観察眼を向け、優れた作品を残した。そのような彼女の本领を『分別と多感』『エマ』『高慢と偏見』に見ることができる。ヒロインが、軽率で放蕩な偽ヒーローに騙されることにより、日頃自負していた「人を見る目」が、いかに欠陥のあるものであったかを知る。どの作品においても、真のヒーローはヒロインが自らの過ちに気付く自己覚醒に力を貸すという共通の働きを持つのだが、三つの作品のヒーローにはそれぞれの特徴がある。言葉を変えると、ヒロインと真のヒーローとの関わり方の違いが、それぞれの作品の趣に影響を与えている。上記三つの作品の中で『高慢と偏見』が最も魅力的な作品だと思われる。なぜなら、真のヒーローも精神的な成長をするからである。それは他の二つの作品には見られない。この論文では、他の二つの作品と比較しつつ、『高慢と偏見』のヒロイン、偽ヒーロー、真のヒーローについて考察する。

キーワード：真のヒーロー、偽ヒーロー、円熟した人物像、小説家・道徳家としてのオースティン

* 東京農業大学応用生物科学部教養分野