

Wit and Vivacity in Jane Austen's PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

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ABSTRACT

The main problem of this research is to prove wit and vivacity in Jane Austen's in Pride and Prejudice. To solve the problem the researcher applies structuralism approach in this study. This approach is used in order to find the wit and vivacity through character's traits. They are physical trait, social trait and psychological trait.

Key words: structuralism, wit, vivacity, character's trait

A. INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen, as a writer who lived in the romantic period, in her Pride and Prejudice shows humor, wit and vivacity. Reading this novel, it is hard to say that she is a romantic writer, because she tends to emphasize her mind than feeling (sense than sensibility) (Samekto, 1998:75). The researcher attempts to answer a research question by analyzing the character of Elizabeth Bennet, one of characters in Pride and Prejudice.

Pride and Prejudice is one of the most valuable writings of Austen. Reading Pride and Prejudice, the researcher has a very deep impression since all the character of the novel were created brilliantly. This is the power of this novel. The writer is very clever in creating the characters, especially women characters. These characters are ordinary people, but their characteristics are presented clearly, carefully and in detail, so their individualities are clearly seen. Her language is simple, clear and understandable (Samekto, 1998:75). The characters are very interesting and the readers feel pleasure whenever they read the novel. As *EM. Forster* remarks: "the characters in Jane Austen give to the reader a lightly new pleasure each time they come in" (1971:82). The researcher is very interested in exploring wit and vivacity in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice

B. ENGLISH ROMANTICISM

Since the 17th century, the age of science and invention, people acted in rational way to understand the universe and God. Literature was marked by typified and rigid rules such as the way Newton determined mathematics. They also thought to define aesthetics. The art creation usually is the same thing as machines; people will get a good result as the clues said.

The Romantic movement was in essence a reactionary tide against the prevailing rationalism of the Enlightenment. Having its roots in Rousseau's work and a need for something more aesthetically suitable, the romanticists basically revolted against the prevailing current of reason. In particular, the movement was against the rationalist intellectual current prevalent at the time, as well as the industrial change taking place. They completely rejected the theories of rationalism, and did not feel that it was supreme in philosophy or religion, as others had taught. Romantic thinkers urged the importance of human passion, uniqueness, impulses of man, aesthetic experience, and variety. The undercurrent of their writings revealed a subtle attitude purveying in the mediocrity of the Victorian lifestyle, a hatred to their social environment, and feeling of moral superiority, feeling to be a "higher caste", than others. They attack individualism as antisocial, egoistic theory utilizing false reason for validity.

Romanticism is a movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that was marked as a rejection of the precepts of order, calmness, harmony, balance, idealization and rationality that typified classicism in general and late 18th-century Neo-classicism in particular. It was also marked by a quickening of cultural nationalism and a new attention to national origins, as attested by the collection and imitation of native folklores, folk ballads and poetry, folk dance and music, and even previously ignored medieval and renaissance works.

At the 18th century, those things changed into new arguments and values. People actualized non-rational thought on art creation such as the imagination, the beauty, the individuality and the spontaneity. The rolling time from rationalism to romanticism needs long process. The era of pre-romanticism was around 1740, it was about 40 years in the early 19th century.

If the enlightenment was a movement which started among a tiny elites and slowly spread throughout the society, Romanticism was more widespread both in its origins and influence. No other intellectual or artistic movement has comparable variety, reach, and staying power to it since the end of the Middle Ages. According to Rewey Belle Inglis, et.al in their book entitled *Adventures In English Literature* Romanticism holds the view: "that literature springs from two main sources: emotion and imagination" (1949: 335). They argued: "Emotion is a feeling of the human heart when intensely stirred by sad, beautiful, comic, or tragic happenings. Imagination is the ability of the mind to picture vividly scenes or happenings that either do not exist or have never actually been seen" (1949: 335). So it means when one's heart easily sympathizes with others and is susceptible to feeling, and his mind can easily conjure up imaginary things or picture to itself scenes and happenings never actually witnessed then he is a romanticist.

The term romantic has such various meanings that it is difficult to define the Romantic movement. *Francois Jost* realizes it, he says in his book entitled *Introduction To Comparative Literature* "the multiple meanings of the word romantic are one of the main sources of difficulty in defining the Romantic movement" (1974: 105). From the multiple meanings the researcher takes one of the meanings of romanticism that is romanticism wants to reflect spontaneous feeling naturally in both nature and human mind. There are some aspects of English Romanticism as *Homes A. Watt et.al* (1952: 388) mentions:

1. Faith in the Individual:

This went side by side with the spread of democracy which resulted from the American and French revolutions; it is reflected in the literature of the romantic movement by a growing humanitarianism.

2. Faith in the Imagination:

This means in poetry a renewed faith in feeling and intuition to challenge the predominance of Reason and the Substitution of new forms and techniques for the formal heroic couplet and stylized poetic diction of the age of Pope.

3. Interest in the Past:

A renewed interest in past literature resulted in the revival of the folk ballad and the Elizabethan Drama.

4. Interest in Nature:

Romanticism is also characterized by the growing interest in mysteries of the universe, instead of sitting at home embalming it, sight unseen, in a conventional cliché (1952: 388). Romanticism begins to lose its influence at the Industrial Revolution.

C. Wit and Vivacity in Elizabeth's Characterization

The researcher analyzes Elizabeth Bennet, one of character in Pride and Prejudice. It is the structuralism that views literary works as a unity and wholeness: the unity of all the inner aspects of the literary work, regardless the outer aspects. Robert Scoles in Faisal "For in its broadest sense, a structuralism is a way of looking out for the reality not individual things but in the relationship among terms" (1999: 9). It is concluded that structuralism tends to study the intrinsic aspects of literary work. Wellek and Warren hold the view that: "Structure is a concept including both content and form so far as they are recognized for aesthetic purposes. The work of art is, then, considered as a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose" (Wellek, 1977: 141).

In accordance with the problem statement, this analysis is focused on Elizabeth Bennet, through her character and characterization and her relation to other characters and other elements of the novel to elucidate or answer the problem statement.

Character, according to M.H. Abrams, "are the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the readers as being with moral, dispositional, and emotional qualities that are expressed in what they say, the dialogue and by what they do the action" (1988: 22). Furthermore, there are alternative methods for characterizing (i.e., establishing the distinctive characters of) the persons in narrative: showing and telling. Abrams argues that in showing (also called "the dramatic method"), the author merely presents the characters talking and acting and leaves the reader to infer what motives and dispositions lie behind what they say or do; whereas in telling, the author intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate, the motives and dispositional qualities of the characters" (1988: 23). For example, in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice in the fine opening chapter, Jane Austen first shows us Mr. and Mrs. Bennet as they talk to one another about the young man who has just rented Netherfield Park, then tells us about them, and so confirms and expands the inferences that the readers begin to make sense out of what has been shown:

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper (PAP, 1985: 53).

The characterization of Elizabeth Bennet can be seen on the three aspects of characteristics: physical, social and psychological. Physical trait is the physical characteristics of the character, so that the readers understand how the author characterizes the character especially with the subject matter. Afterwards, in order to know how the author presents the character's social status the researcher exposes, the relationship between the character and the social background as well as the influence of the environment such as social norms and historical aspects on the characters.

Having understood the physical and social traits of the character, the researcher exposes the psychological trait is used to explore the character's inner state and find out how the physical and social traits put their influence on the psychological trait. These three aspects of characteristic are what Kenney calls character traits. Kenny (Faisal, 1999: 37) says: "A trait is relatively stable or abiding personal quality". The following paragraphs clarify the characterization of Elizabeth Bennet based on that three character traits.

1. Physical Trait

According to Kenny in Faisal (1988: 32), "Physical trait deals with the physical appearance of the character described by the author i.e., the body is tall or short, fat or thin and others".

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen portrays Elizabeth as a unique and different girl among her sisters. It is seen in the conversation between Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth's parents:

"They have none of them much to recommend them" replied he;

"They are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters." (PAP: p.3).

This conversation shows how her father is in favor of Elizabeth. He confronts his wife as he knows that Elizabeth is not like her sisters. The girls go playing balls and shopping. Moreover, they act out of control as new comers to their village. Mr. Bennet clarifies Elizabeth's position as a girl. She is not like her mother and her sisters. Mrs. Bennet's mind is difficult to develop. She is a woman of mean of understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she is discontented she fancies herself nervous. The business of her life is to get her daughters married; her solace is visiting and news.

Her vivacity can be seen in expresses her feeling when she is disdained by Darcy that she is not handsome enough to tempt him, she is back to her natural character;

"...and Elizabeth remained with no very cordial feelings towards him. She told the story however with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition, with delighted in any thing ridiculous" (PAP: p.9)

The other physical description of Elizabeth is portrayed when Lizzy, Elizabeth's nickname, is talking with Charlotte about her sister, Jane Bennet, that interests Darcy.

"Mr. Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty; he had looked at her without admiration at the ball; and when they next met, he looked at her only to criticize. But not sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than

he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. To this discovery succeeded some other equally mortifying. Though he had detected with critical eye more than one failure of perfect symmetry in her form, he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing; and in spite of this his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness" (PAP. p.20).

Jane Austen creates Elizabeth as a young lady who changes her mind. She equips herself with her handsome, sharp intellect and lively wit. There is no worry about to be herself. She actualizes her act as well as thought. She does not only continue the champion of the individual or confidence, but also attacks Darcy's pride; she refuses to dance with him: "Elizabeth looked archly, and turned away. Her resistance had not injured her with the gentlemen, (PAP.p.23).

She tries to rebel against the Romanticism at the time. She concludes herself by having her actual physical magnetism; judgment, consideration, and ability to make changes to her mental reality picture.

2. Social Trait

This novel begins with societal values: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (PAP. p. 1). It describes the human relationship which is determined by wealth and rank. It describes the social view at the time in which social context of human relationship is determined by wealth and rank.

Jane Austen describes Elizabeth's appearance using the social environment where she lives and grows. "A social trait is those that have to do with the character's place and position in his society, especially the character's relationship to groups and institutions constituted or recognized by the society," Kenney remarks (1966:32)

The fact continues to have a conversation between Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet, concerning the single and rich man in good position. They represent the social fact of different view points. Mr. Bennet does not care about the new comer while Mrs. Bennet is busy with her business to have her daughters married. (PAP: p. 3). From this description, it is known that Elizabeth's family is also influenced by the social opinion that the mother is busy to look for husbands for her daughters.

Elizabeth as one of the characters of the novel saves her father's character. She is against the society by having her prejudice. She has prejudices against the concept of money and rank as the conventional judgment. Considering that reason, Elizabeth attacks Darcy's pride by rejecting Darcy's proposal;" I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever prevail on to marry (PAP. p. 187).

Concerning the premise, Elizabeth refuses to get a rich husband. She, even, does not pay any attention to any gentlemen Charlotte proposes. She turns to Wickham's charm. She conducts herself that she has true love. She gives no concern in one's financial standing.

She rejects the values and restraints; she is like her father who shows the champion of individual. She cares about her father who has lack in conjugal matters.

Unconsciously, Elizabeth admits that she has a wrong perception about a connection between wealth and human relationship while at once she looks upon Pemberley, Darcy's estate, at the first sight. (PAP. p. 233-234).

Here, Elizabeth realizes that Darcy's pride and prejudice to Darcy are based on certain contexts. Elizabeth's experiences answer which is pride and which in prejudice.

3. Psychological Trait

Kenney states that psychological trait is a trait that relates to the inner traits and characteristic patterns of external observable behaviour such as the rhythm of speech, qualities of gesture and emotion.

Elizabeth Bennet presents vivacity in her life. She stays calm while her sister, Jane, gets a chance to dance with Mr. Bingley. Even, she does not care when Darcy, the wealthy and aristocratic landowner who presents pride, asks her to dance with him:

Elizabeth admits that her surrounding is such kind of new experiences. She does not think as hard as Jane about perception of a man (PAP. p. 11). She, even, saves her ridiculous story while Darcy is refused to dance with her (PAP. p. 9).

Elizabeth describes herself as a pleasant girl and she likes to learn about the character of someone. She satirizes Mr. Bingley's hurry in making decision of his moving from Netherfield. (PAP. p. 39).

"Whatever I do is done in hurry," replied he; "and therefore if I should resolve to quit Netherfield, I should probably be off in five minutes. At present, however, I consider myself as quite fixed here."

"That is exactly what I should have supposed of you," said Elizabeth.

"You begin to comprehend me, do you? Cried he, turning towards her.

"Oh? Yes I understand you perfectly."

"I wish I might take this for a compliment; but to be so easily seen through I am is pitiful."

"That is as it happens. It does not necessarily follow that a deep, intricate character is more or less estimable than such a one as yours."

D. CONCLUSION

Jane Austen reveals her idea of wit and vivacity through the character of Elizabeth. Jane Austen presents this idea through three character traits; They are physical trait, social trait and psychological trait. In physical trait, Austen creates Elizabeth who is not like her sisters that most of they are beautiful but she creates beauty in her own idea, she creates the beauty of mind in Elizabeth Character. She has different concept of marriage that her sisters and mothers hold. She holds the idea of marriage that a marriage must not be based on love at first sight but it must be more realistic.

In social trait, She is against the society by having her prejudice. She has prejudices against the concept of money and rank as the conventional judgment. Concerning the premise, Elizabeth refuses to get a rich husband. She, even, does not pay any attention to any gentlemen Charlotte proposes. She turns to Wickham's charm. She conducts herself that she has true love. She gives no concern in one's financial standing.

Psychological Trait, Elizabeth Bennet presents vivacity in her life. She stays calm while her sister, Jane, gets a chance to dance with Mr. Bingley. Even, she does not care when Darcy, the wealthy and aristocratic landowner who presents pride, asks her to dance with him.

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