

A Study of Jane Austen

— *Persuasion*: Anne Elliot —

Sun-hee Kim

I

Persuasion is the last and the most mature of Jane Austen's novels, published posthumously, together with the early *Northanger Abbey*, in 1818. Though it has not the sustained brightness of *Pride and Prejudice* nor the combination of sympathy, comic irony, and moral feeling that marks *Emma*, it is still the subtlest and most delicately wrought of all her novels. As W.D. Howells said, "*Persuasion* is imagined with as great novelty and daring as *Pride and Prejudice*."¹

Jane Austen is a critics' novelist par excellence, a writer whose subtlety and sophistication have always attracted subtle and sophisticated minds. She is recognized as a supreme artist of the novel. The dramatic power of her characters led some nineteenth century writers, including Macaulay and George Lewes, to regard her as no less than a "prose Shakespeare",² and in our own day Brigid Brophy has described Jane Austen as the greatest novelist of all time. But because of a Victorian habit of analysing prose fiction principally in terms of subject-matter, Austen was often regarded as a minor figure, nonetheless in the 1860s, it gradually became more widely accepted that to study everyday behaviour was not necessarily trivial.

The publication of Jane Austen's six novels between 1811 and 1818 marked a turning-point in the development of English fiction, and the early reviewers by Scott and Richard Whately proved that criticism of the novel could itself rank as a serious intellectual activity. "In the words of George Moore Jane Austen turned the wash-tub into the vase. In effect, she transformed the eighteenth century novel-which could be a clumsy and primitive performance, uncertain in its technique-into a work of art."³ She gave elegance and form to its shaping, style to its writing, and narrative skill to the presentation of the story. She invented her own special mode of fiction, the domestic comedy of middle-class manners, a dramatic, realistic ac-

-
1. W.D. Howells, "Heroines of Fiction" in *Northanger Abbey & Persuasion*, ed. B.C. Southam (Tiptree, Essex: Anchor Press, 1979), P. 142.
 2. Ian Watt says that in the words of prose of Shakespeare we confess the greatness of Jane Austen, her marvelous power seems more than anything in Scott to the greatest quality in Shakespeare. see *Jane Austen*, ed. Ian Watt (Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 5.
 3. B.C. Southam, *Jane Austen*, (London: Longman Group, 1975), p. 4.

count of the quiet backwaters of the everyday life for the country families of Regency England from the late 1790s until 1815. Her account of this world is, of course, "limited and lightly selective".⁴ Its focus is upon the experiences of young women on the path to marriage. She presented an account of society from the woman's point of view—the woman's experiences of men, of other women, of their families. For the first time in English literature, outside Shakespeare, we meet heroines who are credible, with minds, with the capacity to think for themselves, with an interior life independent of men. Broadly speaking, Jane Austen perfected the techniques of dramatic character, the dilemma of individual moral choice in the bourgeois world.

But Jane Austen's popularity with the middle-brow reading public also reached new height in the twentieth century. In the twentieth century, the literary and critical climate became more favorable to Jane Austen, especially in England. "The writers of the so-called Bloomsbury Group, in particular, combined with their emphasis on personal relationships as of ultimate importance, provided a congenial basis for a fuller appreciation of Jane Austen."⁵ Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf were "both devotees",⁶ but it is in E.M. Foster that Jane Austen found one of her most unqualified admirers, and certainly her greatest literary disciple. Foster confessed that "Jane Austen is my favorite author! I read and reread, the mouth open and the mind closed."⁷

The twentieth century was to see the reputation of Jane Austen grow as rapidly among professional scholars and critics as among novelists and Janeites. "During the thirties and forties the widespread influence of Freud led critics to set Jane Austen in new perspective."⁸ In general, the criticism of Jane Austen in the last decades is incomparably the richest and most illuminating, but in demonstrating how the restrictions of her subject-matter are the basis for a major literary achievement, "recent criticism has perhaps failed to give the nature of Jane Austen's social and moral assumption an equally exacting analysis."⁹

Why do the characters in Jane Austen give us a new pleasure each time they come in? The answer is she was a real artist, the characters are highly organized; Of all Austen's novels *Persuasion* is the warmest and the coldest, the softest and the hardest. In this paper, I mean to discuss about *Persuasion*, "the masterpiece of delicate strength about restraint,"¹⁰ especially about the absolute lady, Anne Elliot, the puzzling

4. Jane Austen's alleged limitations are a necessary ingredient of her dramatic technique of novel writing, the true genius of the novel. see *Jane Austen Today*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), p. 166.

5. Ian Watt, ed., *Jane Austen*, (Egglewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 8.

6. Katherine Mansfield declared that 'every true admirer of Jane Austen cherishes the happy thought that he alone reading between lines has become the secret friends of their authors', and Woolf said Austen was the most perfect artist among women, the writer whose books are immortal.

7. Quoted in Watt, op. cit., p. 9.

8. There's something of Freud in the psychologist D.W. Harding's "Regulated Hatred" (1941). Critics like Lascelles (1939), Wright (1953), and Babb (1962) have since insisted on evaluating Austen's art and moral vision through careful stylistic analysis.

9. Watt, op. cit., p. 13.

10. Elizabeth Bowen, "Persuasion" in *Northanger Abbey & Persuasion*, ed. B.C. Southam (Tiptree, Essex: Anchor Press, 1979), p. 165.

figure in our literature, in some respects of her emotional and moral feeling. And also some features of *Persuasion* will be touched.

II

In *Persuasion* Jane Austen's attitude to her reader and the tone she adopts is at its most assured. She exploited all the means available at her time for representing thought as well as speech. There is more direct narrative than ever before, she has generally preferred conversation or character to transmit information, but here she herself says a great deal. The characteristic technique has shifted from dramatic dialogue to inner speech. As Norman Page showed, "*Persuasion* is in its free blending of narrative, dialogue, and a kind of interior monologue, an extraordinary achievement which was in its originality and artistry to have no parallel for many decades."¹¹

Jane Austen can narrate in her own voice without hinting at either partisanship or dissociation. This reveals a different intention here from the other novels. The tone is serious and even melancholy. Jane Austen, here as always, is uncompromisingly moral in aim and intention, but she is no longer satirical. Her method is not changed. She still understates her points, and minor characters still reveal themselves ironically.

The change is at center. Jane Austen agrees with her heroine much more than she has ever done before. She has usually seen what her heroines see. She has no prejudices to mislead her heroine when Anne Elliot forms opinion. She may share a pleasant and wittily original kind of irony with characters:

"On one other question, which perhaps her utmost wisdom might not have prevented, she was soon spared. . . . You were so altered he should not have known you again."¹²

Also Anne Elliot knows and understands all the characters, even the hero on whom her happiness depends:

"There was a momentary expression in Captain Wentworth's face at this speech, a certain glance of his bright eye, . . . but it was too transient an indulgence of self-amusement to be detected by any who understood him less than herself."¹³

With this perception as this the heroine combines with Jane Austen as a narrator, but Anne is not Jane Austen. Here the narrator's function is to enable us to appreciate the subtle personal experiences Anne undergoes.

But "the principal interest arises from a combination of events which forms, in general, an Euripidean prologue to Miss Austen's novels."¹⁴

11. Norman Page, "Order of Merit" in *Jane Austen Today*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), p. 106.

12. Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, ed. R.W. Chapman (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. 60.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

14. Richard Whately, from unsigned article "Quarterly Review", xxiv (Jan. 1982), in *Northanger Abbey & Persuasion*, ed. B.C. Southam (Tiptree, Essex: Anchor Press, 1979), p. 132.

“He was not Mr. Wentworth, the former curate of Monkford, however. . . . She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning.”¹⁵

Jane Austen “is concerned with states of mind aroused by events, than with the events themselves. Therefore the style is commonly aphoristic and periodic that has been her custom.”¹⁶

And there’s another more notorious example of Jane Austen’s dissociation from her characters. She comments on Mrs. Musgrove’s sentimental laments for her son:

“Captain Wentworth should be allowed some credit for the self-command. . . .which ridicule will seize.”¹⁷

This shows how Jane Austen’s habitual tone elsewhere in this novel has altered from what it was in the early novels. Here we see how very much Jane Austen was a child of the eighteenth century, nothing like these sentences is to be found in the works of any Victorian or post-Victorian English novelist.

Therefore techniques like this allow a growth of inwardness in character. There is less conversation between characters and less use of the monologue. Incidentally “Jane Austen inherits this device from Richardson and Burney”.¹⁸ So Austen’s style recalls that of her eighteenth century masters. This indicates only a more solemn subject and less dramatic treatment of it.

Persuasion’s another new feature is its use of locality. For Jane Austen it was often small country town what afforded the best opportunity of showing the moral pattern implicit in social organization. Place and weather indicate Anne’s state of mind. The well-known description of Lyme is unlike any other in her works. The passage on Lyme has no immediate relevance to the matter in hand, and is unmistakable Jane Austen’s own feeling:

“They were come to late in the year for any amusement or variety which Lyme, as a public place, might offer as may more than equal any of the resembling scenes of the far-famed Isle of Wight: these places must be visited, and visited again, to make the worth of Lyme understood.”¹⁹

This makes Lyme a pleasant, even a romantic place. Such praise, coming from the author, makes Lyme remain a pleasant place even after Louisa’s disastrous fall. The accident cannot efface the first impression either for the reader or for Anne herself.

“One does not love a place the less for having suffered in it, unless it has been all suffering nothing but suffering—which was by no means the case at Lyme.”²⁰

15. Austen, op. cit., pp. 26-30.

16. W.A. Craik, *Jane Austen The Six Novels*, (New York: Methuen & Co., 1979), p. 197.

17. Austen, op. cit., p. 68.

18. David Skilton, *The English Novel*, (London: Douglas David & Charles, 1977), p. 298.

19. Austen, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

"A place may be more valuable than the people living in it, as a place it symbolically upholds the stoic values of control, stability, endurance. And the author offers it as an image of quiet resistance at the start of what was to be the most convulsive century of change in the whole of English history."²¹

Bath is neutral ground, it serves much the same purpose as London does in *Sense and Sensibility*, as a meeting-ground. It's also "a place Anne does not like,"²² either in anticipation the heats of September in all the white glare of Bath or in fact:

"admist the dash of other carriage, the heavy rumble of carts. . . . Anne did not share these feelings. She persisted in a very determined, though very silent, disinclination for Bath."²³

However much of the action is set in Bath in *Persuasion*. Bath is a artificial community where people come from different towns and country houses largely for reasons of social exhibitionism-though there're some who come in search of health. Bath is a fashionable city, and therefore suits the snobbery of the Elliots and is a significant setting for Mr. Elliot.

But what is more important in the course of the novel is Anne's moving. As she moves about in the novel, going from Kellynch, to Uppercross, to Lyme, to Kellynch, and to Bath, "she is aware that she moves each time from one set of people to another, that she moves into a total change of conversation, opinion, and ideas, that she moves into another social commonwealth."²⁴ But Anne has the right kind of imagination. She has the strength and capacity of mind to hold conflicting forces while never losing her own integrity.

III

Brigid Brophy makes much of sense of social degradation, she believe, afflicted Jane Austen from her early days in an interesting article, 'Jane Austen and the Stuarts'. This sense can be discovered in the letters and the fiction, most obviously in the description of Fanny's reaction to the smallness of the rooms and the thinness of the walls at Portsmouth. But Austen's continuing concern with degradation, as Alistair M. Duckworth observes, informs *Persuasion* as a conscious elaboration and authentic working. Mrs. Smith's 'noisy parlour, and dark bedroom behind' in Bath, Captain Harville's tiny rooms in Lyme, Mrs. Croft's uncomfortable accommodations in the man-of-war — these, along with the renting of Kellynch Hall and the absence of a final estate for the heroine, suggest "Jane Austen in her last novel accepted the reduction of earlier horizons and faced the exigencies of her life with the same spirit as Captain Harville, the same intention to turn the actual space to the best account."²⁵

21. Tonny Tanner, "Jane Austen and the Quiet Thing" in *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. B.C. Southam (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968). p. 159.

22. It's told that Austen really fainted away when she heard of the family decision to move to Bath. 15 years later, in *Persuasion* she described Anne confronted with a similar decision. It's debatable how far she was autobiographical.

23. Austen, *Persuasion*, ed. R.W. Chapman (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. 135.

24. Stuart M. Tave, *Some words of Jane Austen*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 275.

25. Alistair M. Duckworth, "Prospect and Retrospects" in *Jane Austen Today*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), pp. 26-28.

Through the novel Jane Austen plays deftly with the terminology of improvement into the realm of manners, behavior and morality. Many critics have argued Jane Austen's social and moral vision is limited by, and works on behalf of the class to which she belonged. But the restricted social vision is a satire in itself. It presents a faithful image of the gentry's state of mind. It reflects the history of her time.

Persuasion shows a sense of history in its depiction of the rising importance of the navy and the declining importance of the aristocracy. The navy had saved England from invasion, preserved her West Indian holdings, and frustrated Napoleonic forces. However the aristocracy did nothing comparable during this period. Kellynch Hall, representing the best of the English tradition, passes into the hands of Admiral Croft. Captain Wentworth accumulates fortune at sea. In the novel "aristocratic society is thoroughly moribund: static, artificial, self-serving. Its image is the self-loving, death-desiring Narcissus. The seafaring society is dynamic, natural and loving. It brings life from the very sea that threatens it with death."²⁶ These dramatizations of life and death are more pronounced in *Persuasion* because it is more identified with a romantic world—picture than any previous Austen novel. So "it is easy to believe that in all this the author is on the side of the rising middle class as against the hereditary aristocracy."²⁷

Another characteristic of *Persuasion* is Austen's mature consciousness in social life. The conflict is grander and more dramatic in conception, it is organized and resolved, gravely and unironically, in the feeling of the heroine. At the turn of the nineteenth century the conflict is between the feudal remnant, conscious of its tradition, and the rising middle class, conscious of its vitality. So "*Persuasion* is about the possibilities of adequate living in a world in which compromises must continually be made, in which the balance between the demands of society and the demands of self is always delicate and character is revealed and molded both in the daily choices to be made the trivialities of ordinary life and the larger choices to be made at critical moments of decision."²⁸

And Jane Austen demonstrates, through Wentworth, the obtuseness of a society that recognized true worth only when it is united to wealth and success. For Anne the sailors are a force of change, and she sees the differences between the two groups in social and moral terms. They are freer and easier, and they can actually keep up estates better. Having already learned more about the lives and attitudes of the sailors, Anne realized that they have more right to be at Kellynch Hall than her own family:

"She could have said more on the subject; for she had in fact so high an opinion of the Crofts, and considered her father . . . and that Kellynch-hall had passed into better hands than its owners."²⁹

There are other moral reasons why the sailors deserve the favour of history. Captain Benwick and Captain Harville show the effect of their professions and their own labours. Generally the sailors are presented to us as members of a profession shaped by their life of duty and making the most of their chances.

26. Joseph Wiesenfarth, "Austen and Apollo" in *Jane Austen Today*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer, p. 58.

27. Donald Greene, "Jane Austen and the Peerage" in *Jane Austen*, ed. Ian Watt (Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 161.

28. David Daches, "An Introduction" to *Persuasion*, ed. R.W. Chapman (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. x.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

The professions have on society, the sense of an evolving need for moral virtue in an evolving society. This touch is of the greatest importance, the concluding sentences enforce it again:

“His profession was all that could ever make her friends with that tenderness (which Anne and Wentworth, married, have for each other) less . . . but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than it its national importance.”³⁰

Now Anne belongs in effect to the profession: “it is unusual ending for Jane Austen; she associates herself with and so vindicates its domestic in addition to its heroic virtues.”³¹

The strikingly new artistic uses can be found. Austen’s ability to subject to the even didactic elements illustrates a greater maturity of outlook and a more objective approach to life than before. “The moral lessons *Persuasion* teaches are three: the duty of individual, the inestimable value of trust and constancy, and the futility of vanity and social pride.”³² But when we meet Anne for the first time, her judgement is already penetrating and reliable, her principles steady, her actions ruled by humility, and her joyless existence illuminated by her constancy to Wentworth.

“Jane Austen looks at actions and characters in relation to moral principles which can be universalized, and she is fundamentally a moralist, in the same sense that Pope and Johnson are.”³³ Therefore “Austen’s moral system was secular, aesthetic. Gilbert Ryle put forward the historical hypothesis that Jane Austen’s special moral ideas derived, directly or indirectly, from Shaftesbury. Certainly she never mentions him by name; but nor is any moralist mentioned by name. Anne Elliot does advise the melancholy Captain Benwick to read, ‘inter alios, ous best moralist.’ But the word moralist would cover Goldsmith or Pope as well as Hume, as well as Shaftesbury or Butler.”³⁴

Indeed Austen’s understanding of the moral nature of man is, within the limits of her experience, complete. However she detects the essential quality of character unflinching. Her characters are presented in a universal context: they are related to universal standards of conduct. Jane Austen understood the importance of virtue. She held that it was people’s first duty to be unselfish, charitable, honest, disinterested, faithful. She showed no enthusiasm for unpractical idealists, felt no sympathy for soul-stirring emotions. She was relentlessly anti-sentimental. For her, imprudence was never a virtue.

So fortitude is a cardinal virtue. Anne has fortitude. It is gentle Anne’s in a higher sense of heroism. Tave suggests that “Anne is the instance of the heroism and fortitude, patience and all that ennoble us most, because she has greatness in action.”³⁵ Anne has the exertion, nor man exerts himself more than Anne.

30. Ibid., p. 222.

31. Malcolm Bradbury, “*Persuasion Again*” (1968) in *Northington Abbey & Persuasion*, ed. B.C. Southam (Tiptree, Essex: Anchor Press, 1979), p. 222.

32. Yasmine Gooneratne, *Jane Austen*, (Cambridge: University Printing House, 1970), p. 172.

33. Robert Alan Donovan, “The Mind of Jane Austen” in *Jane Austen Today*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), p. 116.

34. Gilbert Ryle, “Jane Austen and the Moralists” in *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. B.C. Southam (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 117-118.

35. Stuart M. Tave, *Some Words of Jane Austen*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 284.

IV

Persuasion is the last and altogether the most charming of the novels. A great deal Jane Austen's artistic effort in the novel is devoted to communicating the emotional side of her heroine's nature. Our sympathy and understanding are won for Anne from the beginning, because we share her station of passive listener and observer. We can hear, for the first time, Anne's quiet voice in her gentle defence of the navy when Mr. Shepherd suggests a wealthy Admiral for an ideal tenant. The second time she speaks it is to give her father a concise and accurate summary of Admiral Croft's career. Here Anne's ability to provide an accurate account of Admiral Croft's career illuminates for a moment the mental activity that goes on in the privacy of her calm silence.

But Anne's devotion to Wentworth is the sustained emotional impulse of the persuasion, Anne traces it with unremitting sensitivity. Her feeling is clear enough in her first thought of him.

"Anne....left the room, to seek the comfort of cool air for her flushed cheeks, and as she walked along a favorite grove, said, with a gentle sigh, 'a few months more, and he, perhaps, may be walking here.'"³⁶

Anne is agitated by her perception of just that degree of feeling and curiosity about her in his manner. Anne cannot enjoy even the bitter consolations of self-blame and repentance. "She has learned that prudence has two sides to it, one shaped by good sense, and the other separated by so thin a line from materialism."³⁷ But in the misery of a parting Anne had got her chief consolation from the belief that her sacrifice was principally for his advantage. Her attachment and regrets had, for a long time, clouded every enjoyment of youth, and she had met no man who approached Frederick Wentworth.

Anne is delicate, she has the real delicacy that is pained to see unfeeling conduct and she sympathized with the sufferer. She is an elegant little woman, the most truly elegant of Jane Austen's women because hers is a fully represented quality of mind character. And also this little woman has the kind of force the genuinely heroic Captain Wentworth has not. Jane Austen, in a letter to her niece, Fanny Knight, describes Anne Elliot: 'almost too good for me'.

Persuasion is a sad love story about Anne Elliot. The primary artistic aim of *Persuasion* is the successful creation of Anne Elliot. One way of describing the action of *Persuasion* is to say that it begins when Anne's word has no weight and it ends when her word pierces a man's soul. "Anne herself combines in one character the roles of both darkness and light, of both Jane Fairfax and Emma."³⁸ She is undoubtedly good, a martyr, in large and small ways, to her sense of duty. She is signally unselfish (always a prime virtue for Jane Austen), and bears patiently with that selfish and querulous hypochondriac, Mary Musgrove, and with her odious father and snobbish sister Elizabeth.

36. Austen, *Persuasion*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. 25.

37. Yasmine Gooneratne, *Jane Austen*, (Cambridge: University Printing House, 1979), p. 167.

38. John Bayley, "The Irresponsibility of Jane Austen" in *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. B.C. Southam (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 19.

What are human emotions and what are they really worth? The novel poses this question again and again. Both Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth are concerned with the true state of their own feeling. The problem of the novel is the destiny of Anne's emotional commitment. In *Persuasion*, Jane Austen is concerned with a young love which has grown up, which has steadied, lasted, felt the stress reality, woven itself into the fabric of a life.

But there's a solitary woman in the novel. Anne is the first heroine to be isolated. There's little community between her and her father and sister. Her reaction to Lady Russell is characterized by a detachment not visible. But Anne has time to build a defence against depression. She has painfully learned the art of knowing our own nothingness beyond our own circle. In a changing society the word 'alone' echoes through the novel, "with a peculiar terror as well as a peculiar beauty."³⁹ But Anne attempts to fill her life with duties.

Duty is a key word in *Persuasion*. In the later eighteenth century it had come to carry the most solemn overtones of moral obligation and religious observance. Jane Austen takes nothing on trust. In *Persuasion*, an over-developed sense of filial duty brings Anne Elliot years of needless suffering. Duty is what you make it, what you want it to be.

Persuasion addresses itself to the predicament of the isolated self responding to social deprivation. "It is filled with a sense of what time can do, with its changes, alienations, removals. It can lead to oblivion of the past and even annihilation of the self."⁴⁰ The author explores the existence of a heroine who, recognizing the importance of moral and social conventions, is deprived of the structured world she once enjoyed. She describes the total alienation of the individual from society, friendship, and love.

"Family attachment, far beyond any contemporary convention, was of Austen's essence."⁴¹ She had always depended for her periodic tastes of metropolitan life. Even as Anne is forced into a spiritual solitude—as a consequence of her present loss of home—her responses remain selfless and social. "Kellynch Hall is in effect abandoned, but she does not reject with the loss of her home a whole moral inheritance. The estate is not endangered but abandoned."⁴² Though, Anne is helpless to act or influence actions as she would wish to maintain and properly improve her inherited home.

Jane Austen's newly achieved ability to accept the coexistence of opposed characteristics in a single personality. The author writes of Anne Elliot with a solicitude. With a pardoning understanding there is a degree of sympathy that almost amounts to special pleading. This makes *Persuasion* both the most compelling and the weakest of Jane Austen's novels. As a passive heroine Anne is the one who has the head and heart to the necessary words and take the necessary actions. We can trace the course of a love founded equally upon esteem and passion in Anne.

39. Walton Litz, "Persuasion: Form of Estrangement" (1975) in *Northanger Abbey & Persuasion*, ed. B.C. Southam (Tiptree, Essex: Anchor Press, 1979), p. 241.

40. Litz, loc. cit.

41. Angus Wilson, "The Neighbourhood of Tombuctoo" in *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. B.C. Southam (London, 1968), p. 184.

42. Duckworth had described the importance of the estate in Jane Austen's novels. see Duckworth Alistair M. *The Improvement of the Estate*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974)

The heroine never loses the strength and dignity of her feeling. She has more nature insight, wisdom and intensity in love than other heroines, and has more intellectual and reflective cultivation than they. Through Anne, Jane Austen is no longer afraid to say her love. There is no other major novel so focused on the reanimation of affection. And there's a famous talk about woman's constancy which proves the biographical fact that the author loved. But the novel is a good deal more than a demonstration of the triumph of constancy. "Anne's unfaltering constancy to Wentworth expresses quietly but firmly her ideal of morality in personal relationships."⁴³ So this reticent woman, Anne Elliot, in her confidence holds the attention of readers.

The ideal of marriage for personal love rather than for an establishment or a family alliance was in a transitional stage in Jane Austen's time. This theme occurs in several of her novels, but her attitude is consistent: marriage without love is wrong. In *Persuasion* the problem is posed in its most intractable form. She treats feeling as feeling, not the understanding of feeling. She "was committed to the ideal of 'intellectual love', according to which the deepest and truest relationship that can exist between human beings is pedagogic. This relationship consists in the giving and receiving of knowledge about right conduct, in the formation of one person's character by another, the acceptance of another's guidance in one's own growth."⁴⁴

The idea of love based in pedagogy is seen in the power and charm of Jane Austen's art as Juliet McMaster noted. "Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Henry James goes further in exploring the implications in the pedagogic relationship. For Austen the pedagogic relationship is not parasitic but symbolic, a relationship that is mutual and joyful."⁴⁵ As Richard Simpson pointed out, "the Platonic idea that the giving and receiving of knowledge...is the truest and strongest foundation of love."⁴⁶ Jane Austen accepts the full and mutual engagement of head and heart is what's passionate.

According to Craik, *Persuasion* has greater depth and finer organization. Anne and Wentworth do not really resolve conflicting themes by their union; they exemplify rather a deep and private relationship in the novel. Though Jane Austen moves in her last novel toward a more modern examination of personal relationship, we are in the brink of the Victorian resolution in which the love of two people purifies an enclave within society.

In saying this, "there is in the Anne-Wentworth marriage an apparent union of landed and naval interests, and *Persuasion* seems to fulfill Austen's perennial demand that social position be filled with individual worth."⁴⁷

Persuasion is a different kind of subject from any Austen has attempted before. Really the author has learned that the problem of the heart are too delicate and too momentous to be decided with unhesitating confidence of her youth. She says of Anne Elliot that 'she had been forced into prudence in her youth,

43. Yasmine Gooneratne, *Jane Austen*, (Cambridge: University Printing House, 1979), p. 173.

44. Quoted in Juliet McMaster, "Love and Pedagogy" in *Jane Austen Today*. (Athens, 1975), p. 64.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

46. *loc. cit.*

47. Alistair M. Duckworth, *The Improvement of the Estate*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 202.

she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequence of an unnatural beginning'. The tone of this sentence is something new in Jane Austen's work and something self-revealing.

Though, Jane Austen could still regard love with a touch of irony, but love is softened by a new mood of pensive sympathy. There's nothing in her previous novels like Anne's answer to Captain Harville who

"Oh! cried Anne eagerly, I hope I do justice to all that is felt by you, and by those....All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that a loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone."⁴⁸

This is "the song of the dying swan in which she makes ample recantation for all her heresies, more apparent than real, against the Majesty of Love."⁴⁹ It is exquisitely beautiful, this declaration of such passionate emotion gives the Jane Austen's heroine a new dimension. So our response to it is the stronger for our awareness of Anne's habitual restraint.

Jane Austen still holds the view that love should be a rational passion, inseparable from esteem and respect for the character of the personal love. She tells her niece that "nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound without love, bound to one, and preferring another."⁵⁰ This statement reflects her mature conclusion about life. In a civilized society, romantic love between individual is a disruption. It seems to offer escape from that dependence on social support. The ideals of romantic love are expressed in attachment, like Anne's for Wentworth, or in her refusal to marry, like her resistance to the match with Mr. Elliot. This aspect of romantic love is concerned with the survival of the sensitive and penetrating individual in a society of conforming mediocrity.

Jane Austen in her last novel is quiet evidently seeking to persuade us that marriage is in various terms the ideal reward for two persons. Here, as before, marriage is regarded both as an affectionate relationship involving the moral regard of both partners for the other, a recognition of some difference in function and sensibility between male and female. It can not be denied that Miss Austen profoundly understood the experience of love, of love broken and disappointed, and the pains of loss and loneliness.

For all its general formulation, in the conflict of elderly prudence and the romantic love, there is Anne. Anne is always perfectly right, she is not so astringent as her creator. In Anne Elliot, Jane Austen did succeed. Anne's attitude so nearly coincides with her author's. Anne is the uncommon sort of heroine in English fiction. Her passion, her insight, her maturity, her prolonged fortitude will always attract us.

V

As Andrew Wright has observed, *Persuasion* is marked by a faith in society. Bradbury suggests that Jane Austen seems to want to persuade us that in the moral life the life of the classes are intimately connected. Jane Austen is interested in exploring the ways in which the co-existence of two quite carefully

48. Austen, *Persuasion*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. 235.

49. Richard Simpson, extract from article in *North British Review*: (April 1780) in *Northanger Abbey & Persuasion*, (Tiptree, 1968), p. 139.

50. See David Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*, (New York: Hill & Wang, 1979), p. 171.

defined social groupings-the world of the seafarers-extends our notion of what the moral life is, and creates the contrasting areas of value.

According to Virginia Woolf, "Austen's attitude to life itself is altered. She sees it through the eyes of a woman who, unhappy herself, has a special sympathy for the happiness and unhappiness of others, which she is forced to comment upon in silence."⁵¹ For a true heroine, Jane Austen asked for something more than a happy balance, something more even than a married state in which each partner drew out the first qualities in the other.

Jane Austen is very much aware of what one partner can gain or lose in marriage by the cumulative effect of the other partner on his or her character. A notion of ideal marriage is implicit in the novel. "It is not a romantic notion, not a view of continuing passionate love and idealization, but characteristically, one of balance and compromise, which husband and wife bring out the best and damping down the worst in each other's character."⁵²

It is plain, though, that the ironic dilemma is never resolved. Owing to many happily fortuitous circumstances, Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth are reunited at the end, but there still exists potentially in every relationship between a man and a woman the conflict between love and prudence. At any rate the last complete novel, *Persuasion*, might be called a moving plea for love and risk against worldly prudence. With Richard Poirier's description of Austen's marriages, they are not only meaningful acts of choice but unions of social and natural inclinations, and Malcolm Bradbury tells, that "the literary *persuasion* is towards convincing us that two people have made a good marriage, in terms of complex of social and moral discoveries, illuminating experiences of persons and events."⁵³

In the fullest sense, Austen understood love, and made sure best men and women come to do so. Therefore, *Persuasion* is "Austen's testimony to valour, the enduringness of the human spirit. She believed that love for another can be the light of a life."⁵⁴

51. Virginia Woolf, "The Common Reader" (1925) in *Northanger Abbey & Persuasion*, (Tiptree, 1968), p. 152.

52. David Daiches, "An Introduction" to *Persuasion*, ed. R.W. Chapman (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. xii.

53. Malcolm Bradbury, op. cit., p. 225.

54. Elizabeth Bowen, op. cit., p. 170.

「說得」을 中心으로한 Jane Austen 에 대한 小考

金 仙 姬

19世紀末 英國의 女性作家 제인 오스틴이 結婚 적령기에 놓인 女性들을 中心으로 사랑의 이야기를 다루고 있음은 周知의 事實이다.

본 論文에서 다루게 되는 「說得」은 오스틴의 作品에서 가장 심오하면서도 섬세하게 오스틴 固有의 독특한 創作法으로 쓰여있어, 오스틴의 최고의 걸작이라는 好評을 받고있다.

오스틴은 「說得」에서 그녀 자신의 人生에 대한 文學的 成熟을 보여주고 있다. 즉, 심각한 戲劇性을 결들이면서도 女性的인 필치로 思慮 깊은 오스틴 자신의 哲學的인 人生態度를 보여주고 있다.

우울한 色調속에서 오스틴이 내포하고 있는 意圖는 道德的이지만, 종전의 小說 特徵인 諷刺性을 띄지 않고 주인공 앤 엘리엇를 통하여 궁극적으로 調和와 均衡을 이루는 人間關係의 절묘한 경지를 잘 나타내고 있다. 주인공 앤 엘리엇는 文學的인 측면에서 보면 매력적이며 흔하지 않는 女性이다. 그녀의 사랑의 이야기는 다소 單調로운 느낌도 있으나 오스틴은 종전과는 다른 客觀的인 態度로 人生을 깊이있게 理解하고 있으며 「說得」에 나타난 小說技法은 文學的 成熟美를 더욱 잘 보여주고 있다. 그리고 社會, 友情, 사랑으로 부터 고립된 외로운 앤이 주어진 환경에서 賢明하게 對處해 나가는 굳센 意志와 努力에 우리는 18세기 古典主義의 性格을 띄는 오스틴의 理想主義的인 道德觀을 찾아 볼 수 있다.

한편, 오스틴은 그녀 특유의 小說技法을 터득해냈다. 이야기를 展開시켜 나가는 過程에 있어서는 종전의 유머나 위트 感覺이 다소 결여됐지만, 작가 특유의 부드러운 獨白의 技法은 그 獨創性에 있어서 높이 評價할 만 하다.

오스틴은 진정 위대한 世界的 作家이다. 한정된 範圍內에서 多樣한 主題에 대한 그녀의 表現技法은 어느 男性作家에게도 뒤떨어지지 않을 만큼 섬세하며 현대에 이르러 더욱 관심이 모아지는 世界的인 作家라고 할 수 있겠다.

本 論文에서는 哲學家, 教育家, 道德家로서의 면모를 지니면서 自身の 文學的 成熟을 보여주는 「說得」을 중심으로 오스틴의 사랑에 대한 人生態度와 그 文學性 및 道德性에 대하여 살펴보았다.