

「深遠なる重要性を帯びた影響」—その探求の魅惑」

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初期作品からみるジェイン・オースティンとジョージ・エリオット

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<はじめに>

・Walter Scott による Jane Austen への評価

The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early! (Scott, 106)

・George Henry Lewes による Jane Austen への評価

Of all imaginative writers she is the most real. Never does she transcend her own actual experience, never does her pen trace a line that does not touch the experience of others. Herein we recognise the first quality of literature. We recognise the second and more special quality of womanliness in the tone and point of view: they are novels written by a woman, an English woman, a gentlewoman; no signature could disguise that fact; . . . as the most truthful, charming, humorous, pure-minded, quick-witted, and unexaggerated of writers, female literature has reason to be proud of her. (141、下線発表者)

・ジョージ・エリオット、“How I Came to Write Fiction”

It had always been a vague dream of mine that some time or other I might write a novel, and my shadowy conception of what the novel was to be, varied, of course, from one epoch of my life to another. But I never went farther towards the actual writing of the novel than an introductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village and the life of the neighbouring farm houses, and as the years passed on I lost any hope that I should ever be able to write a novel, just as I desponded about anything else in my future life. (*Journals* 289)

1. ジェイン・オースティン

1) <初期作品 (*Juvenilia*)>

・Charles Adams の自己評価 (「ジャックとアリス (“Jack and Alice”）」、『第 1 巻』所収)

“I look upon myself to be Sir a perfect Beauty—where would you see a finer figure or a more charming face. Then, sir I imagine my Manners and Address to be of the most polished kind;

there is a certain elegance a peculiar sweetness in them that I never saw equaled and cannot describe My temper is even, my virtue innumerable, my self unparalleled. Since such Sir is my character, what do you mean by wishing me to marry your Daughter?" (*Juvenilia*, 28)

・失恋した女性

The unfortunate Alice on receiving from her father the sad account of the ill success his visit had been attended with, could scarcely support the disappointment—She flew to her Bottle and it was soon forgot. (*Juvenilia*, 29)

・破天荒なヒロイン（「ヘンリーとイライザ(“Henry and Eliza)」、『第1巻』所収)

No sooner was she reinstated in her accustomed power at Harcourt Hall, than she raised an Army, with which she entirely demolished the Dutchess's Newgate . . . and by that act, gained the Blessings of thousands, and the Applause of her own Heart. (*Juvenilia*, 45).

2)小説家としての自己定義 (Revd. James Stanier Clarke への書簡)

・The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or must occasionally be abundant in allusions and quotations which a woman who, like me, knows only her mother tongue, and has read very little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and ill-informed female who ever dared to be an authoress. (*Letters*, 306. 下線発表者)

・I could no more write a Romance than an Epic Poem. —I could not sit seriously down to write a serious Romance under any other motive than to save my Life, & if it were indispensable for me to keep it up & never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first Chapter. —No—I must keep to my own style & go on in my own Way; (*Letters*, 312)

2. ジョージ・エリオット

・ “How I Came to Write Fiction”での自己評価

I always thought I was deficient in dramatic power, both of construction and dialogue, but I felt I should be at my ease in the descriptive part of a novel. My “introductory chapter” was

pure description though there were good materials in it for dramatic presentation. (*Journals*, 289)

1) 小説の役割について

- ・ “The Natural History of German Life” (July 1856)

...our social novels profess to represent the people as they are, and the unreality of their representations is a grave evil. The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. . . a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is apart from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment. (*Essays*, 270)

- ・ 女性の書く小説 “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists” (October 1856)

Happily, we are not dependent on argument to prove that Fiction is a department of literature in which women can, after their kind, fully equal men. A cluster of great names, both living and dead, rush to our memories in evidence that women can produce novels not only fine, but among the very finest;— novels, too, that have a precious speciality, lying quite apart from masculine aptitudes and experience. No educational restrictions can shut women out from the materials of fiction, and there is no species of art which is so free from rigid requirements. Like crystalline masses, it may take any form, and yet be beautiful; we have only to pour in the right elements —genuine observation, humour, and passion. (*Essays*, 324)

2) 「エイモス・バートン (“The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton”)] (*Scenes of Clerical Life*)の人間像

- ・ルイスからの推薦状

. . . we have had abundant religious stories, polemical and doctrinal, but since the ‘Vicar’ and Miss Austen, no stories representing the clergy with the humours, sorrows, and troubles of other men. He begged me particularly to add, that . . . the tone throughout will be sympathetic, and not at all antagonistic.” (Cross, 418)

- ・Amos Barton の描写:

THE Rev. Amos Barton, whose sad fortunes I have undertaken to relate, was, you perceive, in no respect an ideal or exceptional character, and perhaps I am doing a bold thing to bespeak your sympathy on behalf of a man who was so very far from remarkable,—a man

whose virtues were not heroic, and who had no undetected crime within his breast; who had not the slightest mystery hanging about him, but was palpably and unmistakably commonplace; who was not even in love, but had had that complaint favourably many years ago. ‘An utterly uninteresting character!’ I think I hear a lady reader exclaim—. . .

Depend upon it, you would gain unspeakably if you would learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out through dull grey eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones. (*Scenes of Clerical Life*, 38-39)

・Milly Barton の描写:

Soothing, unspeakable charm of gentle womanhood! which supersedes all acquisitions, all accomplishments. You would never have asked, at any period of Mrs Amos Barton’s life, if she sketched or played the piano. You would even perhaps have been rather scandalized if she had descended from the serene dignity of being to the assiduous unrest of doing. (*Scenes of Clerical Life*, 15)

・エリオットの目指した小説

There was another motive at work, one which relates to the very characteristics which inform all George Eliot’s writings. She wanted to write not ‘women’s fiction’, novels and stories centering exclusively on young women observed in their domestic setting as they found romantic love, but to use a wider canvas, to show both men and women in their everyday lives, to pursue her characters into the workplace and to observe their interactions in terms of all their relationships - emotional, social, professional. (Ashton, 10)

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