

博士論文(要約)

論文題目

**Domestic Ideology and National Tale in Maria
Edgeworth's Novels**
(マライア・エッジワースの小説における家庭のイ
デオロギーとナショナル・テイル)

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5年以内に出版予定

Acknowledgements

The earlier and shorter versions of the chapters of this thesis were published over time. Chapter 1 and 2 revise and update my arguments in “Educating Domestic Women: ‘Active Virtues’ and Mother-Daughter Relationship in *Belinda* and *Helen*” (*Reading* [Journal of the Univ. of Tokyo English Literature Society], vol. 22, 2001, pp. 78-89) and “Maria Edgeworth’s Domestic Novels and National Heroines” (*The Journal of the Jane Austen Society of Japan*, no. 3, 2009, pp. 12-33); Chapter 3 reorganises two earlier essays, “The Vulnerable Framework: Competing Discourses in *Castle Rackrent*” (*Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 19, 2004, pp. 93-104) and “Focalising a Family History in *Castle Rackrent*” (*Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 22, 2007, pp. 7-15); Chapter 4 reworks and develops my arguments in “‘Happy England’: An Anglo-Irish Vision in *The Absentee* and *Ormond*” (*Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 16, 2001, pp. 108-17) and “Romantic Past and Didactic Prospect: Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan” (*Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 18, 2003, pp.75-86); Chapter 5 first appeared as a Japanese essay, 「イギリスのナショナル・テイル——マライア・エッジワースの『パトロネッジ』」 (『専修大学人文科学年報』 [*The Annual Bulletin of the Humanities, Senshu University*], no. 41, 2011, pp. [1]-[22]); an earlier version of Chapter 6 appeared as “‘Wild Irish’ Heroines: Sydney Owenson’s National Tales of the 1810s” (*Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 26, 2011, pp. 24-37); and Chapter 7 revises an essay originally in Japanese, 「スコットランドの風俗小説——スーザン・フェリアとブリテンの家庭／故郷」 (『一九世紀「英国」小説の展開』 [*Developments in the Nineteenth-Century British Novel*], edited by Hiroshi Ebine and Kazuhisa Takahashi, Shōhakusha, 2014, pp. 45-66). The last stage of this research project was funded by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS): “Atlas of the Domestic Novel in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Empire and National Identity” (Grant Number: 15K02293, April 2015-March 2019).

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the works of Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) as indicative of some important consciousness about womanhood and nationhood around the time of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland (1801). She was a prolific writer between 1800 and 1820, and has long been acknowledged as a key figure in the development of the English novel in the early nineteenth century. Her works extend to several different genres, from children's educational texts to adult fiction and from fashionable novels of manners to Irish writings. She is an interesting example of the intellectual women of the Romantic age in that she was an important participant in debates over socio-political matters such as regionalism and colonialism, education and feminism.

Because her writings bear various facets and their interrelationships are complex, it is important to pay attention to the generic crossovers of her works, examining them for what they reveal of cultural and political cross-currents. Following such a trend in Edgeworth criticism as well as the recent development of the Romantic studies which takes more notice of national differences within the British Isles, I look at feminist issues and Irish problems in Edgeworth's writings in tandem, focusing on her concern with Britain and Britishness. Whether it is a novel of manners primarily concerned with female education and domestic ideology or an Irish novel describing the state of the Irish countryside and land management, there is the same consciousness—her consciousness as a member of the Anglo-Irish landowning class, living in a place which has become a part and a periphery of Great Britain.

The thesis starts with a close analysis of Edgeworth's domestic and Irish novels. Part I considers her domestic ideology in her novels of manners. Chapter 1 looks at her early writings, the semi-fictional *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795), the educational treatise *Practical Education* (1798) and *Moral Tales for Young People* (1801). These early writings are concerned with the question of how a woman should be educated and what role she should play in society. Edgeworth's standpoint is made clear through comparison with other educational writers from Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) to Hannah More (1745-1833). She advocates the importance of reason and intelligence in a woman and the necessity of female education in the context of private life she is recommended to lead. Edgeworth redefines female domesticity as a space

where a woman actively exercises her reasoning and judgement for the welfare of her family. Also, Edgeworth's advocacy of the ideal of the rational domestic woman enabled her to launch her career as a writer. By connecting mothering, education and literacy, she promotes women's solid reading, and, furthermore, by paralleling her authorship with motherly supervision, she retains the respectability and propriety of her fictional writings.

Chapter 2 discusses how Edgeworth fictionalises her ideal of the rational domestic woman in her novels of manners, *Belinda* (1801), *Leonora* (1806) and *Helen* (1834). They demonstrate the importance of reason and domesticity by bringing poetic justice to the female characters according to their conformity to these values. However, her domestic novels also involve some contradictions: in upholding the rational reading of the novel as a "Moral Tale," her heroines run the risk of becoming unappealing in spite of (or because of) their virtues, while their antagonists provide the eloquent and vivid narrative drive due to the publicity, sentimentalism and performativity for which they are condemned. Edgeworth's domestic novels show the difficulty involved in the fictionalisation of the ideal woman. On the other hand, the apparently uninteresting domestic women are made to play an important role in relation to the idea of Britishness: a woman who is well-prepared to manage the household serves not only to maintain the family, but also at a higher level, the stability of the state. The ideal woman is designed in such a way that she marks and preserves the boundary of Britishness. Edgeworth promotes the education of women by presenting the rational domestic woman as the stronghold of Britain.

Part II focuses on Edgeworth's Irish writings, questioning how she represents Ireland in relation to her ideas about Britain. Chapter 3 deals with the first of her four Irish novels, *Castle Rackrent* (1800), which has a unique position in the whole of Edgeworth's oeuvre in that it employs the first-person narrative of the Irish servant Thady Quirk. Because of its complex narrative structure, the narrator and his narration have been the main focus of criticism. However, the framing devices that surround Thady's narrative—namely the Preface, Notes and Glossary—are equally important. *Castle Rackrent* deals with the vices of the Ascendancy family as "a tale of other time," as something that the present Ireland has overcome and left behind. An English voice of the editor is devised for this purpose, and the editorial framework foils the problematics of Thady's narrative and attempts to contain his Ireland within an Ireland

that has become a part of Britain. However, the editorial apparatus itself begins to unravel, and it betrays Edgeworth's anxiety about the Irish colonial situation. In the end, Thady's Ireland cannot be fully contained within a British framework, and such a dynamism of competing discourses makes *Castle Rackrent* a tantalisingly unstable text.

In Chapter 4, Edgeworth's later Irish novels, *Ennui* (1809), *The Absentee* (1812) and *Ormond* (1817), are discussed. It may be said that in these novels her complex views on Ireland and Britain are presented more straightforwardly than in *Castle Rackrent*. Through the moral development of the young protagonists, Edgeworth advocates the importance of the landowning class's commitment to Ireland. To bring out her Irish vision and British consciousness, the chapter first looks at *Ennui* in comparison with Sydney Owenson (1776?-1859)'s *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), the quintessential national tale. While Owenson advocates the uniqueness of traditional Irish culture and develops a "national marriage plot" of a symbolic union between the local/national heroine and the metropolitan male protagonist, Edgeworth takes a utilitarian Enlightenment attitude and envisions a more Anglicised Ireland. This reveals her ambivalence towards the indigenous people and culture in the treatment of her protagonist's marriage. In her Irish novels, a simple Anglo-Irish vs. Irish dichotomy is blurred, and Ireland's identity is established within the framework of the United Kingdom. In *The Absentee* and *Ormond*, too, the "national marriage plot" is inflected by her ideas of domestic ideology and moral landlordism, as the question of national identity for Ireland is deeply connected to an ideal of British womanhood discussed in Part I. Edgeworth's Irish *Bildungsromane* reflect the complexity of Anglo-Irish relationships in the post-Union situation, and the values recommended in them, namely the harmonious, stable community founded on moral landlordism and domestic ideology, become the standard for the entire British social order.

Part III attempts to put Edgeworth's idea of nation and gender into the context of national tales and the discourse of national identities of the early nineteenth century. Chapter 5 focuses on Edgeworth's longest novel, *Patronage* (1814), and proposes to read it as a British "national tale." It explores British national identity against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars. Qualities such as independence, freedom and sufficiency become central to Britishness, and meritocracy and professionalism are commended in the novel. Furthermore, the life of the English country gentleman is idealised as an embodiment of such Britishness, celebrating the

privacy and self-sufficiency of the landed class. Such an ideal echoes the moral landlordism advocated in Edgeworth's Irish novels, and works to incorporate the different nations within a unified state. Simultaneously, the rational domestic woman is presented as quintessentially British, and a home with such a wife is shown as the foundation of national welfare. *Patronage* thus brings together two of the most important themes in Edgeworth's writings, placing "a cultivated independent country gentleman and his family" at the centre of her national order. Through its voluminous episodes and geographic expanse that extends to the continental Europe and British colonies abroad, Edgeworth defines British nationhood by mapping her novelistic world with the English countryside as its centre.

The final two chapters compare her idea of nationhood and gender with those of Sydney Owenson and Susan Ferrier (1782-1854). Chapter 6 deals with Sydney Owenson's Irish national tales after *The Wild Irish Girl, O'Donnel* (1814), *Florence Macarthy* (1818) and *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* (1827), which give a very different outlook from that of Edgeworth. In the 1810s, Owenson herself begins to revise the "national marriage plot" of her previous novel. The marriage plots of her later national tales cease to revolve around the unity of different national characters, and the novels are less and less invested in the Irish alliance with the English. Instead, they become a clear vindication of "Irishness," and their marriages are between dispossessed Irishmen and mercurial Irish women; and these women's agency plays an important role in reclaiming Ireland for themselves. More concerned to promote cultural nationalism, Owenson has an opposite take to that of Edgeworth in imagining nationhood. Although in the 1820s its effectiveness became rather doubtful to Owenson herself, her later national tales nevertheless succeed in offering a way to imagine Irish national identity outside the confines of the British order.

Chapter 7 discusses Susan Ferrier's domestic novels, *Marriage* (1818), *The Inheritance* (1824) and *Destiny* (1831). Born and bred in Edinburgh, Ferrier wrote her novels set specifically in another region/nation within Great Britain: Scotland. For Scotland, which experienced political union with England a century earlier than Ireland, the tension between British and Scottish identity was one of the continued themes throughout the long eighteenth century. Ferrier uses the form of Scottish novels of manners and advocates the Highlands as the locus of British domestic values. By translating the discourse of the romantic Highlands,

developed by travelogues and national tales, into moral terms in her novels, she connects Highland landscape with domesticity. This, on the other hand, is achieved by playing down the presence and importance of the Scottish Lowlands, while England is basically represented as metropolitan superficiality. Through the contrast of the simple domesticity of the Scottish Highlands and the sophisticated dissipation of the English metropolis, the values she attaches to the Highlands permeate the different levels of nation and become distinctively British in her novels.

At the time when the United Kingdom was expanding, it was natural for women writers who lived in Ireland and Scotland, which had become peripheries of the United Kingdom, to be concerned with the question of national identities in a way that was closely related to gender politics. Both domestic ideology and the “national marriage plot” served to this purpose and their novels reveal tensions and negotiations between the complex national identities within Britain. The Epilogue makes a brief comparison with Jane Austen (1775-1817)’s *Emma* (1816), which is set at the heart of England. *Emma*’s world is basically centripetal, self-contained and insular, suggesting England’s cultural hegemony in Britain. At the same time, however, *Emma* contains a number of latent counter-narratives, which suggests the Englishness it represents is not necessarily unproblematic. Reading Jane Austen together with Maria Edgeworth, Sydney Owenson, and Susan Ferrier gives us a fuller picture of the complex nature of the debate over national identities these Romantic women writers in the British Isles were engaged in.