

0. Introduction

In *Mansfield Park*, the heroine Fanny tends to be understood as a shy and reserved girl compared with other female characters as well as the heroines Jane Austen's other novels. Austen effectively illustrates Fanny's personality through narration and character's thought and speech. Fanny's thought is described through narration in the following quotation:

- (1) Her influence, or at least the consciousness and use of it, originated in an act of kindness by Susan, which after many hesitations of delicacy, she at last worked herself up to. It had very early occurred to her, that a small sum of money might, perhaps, restore peace for even on the sore subject of the silver knife, canvassed as it now was continually, and the riches which she was in possession of herself, her uncle having given her 10*l.* at parting, made her as able as she was willing to be generous. (311)¹

Fanny might have a certain confidence that one more silver knife will do well to create peace between Susan and Betsey. However, "She was...wholly unused to confer favours, except on the very poor, so unpracticed in removing evils, or bestowing kindness among her equals, and so fearful of appearing to elevate herself as a great lady at home" (311), so the narrator avoids expressing Fanny's confidence by using *might*. Fanny is sure that the present itself would have a good effect, but she is not sure that it is suitable for her to make such a present, and feels uneasy about doing so. Here, the combination of *might* and *perhaps* has the effect of expressing her willingness in a tentative manner, not in an assertive one. As such, Austen skillfully describes her characters' complex feelings, by using the combinations of modal verbs and other modal expressions.

This paper aims to explore how modal forms contribute to describing the unique meaning which the character is striving to express or the narrator is trying to illustrate when modal verbs (*shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*, *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, and *ought to*) occur in combination with other modal expressions. In addition, I shall observe how the use of modal combinations has the effect on Austen's illustration of her characters.

Following Matsutani, I shall apply the "harmonic combination" (2000: 66) as a theoretical background and Preisler's (1986) theoretical classification to analyse the examples in this paper.

* This paper is a modified and enlarged version of my master thesis, "The Use of Modal Auxiliaries in *Mansfield Park*", presented to Graduate School of Letters, Hiroshima University in 2016.

¹ All the quotations in this paper are from *Mansfield Park* (Oxford World's Classics), edited by James Kinsley, 2008. Underlines are mine in this paper.

1. Modally Harmonic Combination and Non-harmonic Combination

Halliday (1970: 330-331) has defined modality as being “expressed by either or both of two elements, one verbal and the other non-verbal (where *verbal* means ‘functioning syntactically as a verb’)”. He categorizes these two elements as follows (1970: 330-331):

- Verbal forms [modal auxiliaries]:
will, would, can, could, may, might, should, must, ought to, need
- Non-verbal [lexical items]:
 1. as adverb (“modal adjunct”): *perhaps, possibly, presumably, obviously &c.*
 2. as adjective (predicative in impersonal matrix clause *it is ... that ...*): *possibly, likely, obvious, conceivable &c.*
 3. as adjective (predicative in impersonal, speaker-hearer matrix clause *I am ... that ..., are you ... that ...?*): *sure, certain &c.*; also *doubtful* (whether ...)
 4. as adjective (predicative in clauses such as *he is sure to have known*): *sure, certain, likely.*
 5. as noun (complement in impersonal matrix clause *there is a ... that ...*): *possibility, chance, likelihood, presumption &c.*

In addition, he suggests that the verbal and the non-verbal forms do not always occur in the same combination (1970: 331). Lyons states that when a variety of combinations of modal verbs and modal adverbs occur, there are two distinctions to be drawn: “modally harmonic and modally non-harmonic combinations” (1977: 807). For example, the modal auxiliary verb *may* and the modal adverb *perhaps* are “harmonic” (Lyons, 1977: 807), and “reinforce each other” (Halliday, 1976: 194). Kasai (1998: 11) points out that modally non-harmonic combinations make a non-sentence, because such combinations are incoherent and inconsistent in terms of mental attitude. There are, however, varieties of examples of modally non-harmonic combinations in *Mansfield Park* as well as modally harmonic combinations. Therefore, my study also focuses on the use of modally non-harmonic combinations to understand what the subject’s mental attitude is like when the characters or the narrator employ them in their speech or thoughts.

As mentioned above, I shall apply the categorization of clause-external and internal modal constructions to the classifications of my examples in this paper. Preisler distinguishes “structural modality” from “lexical modality”, and then divides “lexical modality” into “clause-external modal constructions” and “clause-internal modal constructions”: the former is the reporting verbs which occur in an external clause, and the latter is modal adverbs which occur in an internal clause, which is categorized as follows (1986: 87-88):

- Structural Modality
 1. Preterit without past reference

2. Central modal auxiliary verbs
3. Marginal modal auxiliary verbs
4. Tag questions
5. Hedges
- Lexical Modality
 6. Clause-external modal constructions
(e.g. John will find out about it, I'm sure.)
 7. Clause-internal modal constructions
(e.g. John will find out about it without doubt./ He surely can't mean that.)

My concern in this paper is restricted to the co-occurrence of modal verbs and modal adverbs which appears relatively frequently: as to clause-external modal constructions, I shall analyse the combination of modal auxiliaries with *I think* and *I am sure*; and as for clause-internal modal constructions, I will analyse the co-occurrence with *certainly* and *perhaps*.

2. Clause-external Modal Constructions and Modal Auxiliaries

Table 1 shows the huge variation of the combinations of modal verbs and clause-external modal expressions which occur in *Mansfield Park*. As I have mentioned above, I shall concentrate on the analysis of the combination of modal auxiliaries and modal constructions, *I think* and *I am sure* in this paper.

Table 1. Co-occurrence of modal auxiliaries and clause-external modal constructions

| | <i>I think...</i> | <i>I suppose...</i> | <i>I believe...</i> | <i>I am sure...</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Shall</i> | 7 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| <i>Should</i> | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| <i>Will</i> | 7 | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| <i>Would</i> | 10 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| <i>Can</i> | 3 | | | 2 |
| <i>Could</i> | 2 | | 1 | 2 |
| <i>May</i> | 3 | | | 2 |
| <i>Might</i> | 4 | | | |
| <i>Must</i> | 3 | | 5 | 2 |
| <i>Ought to</i> | 2 | | | 2 |

2.1. Combination of *I think* and Modal Auxiliaries

In example (2), Edmund is directly speaking to Tom, expressing his strong objection to private theatricals with several reasons.

- (2) ‘I [Edmund] think it would be very wrong. In a general light, private theatricals are open to some objections, but as we are circumstanced, I must think it would be highly injudicious, and more than injudicious, to attempt any thing of the kind. It would show great want of feeling on my father’s account, absent as he is, and in some degree of constant danger; and it would be imprudent, I think, with regard to Maria, whose situation is a very delicate one, considering every thing, extremely delicate.’ (99)

Edmund opposed the private theater while Tom and other young people were advancing the scheme, for the reason that he was sure of his father’s opposition and that his sister, Maria, was soon to be married. *Would* used in example (2) is “Hypothetical WOULD” “which is used to express politeness or tentativeness rather than a genuine hypothesis” (Coates, 1983: 216). Hypothetical *would* has an effect of enabling the speaker to express his/her opinion without giving the impression that he/she is telling the addressee what to do (Coates, 1983: 216). In (2), Edmund expresses his opinion assertively, but his statement seems to be uttered in a restrained manner, because of the use of hypothetical *would* and *I think*. Here, *I think* highlights the tentativeness of *would* as a hedge. In terms of the use of *I think* as a hedge, Holmes (1984) suggests that, “particularly in informal speech situations, women tend to use more expressions which express uncertainty or politeness than men” on the basis of Robin Lakoff (1972). In addition, Coates (1987: 127) observes that the women’s conversation contains far more epistemic modals than the men’s conversation. In *Mansfield Park*, however, among the examples in Table 1, 14 examples of the combinations of *I think* and modal verbs are used by Edmund as in example (2). This would mean that Edmund is more involved in sensitive conversation related to moral concerns and principles, so he needs to be considerate when he reveals his own feelings. In addition, his clerical character, though he is not a clergyman yet, is reflected in the frequent use of *I think*.

Fanny has been talking with Edmund about Henry’s marriage proposal before example (3), and here, Fanny’s strong emotion is expressed to Edmund who advised Fanny “let him succeed at last” (272). Here, *I think* is used with *shall*:

- (3) (a) ‘Oh! Never, never, never; he never will succeed with me.’ And she spoke with a warmth which quite astonished Edmund, and which she blushed at the recollection of herself, when she saw his look, and heard him reply, ‘Never, Fanny, so very determined and positive! This is not like yourself, your rational self.’ (b) ‘I mean,’ she cried, sorrowfully, correcting herself, ‘that I think, I never shall, as far as the future can be answered for—I think I never

shall return his regard.’ (272)²

This is one of the important examples in *Mansfield Park*, because Fanny’s strong emotional feelings are expressed directly by herself. In (a), *will* expresses Fanny’s volition and it directly and emotionally expresses that Fanny thinks it impossible to accept the marriage proposal from Henry. Fanny’s emotion was too strong to be restrained by her usual reason, and unconsciously appears in her words. Fanny, having noticed Edmund’s surprise and having been embarrassed by her own irrationality, then represents her own feelings in a more indirect and explanatory way in (b). Such a change of her feeling from (a) to (b) is also indicated by modal verbs in her words. *Will* in (a) represents Fanny’s strong volition and confirmation, while *shall* in the rationally rephrased latter utterance (b) indicates an inevitability unrelated to her authority. In addition to the use of *shall*, *I think* is used as a hedge to express politeness.

In example (4), Henry is openly tempting Maria to pass round the gate with him instead of waiting for her husband, Mr. Rushworth. Here, *I think* occurs with *might* to express his clever seduction.

- (4) ‘And for the world you would not get out without the key and without Mr. Rushworth’s authority and protection, or I think you might with little difficulty pass round the edge of the gate, here, with my assistance; I think it might be done, if you really wished to be more at large, and could allow yourself to think it not prohibited.’ (79)

Jespersen (1949: §9.5(3)) points out that *might* is frequently used mainly in sentences of imagination referring to the present time. In (4), *might* is used with the meaning of ‘it would be possible that ... would ...’ as the hypothetical form of Epistemic MAY.³ According to Coates, “MIGHT, like MAY, is used as a hedge: the speaker avoids committing himself to the truth of the proposition ... When speakers are more confident they predict what will happen, but speakers who want to avoid any commitment to the factuality of the utterance choose MIGHT or MAY” (1983: 149). Here, Henry uses *might* to indirectly convey his intention to Mary, although he has confidence that she can pass the gate if she wants. So, here, *might* expresses the tentativeness and skillfulness of his temptation, and *I think* gives his words a more indirect manner.

2.2. Combination of *I am sure* and Modal Auxiliaries

I am sure appears with all the modal verbs listed in Introduction except *might* in *Mansfield Park*. *I am sure* is an expression which expresses the speaker’s confidence about what he/she thinks or says

² For convenience of explanation, I have numbered the sentences alphabetically in this paper.

³ See Coates (1983: 157-158).

(Matsutani, 2000: 73), and according to Matsutani's analyses, *I am sure* occurred with *must* most frequently, while it appears to be most harmonic with *will* in *Mansfield Park*.

The use of *I am sure* with modal verbs is remarkable in Mrs. Norris's words. In example (5), Mrs. Norris is talking with Sir Thomas about their undertaking the care of Fanny.

- (5) ... and I [Mrs. Norris] am sure I should be the last person in the world to withhold my mite upon such an occasion. Having no children of my own, who should I look to in any little matter I may ever have to bestow, but the children of my sisters? — and I am sure Mr. Norris is too just — but you know I am a woman of few words and professions. (5)

Mrs. Norris depicts her own disposition expressing strong subjective confidence by the use of *I am sure*. As to the difference between epistemic *must* and *should*, Lakoff (1972: 912-913) states that epistemic *must* expresses an inference which can be proven at present using evidence which the speaker can acquire directly, while epistemic *should* expresses an inference which can be proven in the future. In addition, Sawada (2006: 212) observes that epistemic *should* indicates that the subject predicts according to abstract knowledge, such as common sense, law, formula, and past experience. In example (5), Mrs. Norris expresses her prediction from her own belief about her personality, not from objective knowledge of herself. Sawada (2006: 215) also states that epistemic *should* sometimes expresses the difference between theory and fact, or ideal and reality, because the proposition is predicted, not asserted according to direct proof. The use of *should* may imply that the result may not match to her prediction in spite of her confidence expressed by *I am sure*.

Examples (6) and (7) also show Mrs. Norris's verbal contradiction of her actual personality. Here again, she uses *I am sure* to strengthen what she is saying, but unlike example (5), *I am sure* is used to show her confidence about what depends on other people's thoughts or feelings:

- (6) '... Fanny live with me! the last thing in the world for me to think of, or for any body to wish that really knows us both ... Sure Sir Thomas could not seriously expect such a thing! Sir Thomas is too much my friend. Nobody that wishes me well, I am sure, would propose it. How came Sir Thomas to speak to you about it?' (23)
- (7) '... He could not say he wished me to take Fanny. I am sure in his heart he could not wish me to do it.' (23)

In examples (6) and (7), Mrs. Norris asserts that Sir Thomas has thought in exactly the same way as she does, using the phrase *I am sure*. The subject of the proposition is the third-person, so the objective facticity is rather doubtful. Actually, Sir Thomas "could not but wonder at her refusing to do any thing for a niece, whom she had been so forward to adopt" (24) when he hears from Mrs.

Bertram what Mrs. Norris has actually been thinking about her adopting Fanny. His surprise indicates that Mrs. Norris's confirmation is clearly different from the actual thoughts of Sir Thomas.

In addition to the examples of Mrs. Norris's usage, the use of the combination of *I am sure* and modal auxiliaries may express the speaker's personality. Example (8) is a part of the letter which Mary writes to Fanny after the elopement of Henry and Maria.

- (8) '... Say not a word of it — hear nothing, surmise nothing, whisper nothing, till I [Mary] write again. I am sure it will be all hushed up, and nothing proved but Rushworth's folly. If they [Henry and Maria] are gone, I would lay my life they are only gone to Mansfield Park, and Julia with them ...' (343)

In example (8), *will* has the more confidential epistemic meaning 'Predictability'. Coates (1983: 177) notes that Epistemic *will* "expresses the speaker's confidence in the truth of the proposition; unlike Epistemic MUST, the speaker's confidence is not based on a process of logical inference. Instead it is based on common sense, or on repeated experience". *Will* expresses Mary's predictability that even such a serious fault as the elopement of Henry and Maria can be resolved and artfully managed so as to conceal it. Fanny observes that Mary's letter expresses "her eager defense of her brother, her hope of its being *hushed up*, her evident agitation" (346). As Fanny thinks, Mary is agitated at the information about the elopement in spite of her confidence expressed in her words. Here, it is reasonable to assume that *I am sure* is used rather to "boost the strength of the assertion with intensifying and emphatic devices" (Holmes, 1984: 60) than to express her confidence.

3. Clause-internal Modal Constructions and Modal Auxiliaries

I shall now analyse how modal verbs, which I discussed in Section 2, are used with clause-internal modal constructions, such as *certainly* and *perhaps*. Wierzbicka (2009: 251) states that there are two important semantic analyses of epistemic adverbs. Firstly, "epistemic adverbs are 'speaker-oriented' rather than 'subject-oriented'", and secondly, "they express 'a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker'" (251). Moreover, she comments on the features of clause-external modal verbs and clause-internal modal adverbs: "verbal epistemic phrases such as *I think* and *I believe*, which focus exclusively on the speaker's own attitude to the utterance. ... epistemic adverbs, unlike epistemic verbal phrases, 'objectify' the speaker's own attitude by extending it, in anticipation, to 'other people'" (288). Therefore, both the clause-internal and external modal expressions are speaker-oriented and subjective, but clause-internal modal expressions (epistemic adverbs) give a more objective impression than clause-external forms do.

As Table 2 shows, modal adverbs *certainly* and *perhaps* occur with a variety of modal verbs, while *probably* occurs with fewer, and *possibly* occur only with *can* and *could*. As I have noted above, I shall concentrate on analysing the co-occurrence of modal auxiliaries and modal adverbs, *certainly* and *perhaps*, in this paper.

Table 2. Co-occurrence of modal verbs and clause-internal modal constructions

| | <i>Certainly</i> | <i>Probably</i> | <i>Perhaps</i> | <i>Possibly</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Shall</i> | 2 | 1 | | |
| <i>Should</i> | 2 | | 1 | |
| <i>Will</i> | 8 | 3 | 2 | |
| <i>Would</i> | 10 | 8 | 3 | |
| <i>Can</i> | 1 | | 1 | 3 |
| <i>Could</i> | | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| <i>May</i> | 1 | 1 | 8 | |
| <i>Might</i> | | | 15 | |
| <i>Must</i> | 2 | | 1 | |
| <i>Ought to</i> | | | 1 | |

3.1. Combination of *Certainly* and Modal Auxiliaries

Example (9) is Fanny’s direct speech (DS⁴), which is uttered after reading a letter from Edmund when she was in Portsmouth. She had been longing for his letter, but when she received it, she found it a painful and distressing letter, which brought only disappointment and sorrow to her.

- (9) (a) ‘I never *will* — (b) no, I *certainly* never *will* wish for a letter again,’ was Fanny’s secret declaration, as she finished this. ... She was almost vexed into displeasure, and anger, against Edmund. “There is no good in this delay,” said she. “Why is not it settled? — He is blinded, and nothing will open his eyes, nothing can, after having had truths before him so long in vain. — He will marry her, and be poor and miserable. God grant that her influence do not make him cease to be respectable!” (332)

This letter informed Fanny that she could not return to Mansfield till after Easter, and also Edmund declared his state of mind towards Mary: “I cannot give her up, Fanny. She is the only woman in the world whom I could ever think of as a wife” (331). In both (a) and (b), *will* refers to Fanny’s strong volition, and it is written in the inverted form of *will never*. Palmer (1986: 64) describes a difference

⁴ DS stands for Direct Speech, IS for Indirect Speech, FIS for Free Indirect Speech, IT for Indirect Thought, FIT for Free Indirect Thought, and DT for Direct Thought in this paper.

of meaning between modal verbs and modal adverbs, “the modal expressing inference and the adverb confidence”.⁵ In (b), Fanny’s strong volition is highlighted by *certainly* which expresses her confidence in what she has thought.

In example (10) Fanny’s thought is represented by the narrator through FIT:

(10) She was feeling, thinking, trembling, about everything; — agitated, happy, miserable, infinitely obliged, absolutely angry. (b) It was all beyond belief! He was inexcusable, incomprehensible! — But such were his habits, that he could do nothing without a mixture of evil. He had previously made her the happiest of human beings, and now he had insulted—she knew not what to say—how to class or how to regard it. She would not have him be serious, and yet what could excuse the use of such words and offers, if they meant but to trifle?

But William was a Lieutenant. — That was a fact beyond a doubt and without an alloy. She would think of it for ever and forget all the rest. Mr. Crawford would certainly never address her so again: he must have seen how unwelcome it was to her; and in that case, how gratefully she could esteem him for his friendship to William! (236-237)

The narrator depicts Fanny’s psychological state in (a), and her thought is represented through FIT in (b). “*Would certainly*” is back-shifted form of “*will certainly*”, and here epistemic *will* expresses Fanny’s strong volition, and *certainly* strengthens her confidence toward her predictability.

3.2. Combination of *Perhaps* and Modal Auxiliaries

Example (11) is the only example of the combination of *ought to* and *perhaps*, and Fanny’s feeling is represented by the non-modally harmonic combination.

(11) (a) Now she was angry. Some resentment did arise a perseverance so selfish and ungenerous. Here was again a want of delicacy and regard for others which had formerly so struck and disguised her. Here was again a something of the same Mr. Crawford whom she had so reprobated before. (b) How evidently was there a gross want of feeling and humanity where his own pleasure was concerned — And, alas! How always no known principle to supply as a duty what the heart was deficient in. Had her own affections been as free — as perhaps they ought to have been — he never could have engaged them. (257)

In (a), Fanny’s thoughts are represented by the narrator, and in (b), her *perhaps* expresses Fanny’s uncertainty about the proposition: “they [her own affections] *ought to have been* [free]”. *Ought to* expresses objectivity and *perhaps* implies her willingness to make the proposition less definite. The

⁵ Palmer (1986: 64) explains that in modal verbs, the speaker indicates that he is inferring from available information, while in modal adverbs, he indicates the degree of confidence he has in what he is saying. See Palmer (1986) for more detailed information.

modally non-harmonic combination seems to depict Fanny's subtle feeling that it is not always wrong to love Edmund.

Perhaps is technically harmonically-combined with *may* and *might*. However, in the next passages, it appears with *must* which expresses logical necessity. Fanny's controversial feeling is described through FIT:

- (12) Yet to have so little said or asked about herself — to have scarcely an enquiry made after Mansfield! ... But here, one subject swallowed up all the rest. Perhaps it must be so. The destination of the Thrush must be now pre-eminently interesting. (300)

She returns to her original house at Portsmouth, but her family will not ask any questions about her life at Mansfield. Their interest is only in William's sailing and it is the only topic of their conversation. *Must* is used in the epistemic meaning which expresses Fanny's assumption according to the proof which she can rationally discover, that is, "What right had she to be of importance to her family? She could have none, so long lost sight of! William's concerns must be dearest—they always had been — and he had every right" (300). *Perhaps* implies Fanny's uncertainty and tentativeness about the proposition that "it *must* be so" (my emphasis).

Example (13) is one of the examples of the combination of *perhaps* and *might* used in narrative sentences, and here, the narrator comments on Mrs. Norris's character:

- (13) Under this infatuating principle, counteracted by no real affection for her sister, it was impossible for her to aim at more than the credit of projecting and arranging so expensive a charity; though perhaps she might so little know herself, as to walk home to the Parsonage after this conversation, in the happy belief of being the most liberal-minded sister and aunt in the world. (7)

In *Mansfield Park*, there are 15 examples of the combinations of *perhaps* and *might*, and among the 15 examples, 8 examples are used in narrative sentences and 7 examples are used by Fanny. The narrator describes the characters' emotion or illustrates her opinion through the combination of *might* and *perhaps*, not as an omniscient narrator, but as an individual person whose point of view seems quite close to that of the reader. In example (13), the narrator ironically describes how Mrs Norris, who has no intention of taking economic responsibility for bringing Fanny up because of her love of money, is savoring the feeling of satisfaction for her being benevolent as much as Sir Thomas, who actually takes every responsibility for Fanny.

Before (14), Edmund and Tom are discussing private theatricals, and Fanny, listening to their conversation, ventures to give her opinion to assuage the agitation of Edmund:

- (14) Fanny, who had heard it all, and borne Edmund company in every feeling throughout the whole, now ventured to say, in her anxiety to suggest some comfort, ‘Perhaps they may not be able to find any play to suit them. Your brother’s taste, and your sisters’, seem very different.’ (101)

After the discussion, Tom leaves the room and Edmund sits down and stirs the fire in thoughtful vexation. Therefore, Fanny needs courage to utter comforting words to Edmund. Fanny’s anxious and tentative feeling appears in the use of the combination of *perhaps* and *may* in example (14).

4. Modal Combinations and Characterization

Matsutani (2000: 77) observes the difference between speech of Mr. Knightley and Harriet in terms of the strength of subjectivity in modal expressions, and points out that these differences have the effect on the process of image formation of characters. In this section, I shall explore the effect of the modal combinations employed in *Mansfield Park*, focusing on the use related with Fanny and Mrs. Norris.

4.1. Characterization of Fanny

Lodge (1962: 277) states “The faculty of judgment is, of course, possessed to a prominent degree by the heroine of *Mansfield Park*, Fanny”. Also, according to him, the essential meaning of judgment in *Mansfield Park* is “the ability to distinguish correctly between the right and the wrong course of action” (1962: 278). As mentioned in Introduction, Fanny is interpreted as a shy and reserved girl compared with other female characters, and her social situation and circumstance seem to highlight her personal disposition as in example (13) and (14). They are the examples of modally harmonic combinations, and they express Fanny’s tentative and reserved disposition. However, I rather think that Fanny has passion and strong mind, though they are rarely visibly apparent, we can catch a glimpse of them in her utterance, thoughts, and the choice of behaviour.⁶ Her strong volition to live up with her own principle and do her duty can be seen in (3b). Although her agitated utterance is rephrased in a more rational manner, her volition is clearly expressed even to Sir Thomas.

From Chapter I to III of the novel, there are clear differences in the amount of the utterances of Fanny, the opportunities in which her feelings are disclosed, and the attention being paid to her. The more confident in her own principle she gets, the stronger her words become. Characteristically,

⁶ Kano (2010: 33) suggests that restraining one’s own emotion tends to give an impression that the person is quiet, but it may also express his/her strength of nature, and one can express oneself through behaviour not through words. Declining to participate in the theatricals and refusing Henry’s marriage proposal would be apparently understood to be passive behaviour, but at the same time, they are her own choice of her behaviour without yielding to others’ opinion.

however, the strong words are used in the passages conveying her thoughts and feelings which are not directly spoken by her. Fanny is a thinker rather than a speaker, and “she was always more inclined to silence when feeling most strongly” (290). Therefore, “soliloquies” as in example (10) “serve an important function in the presentation of the heroine’s emotional life” (Page, 1972: 37), and they help us to understand her personality. Sometimes, however, her thoughts are expressed directly by herself as in example (3a) and (9). In these examples, the modality expresses that Fanny’s usual rational self cannot restrain her strong emotion.

4.2. Characterization of Mrs. Norris

The frequent use of the combination of *I am sure* as in (5), (6) and (7) expresses that she thinks she understands everything justly, and other people also should think or feel as she does, while the proposition highlighted by *I am sure* is self-centered and often judged biasedly. Trilling (1948) observes Mrs. Norris’s character as follows:

... there is a plain disparity between what she says of herself and what the actual language of her speeches tells us about her (“I am a woman of few words and professions”). In spite of her belief of herself, “that speech runs to a full page, the opening sentence to eighty-seven words, and the whole is assertive and presumptuous” she has Miss Bates’s garrulity without her good nature, just as the latter’s entertaining preoccupation with trifles has somehow gone sour with Mrs Norris and turned into a symptom of her incorrigible meanness of spirit. (Trilling, 1948: 143)

Her personality told by herself and the impression which reader might gradually acquire from what she actually does or says are completely different. She believes that she lives up to her own principle which justly accords with general social and moral values, although she thinks, feels, and judges according to a biased principle in which she judges right or wrong only for her convenience.

There is another example of Mrs. Norris’s use of the combination of *I am sure* and modal auxiliaries. In (15), Mrs. Norris is talking to Fanny at the end of the day of their visit to Southerton. *I am sure* is employed to emphasize Mrs. Norris’s objectified subjective sense of value:

(15) ‘Well, Fanny, this has been a fine day for you, upon my word!’ said Mrs. Norris, as they drove through the park. ‘Nothing but pleasure from beginning to end! I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to your aunt Bertram and me, for contriving to let you go. A pretty good day’s amusement you have had!’ (83)

In (15), *ought to* expresses weak obligation, which may be paraphrased as “it is natural”. Mrs. Norris is advising Fanny to feel obliged to her as if she is the person who made efforts to make it possible

for Fanny to visit Southerton. In point of fact, however, Mrs. Norris assumes that Fanny wants to stay at home with Mrs. Bertram. Moreover, she “[has] no affection for Fanny, and no wish of procuring her pleasure at any time” (63), so when Edmund suggests that he will rather stay at home instead of Fanny, Mrs. Norris feels that “she had arranged every thing extremely well, and that any alteration must be for the worse” (63). Austen tries to illustrate Mrs. Norris’s character through her utterances, and also through the contradiction between her words and behaviour.

5. Final Remarks

In the discussion above, I have analysed how Austen employs the combinations of modal auxiliaries and the clause-external and internal modal constructions and how they contribute to illustrate the characters’ personality. Coates (1987) illustrates the unique meaning which modal combinations can express as follows:

The truth is something like good vegetable soup: on their own, epistemic modal forms, like carrots, leeks or celery, have little meaning; but in combination, in that particular context, with those prosodic features, they achieve the unique meaning which the speaker is striving to express. (Coates, 1987: 130)

As Coates (1987) observes, the combination of modal auxiliary verbs and the clause-external and internal modal constructions express the characters’ subtle psychological states which the narrator cannot illustrate with the use of just a single modal expression. The modally-harmonic combinations reinforce the modal meaning. They sometimes strengthen the characters’ confidence, and at other times highlight the speaker’s tentativeness or politeness, while the modally-non-harmonic combinations express the characters’ uncertainty, doubt, conflicting feelings, and insistent emotions. Austen effectively combines these modal expressions to describe different emotional states, and when the characteristic expressions are employed repeatedly in a certain character’s speech or thought, they have the effect of illustrating not only the character’s feelings in each sentence, but also his/her personality.

Text

Austen, J. (1814) *Mansfield Park*. (Oxford World’s Classics) Edited by James Kinsley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

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