

# Wilkie Collins の *Basil* における 'sensation' の扱いをめぐって

## 1850 年代における「センセーション小説」の萌芽

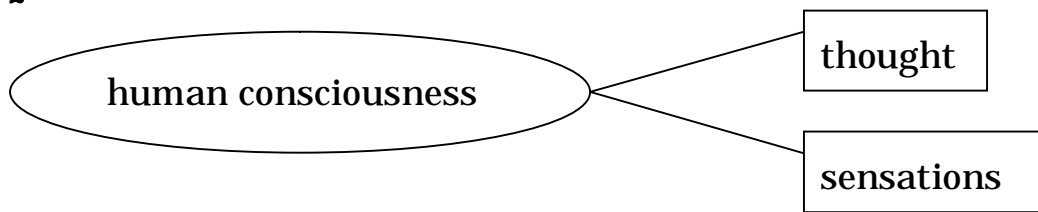
関西外国語大学 専任講師 橋野 朋子

### 1 . *Basil* における 'sensation' と 'thought' の対比

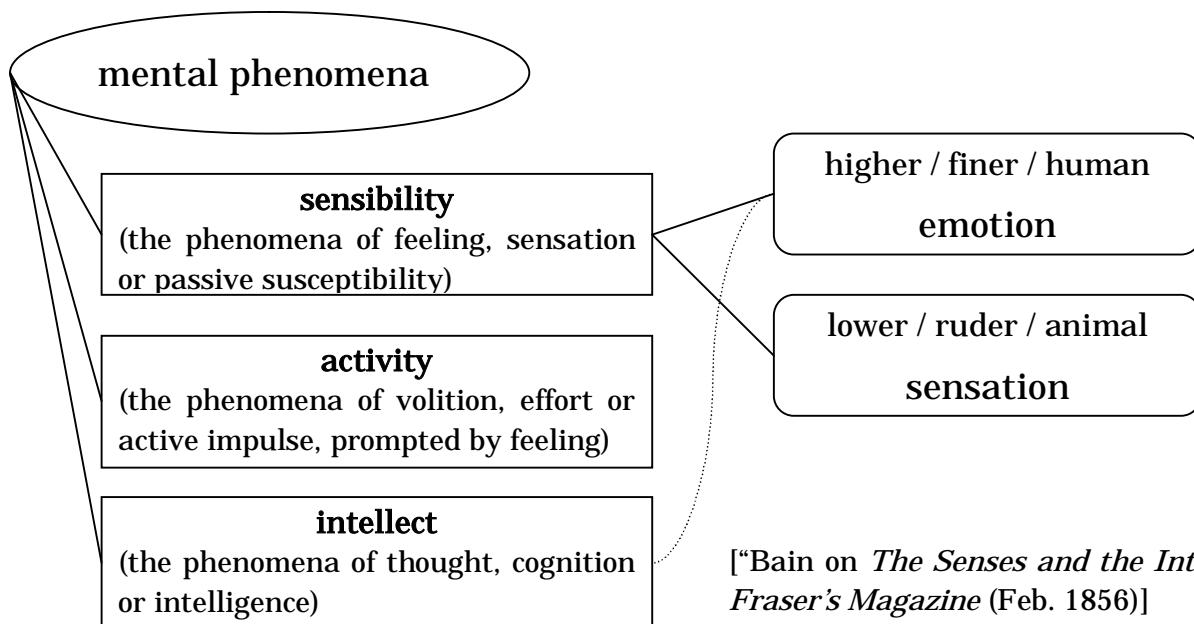
1-1 The impression left by it [the sight of Margaret] made me insensible for the time to all boding reflections, careless of exercising the smallest self-restraint. I gave myself up to the charm that was at work on me. Prudence, duty, memories and prejudices of home, were all absorbed and forgotten in love - love that I encouraged, that I dwelt over in the first reckless luxury of a new sensation. (emphasis added.)

[Wilkie Collins, *Basil* (1852. Oxford: Oxford U. P. , World's Classics, 1990) 38]

1-2



["Psychological Inquiries" *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (Apr. 1855)]



["Bain on *The Senses and the Intellect*" *Fraser's Magazine* (Feb. 1856)]

*OED* での 'sensation' の定義 : the operation or function of the senses / a physical 'feeling' considered apart from the resulting 'perception' of an object

- 1-3 . . . how the sense of that touch was prolonged! I felt it thrilling through me – thrilling in every nerve, in every pulsation of my fast-throbbing heart. (emphasis added.) [*Basil* 29]
- 1-4 . . . the senses are dependent upon the attention the mind may bestow. The soul can insulate itself, as it were; or, locking up all the doors of its adytum, can exclude the impressions which solicit admission.  
[“The Philosophy of the Senses” *The British Quarterly Review* (Apr. 1854) 433-434]
- 1-5 Stirring ideas; store of knowledge patiently heaped up; visions of better sights than this world can show, falling freshly and sunnily over the pages of my first book; all these were past and gone - withered up by the hot breath of the senses - doomed by a paltry fate, whose germ was the accident of an idle day! (emphasis added.)  
[*Basil* 41]
- 1-6 Deteriorating as my passion was in its effect on the exercise of my mental powers, and on my candour and sense of duty in my intercourse with home, it was a pure feeling towards her. (emphasis added.) [*Basil* 43]
- 1-7 Her lovely lustrous black eye seemed to flash into mine through the glass; her warm, quick breathing played on my cheek – it was but for an instant, and in that instant I kissed her for the first time. What sensations the kiss gave me then!  
(emphasis added.) [*Basil* 99]
- 1-8 Directing my characters and my story. . . towards the light of Reality wherever I could find it, I have not hesitated to violate some of the conventionalities of sentimental fiction. [*Basil* xxxvi]

## 2 . Basil が妻の「不貞」を聞き知る章に関して

- 2-1 I could neither move nor breathe. The blood surged and heaved upward to my brain; my heart strained and writhed in anguish; the life within me raged and tore to get free. Whole years of the direst mental and bodily agony were concentrated in that one moment of helpless, motionless torment. I never lost the consciousness of suffering. . . and knew when the paroxysm passed, and nothing remained of it, but a shivering helplessness in every limb.  
Ere long, the power of thinking began to return to me by degree.  
(emphasis added.) [*Basil* 161]
- 2-2 ONE THOUGHT slowly arose. . . and cast down before it every obstacle of conscience, every principle of education, every care for the future, every remembrance of the past, every weakening influence of present misery, every repressing tie of family and home, every anxiety for good fame in this life, and every idea of the next that was to come. Before the fell poison of that Thought, all other thoughts - good or evil - died. As it spoke secretly within me, I felt my bodily strength coming back; a quick vigour leaped hotly through my frame. [*Basil* 161]

- 2-3 One long pang of shame and despair shot through my heart as I looked at her, and tortured out of its trance the spirit within me. Thousands on thousands of thoughts seemed to be whirling in the wildest confusion through and through my brain - thought, whose track was a track of fire - thoughts that struck me with a hellish torment of dumbness, at the very time when I would have purchased with my life the power of a moment's speech. (emphasis added.) [*Basil* 165]
- 2-4 I hid my face in my hands, and tried to assure myself that I was still in possession of my senses. I strove hard to separate my thoughts; to distinguish between my recollections; to extricate from the confusion within me any one idea, no matter what - and I could not do it. In that awful struggle for the mastery over my own mind, all that had passed, all the horror of that horrible night, became as nothing to me. I raised myself, and looked up again, and tried to steady my reason by the simplest means. . . The darkness bewildered me. . . A blaze of lurid sunshine flashed before my eyes; a hell-blaze of brightness, with fiends by millions, raining down out of it on my head; then a rayless darkness - the darkness of the blind - then God's mercy at last - the mercy of utter oblivion. (emphasis added.) [*Basil* 167]
- 2-5 My first sensation. . . was of a terrible heat. . . After this, came a quick, restless, unintermittent toiling of obscure thought. . . Soon these thoughts began to take a form that I could recognise. (emphasis added.) [*Basil* 169]

### 3 . 同時代小説の流れにおける *Basil* の特異性

- 3-1 I'm sick to death of novels with an earnest purpose. I'm sick to death of outbursts of eloquence, and large-minded philanthropy, and graphic descriptions, and unsparing anatomy of the human heart, and all that sort of thing. . . Good Gracious me! isn't it the original intention or purpose of fiction, to set out distinctly by telling a story? And how many of these books, I should like to know, do that? Why, so far as telling a story is concerned, the greater part of them might as well be sermons as novels. . . what I want is something that seizes hold of my interest. . . something that keeps me reading, reading, in a breathless state to find out the end.  
[Wilkie Collins, *The Queen of Hearts* (1859 Doylestown: Wildside Press) 43]
- 3-2 We must shuffle off the traditional descriptions, the sleepy dialogue, the bits of scenery which have nothing to do with the action. . . We must go straight to the vital interest, and keep to it to the end.  
["The Art of Story-Telling" *Fraser's Magazine* 53 (Jun. 1856) 732]
- 3-3 Whatever men are congregated together, there are human passions, hopes, desires. The inner life is much the same everywhere. It is the external life, modified by social, moral, and physical circumstances, that presents the most material differences. The story in which the former is taken as the basis of the interest, and the latter as the vehicle, must make itself felt it be true to its design. English story-tellers have seldom grasped both. ["The Art of Story-Telling" 730]

#### 4 . 出版当時の *Basil* に対する評価

- 4-1 There is a startling antagonism between the intensity of the passion, the violent spasmodic action of the piece, and its smooth, common-place environments. The scenery, the dramatic personae, the costumery, are all of the familiar, every-day type, belonging to an advanced stage of civilization; but there is something rude and barbarous, almost Titanic, about the incidents; they belong to a different state of society. (emphasis added.) [“*Esmond and Basil*” *Bentley’s Miscellany* (Dec. 1852) 586]
- 4-2(a) Fertile and comprehensive as is the domain of imaginative art, . . . it is not too much to expect that [man’s] vices, in the lowest abyss of their degradation, should not be selected as the subject of fiction. (emphasis added.)  
[“A Trio of Novels” *Dublin University Magazine* (Jan. 1853), in Norman Page [ed.] *Wilkie Collins: the Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1974) 51]
- 4-2(b) Mr. Collins, on the contrary, makes a woman given up to evil the heroine of his piece, and dwells on the details of animal appetite with a persistency which can serve no moral purpose, and may minister to evil passions even while professing condemnation of them. [“The Progress of Fiction as an Art” *The Westminster Review* (Oct. 1853) 373]
- 4-2(c) There are some subjects on which it is not possible to dwell without offence; and Mr. Collins having first chosen one which could neither please nor elevate, has rather increased the displeasure it exercise, by his resolution to spare us no revolting details.  
[“The Progress of Fiction as an Art” 372-373]

#### 5 . まとめ 先駆的な「センセーション小説」としての *Basil*

- 5-1 Lingering over the delineation of character and of manners, our novelists began to lose sight of the story and to avoid action. . . . As modern stories are intended not to set people to sleep, but to keep them awake, instead of the narrative breaking down into a soporific dulness, it was necessary that it should rise at the close into startling incident. (emphasis added.)  
[E. S. Dallas, “*Great Expectations*” *The Times* (17 Oct. 1861)]
- 5-2 . . . not because we are less intellectual, but because it is a necessity of our existence. . . we should fly thought, and cultivate sensation. (emphasis added.)  
[E. S. Dallas, “Popular Literature - the Periodical Press” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (Jan. 1859) 111]
- 5-3 The “sensation” which it is the design of Mr Wilkie Collins to raise in our monotonous bosom, is - horror.  
[Margaret Oliphant, “Modern Novelists - Great and Small” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (May 1855) 566]

##### 参考

*The Woman in White* における ‘sensation’ の扱いについて

「*The Woman in White* における ‘sensation’ とは」  
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