

# Study on the Effect of Cognitive Style on Love in *Pride and Prejudice*

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**ABSTRACT.** For a long time, there have been numerous researches on psychology. Aiming at a specific problem and phenomenon, it is of great significance to explain and effectively propose solutions from the perspective of psychology, which is of great significance to the teaching field, business field, political field and the growth and life closely related to ourselves. This research embarks from the psychology angle, explores the influence and significance of different cognitive styles on the characters' view of love in the novel on the basis of the cognitive style theory studied by American psychologist Herman A. Witkin, Richard Riding et al.

**KEYWORDS:** Cognitive style, Effect, Love view

## 1. Literature review

The habituated behavior pattern shown by individuals in the cognitive process, as well as their preference for information processing in the cognitive activities, is manifested in the way individuals perceive, pay attention to, think about, remember and solve problems to the external information, which is defined as the cognitive style. One can through analyzing themselves, including their own cognitive style, to make themselves more know yourself, know the surrounding environment, and then set up the harmonious social relations. There are differences in the way people perceive themselves and the world. The Swiss Psychologist Jung put forward the theory of introversion and extroversion, which is not only reflected in people's behavior, but also in their thinking. This theory can be regarded as the initial theory of individual cognitive style. Since the mid-20th century, with the rise, development and expansion of cognitive science, cognitive style differences have been recognized and paid attention to by experts and scholars in the field of psychology. Witkin was the first one to make a clear and systematic study of cognitive style. He started with the study of perception, and then extended the research scope to the fields of memory, imagination, learning, thinking and problem solving. On this basis, he also explored the problems of interpersonal relationship and wrote his theory of psychological differentiation. Different from the past, Witkin's theory breaks the inertia separating cognition and personality in the past research. Meanwhile, there was no or no significant correlation between cognitive style and intelligence (Riding & Pearson, 1994; Riding & Agrell, 1997), mostly the attitude and expression in perception, memory and problem solving developed since childhood. Cognitive style is an individual difference in the cognitive process, a process variable rather than a content variable, with stability across time and consistency across situations, and with the characteristics of bipolarity and value neutrality. There are various cognitive styles, such as field-independent and field-dependent, thinking and impulsive, holistic and analytical. (prominent contributors to psychology/social sciences: Witkin, Richard Riding et al). At present, there are more researches on the field-independent cognitive mode and field-dependent cognitive mode, impulsive cognitive mode and contemplative cognitive mode.

Furthermore, the concepts of field independence and field dependence are derived from h. Witkin's research on perception. When judging objective things, field-independence is not easily affected and interfered by external factors. Cognitively independent of the surrounding context, it tends to process things at a more abstract and analytical level, making judgments about things independently. The perception of the field-dependent object tends to take the environmental factors into consideration while processing information. According to the speed and accuracy with which individuals solve problems, Jerome Kagan divides cognitive styles into contemplative and impulsive. Contemplative means that when making a judgment, one does not care about the time spent, and does not express one's opinion in a hurry. Instead, one considers all possible answers, analyzes them, and finally comes to a conclusion. The impulse type is characterized by quick response but poor accuracy. They are always eager for success when facing problems, unable to fully and meticulously analyze the various possibilities of the problem, and they are eager to express.

In the *Pride and Prejudice*, there have been different literatures to conduct research and exploration from the

perspectives of Marriage, Economy, Character, Epistemology Theory, Emotion and so on. This study will make some innovations on the basis of the past, and study the influence of different cognitive styles on love from the perspective of psychology. The analysis and results of this study also have certain reference significance for love in our real life.

## 2. The Analysis of Elizabeth Bennett's Cognitive Style on the Vision of Love

Elizabeth in this novel loves reading, is brilliant and witty. She has her own ideas and is neither blindly obedient nor snobbish. In the novel, Elizabeth is a relatively rational person. When Collins proposed to Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennet made every effort to get her daughter to marry him. However, Elizabeth takes the emotional need, good morality, equality, independence and dignity of personality as the first priority in marriage. Therefore, although wealth is of great attraction to the middle class unmarried women, she still resolutely refuses the proposal from the stupid and conceited "monster" Collins. However, she seems to have an arbitrary prejudice against Darcy's pride. From the very beginning, when Elizabeth and her sisters visit the Bentley and their friend Darcy. They dance together, and she doesn't like Darcy very much because of his expressionless and unfriendly words. So what made Elizabeth so prejudiced against Darcy in the first place? All of this comes from Elizabeth's upbringing in that era. Although beauty can give people a good impression, but only with an independent personality and good character can produce lasting attraction. Because of the special social status of women at that time, when it comes to marriage, money and family are closely related to each other, which is the material reason that determines the relationship between marriage and people. This great prejudice also laid the foundation for Elizabeth's later cognition of Darcy. Later, coupled with the vicious slander of Mr. Wickham, the bad rumors of Darcy, the poor relationship of sister and Charles, and so on, and Elizabeth's misunderstanding of Darcy rapidly deepened. Elizabeth combined what she saw and heard together, and had a great misunderstanding of Darcy. Before Elizabeth really knew a person, she had the initial misjudgment of such a person.

Although Elizabeth is a rational person among her sisters, she is not completely rational in terms of cognition in love. She lacks her own thinking and only judges according to others' words and Darcy's behaviors. Elizabeth has unique views, but the prejudice against Darcy also let her not rational to look at him. When Darcy proposed to her, she rebuked him without mercy and firmly rejected him. Elizabeth's false perception of Darcy includes prejudice against different classes from childhood, but also the prejudice of kindness after being deceived by ulterior motives. Therefore, Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy also comes from the inherent prejudice of different classes. And this is something that Elizabeth may have had since she was a child, which provides the premise for Elizabeth to judge Darcy.

According to the words of others, Elizabeth began to change her opinion of Darcy. During her visit to Pemberley, Elizabeth proved from the words of the housekeeper that Darcy was a friendly and amiable man. The servant thought Darcy the best landowner and he was quite unlike the dissolute young people of today, who have no regard for anybody but themselves. He just doesn't talk like other young people. During that period in England, or in the world, it is not easy to get the servant's sincere appreciation. The housekeeper's words strongly prove Darcy's integrity from the another side. In the novel, the author analyzes Darcy from the other side by the mouth of others. Miss Lucas thinks that Darcy does not disgust me like the arrogance of other people, because he has his reasons. It is not surprising that such a handsome young man, with so many possessions, should think highly of himself. Her older sister, Jane, with whom she grew up, had hinted to Elizabeth that Darcy might not be what he appeared to be, that she had always thought him a good man, and that she wanted her sister to get to know him for herself. Elizabeth knew from others what Darcy was and how he stood in the eyes of others. After that, Elizabeth began to observe Darcy's behavior until the final change of Darcy's opinion, and Elizabeth also lifted some of the misunderstanding of Darcy in the end.

Therefore, it can be seen from this that Elizabeth has passed the opinions of different people on Mr. Darcy, and found that her opinions on Mr. Darcy were very one-sided. All of these reflect Elizabeth's cognitive style is field-dependent in the love of vision. We may have some reasons for forming a kind of the wrong cognition initially. First of all, this is a cognitive judgment, with this judgment, in turn, will cause this bias. Prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination to some extent are actually part of our human instinct. The deeper reasons are: Our brains are actually very limited cognitive resources, we can't fully meet the complicated world, hence, most of the time, the brain is to be the "label" simplify our cognitive process. Stereotype is such a label, and we stick a label to a group of people, then, the differences will no longer need to consider each individual. As long as the label is rough arbitrary, they will give others an overall judgment. The power of prejudice is very powerful, and it's easy to fall for an idea. Therefore, they will judge and understand a person or a thing with the help of the environment. This is what Elizabeth shows in her own world of love. She needs to judge a person by her circumstances, not by her ideas. His misunderstanding of Darcy is deeper and deeper, and even her impression of

Darcy is deeply rooted, which reflects the field-dependent type of Elizabeth's cognitive style.

### 3. The Analysis of Darcy's Cognitive Style on the Vision of Love

Darcy, on the other hand, belongs to the field-independent cognitive style. In the novel, Darcy was born into wealth. His excellent environment not only shaped his good breeding and elegant behavior, but also developed his arrogant characteristic. In fact, from the first time Darcy met Elizabeth, he was attracted by her charming temperament. After many encounters, though pretending to be calm and collected, he couldn't help expressing his feelings to Elizabeth. He dislikes Elizabeth at the beginning of the plot because she was born into a poor family. When Darcy saw her sisters and her mother, he knew he did not want to be mentioned in the same breath with such a family. He was an unlovable, arrogant man, who had always disdained the superficial relationships around him. The rigid antagonism of this kind changed when he finally became interested in Elizabeth. Pride may be right for him, but prejudice is callous, which both the impact and inevitable. This Shock may be called The Shock of Recognition (The impact of cognitive). Darcy and Elizabeth were the fate of the fire and water, struggling with disorder of other events have performances. Cognitive collision makes the main characters in The novel characters vivid, a character can in personality will be unable to measure. In spite of the big gap between family and status, Darcy proposed to her, and he was rejected. When he heard Elizabeth's refusal and pointed criticism, Mr. Darcy was not vexed and ashamed, instead, he was surprised at Elizabeth's forthright. Most commendably, he began to look at himself, at the man he had always been. Sir William's attentions to introduce Elizabeth to his partner did not detract from her image in his eyes.

He was able to see rationally what she had done, reflect on himself and make up his mind to change. He realized the reason of Elizabeth's prejudice against him, and wanted to make Elizabeth re-examine himself through his own changes. He strove for his love, held to his heart, and silently helped the Bennets. In real life, we have this experience: in a relationship, for he is a person who is not very familiar with us, and we don't know his or her joys and sorrows, so we can't approach him or her with ease. We know him in company, in his manners to gauge what kind of person he is, and then think of some way to go to associate with him, so did Darcy. From this we can see that Darcy's cognitive style in his love world is field independent.

Cognitive style analysis of other characters on the vision of love

*Pride and Prejudice* is beloved for its series of comic characters. In addition to its main characters, Bingley, Lydia are among the more interesting parts of the novel that define marriage.

### 4. The Analysis of Charles Bingley's Cognitive Style on the Vision of Love

Mr. Bingley is a man of gentle and modest manners, nevertheless, Mr. Bingley is not a man of strong will, which was his strength as well as his weakness. Mr. Bingley's love for Jane was sincere and continual. His simplicity had led to his ardent love for Jane, but his weakness had led to their separation. And so, while their love was going on so smoothly, his sudden departure from Jane almost ended it. In short, it was his relationship with Darcy that had led him to leave Jane. His lack of courage and independence of thought was a hindrance to his happy marriage with Jane. Mr. Bingley was liked by Darcy chiefly for his simplicity. Mr. Bingley was a most trustworthy friend to Mr. Darcy. It seemed impossible to Darcy that Jane should be in love with his friend Bingley. He therefore persuaded Bingley not to marry Jane. Mr. Bingley's character is easily influenced. He is so humble and meek that he has no idea about his marriage. However much he liked Jane, he was sure of the truth of Darcy's account of her indifference. And his sisters want him to choose Georgiana (Darcy's sister) for his wife, and therefore they did not approve of his marriage to Jane. Under the influence of his sister and Darcy, Bingley began to believe that Jane doesn't like him. When he thought Jane did not love him, he left Jane without saying anything. Finally, with Darcy's help, the misunderstanding between them was solved. If it is said that pride and prejudice are the stumbling block to the love between the hero and the heroine, excessive humility and lack of courage are the obstacles to the love between Jane and Bingley. Bentley was a kind but somewhat indecisive man, deeply influenced by traditional ideas. Some plots in novels act as catalysts and clues, Bentley was a kind but somewhat indecisive man, deeply influenced by traditional ideas. In the face of his love with Jane, he did not have his own independent judgment, only according to the others to guess his love with Jane. He has no independent judgment in love, from which we can see that Bingley's cognitive style in love is field-dependent.

### 5. The Analysis of Lydia Bennett's Cognitive Style on the Vision of Love

Lydia's cognitive style is impulsive. To analyze Lydia's cognitive style in *Pride and Prejudice*, one must first

consider often overlooked fifth marriage in the work, that of her father and mother. This in the original description is Mr. Bennett was captivated by his wife's youthful beauty. He didn't know what sort of person she is and married his wife who is essentially a superficial and vulgar, stupid, not suitable for Mr. Bennett, which brought endless pain and suffering to their married life. Lydia was Mrs. Bennet's favourite daughter. She was young, vain, undiscerning, irrational, and unrestrained. Due to her mother's lack of upbringing, the youngest daughter Lydia more or less has her mother's shadow. Lydia at a young age to discuss these beautiful officers and beautiful uniforms, unquestionably, Lydia is attracted by the handsome appearance of Mr. Wickham, which was a moment of passion. Her right understanding of love, not rational to think about the love between her and Mr. Wickham, and she did not have time to recognize the nature of each other to impulsively decided to marry Mr. Wickham. Lydia didn't know each other well before she got married. The marriage of two people has no emotional basis and no material basis, only impulse and the product of material needs. Her perception, attitude and expression of problem solving process are reflected in her behavior pattern. All of this shows that Lydia's cognitive style is impulsive. Lydia's previous experience, living environment and accepted values formed her cognitive style, which had a great impact on Lydia's thinking, and she was inclined to make rapid decisions on judgment and treatment of behaviors. Similarly, cognitive style also involves its influence on Lydia's personality and other aspects, which reflects in her attitude, ideal, confidence, way and fundamentally formed her practical ability and level and operating habits.

## 6. Conclusion

From the above dialectical interpretation, the research on different cognitive styles can make effective attributions to the setbacks we encounter in love, which is of vital guiding significance for people to clearly recognize their own cognitive styles, so as to better coordinate and solve them. On the road of love, there are many obstacles. Take a look at ourselves and see that we have flaws in the other person's eyes that we can't let go of. Look at ourselves, think for ourselves, do not listen to others' calumnies and lose our rational judgment. In both cases, it takes courage to inquire into one's own heart, to let pride and prejudice become the captives of love, to be able to see everything rationally without being deceived by the surface of things, to listen to one's own inner thoughts, and to feel for oneself. Elizabeth and Darcy are a very typical example. If we are not careful, we will fall into a blind spot, we will lose the judgment of justice and only based on other people's ideas, environmental factors to judge, without our own independent cognition. But at the same time, it is the impact of each person's different cognitive style that makes the characters in the novel more vivid, makes the plot more ups and downs, and makes the theme of the novel more profound and memorable, which is the part of this novel's appeal.

Based on the original cognitive style, further, when Darcy made a serious mistake, he had the courage to correct his cognitive bias, and Elizabeth also broke the paranoid perception of Darcy and changed the inherent prejudice against Darcy. It is not difficult to see that, cognitive style is difficult to change, but it doesn't mean that it can't be changed. Field-independence and field-dependence are not good or bad. Sometimes field-independence has advantages, sometimes field-dependency has advantages, but it can still be changed in some ways. Sometimes, field-dependent cognitive style also needs to take more account of its own subjective initiative, and field-independent cognitive style may also need to take others' opinions into consideration. This is what we need to pay attention to in our imperfect daily life.

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