

## An Analysis of Love and Marriage in Jane Austin's novel Emma

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### Abstract

Jane Austen (1775- 1817) is a well-known English writer who is regarded as the first novelist in giving the manifestly modern feature to the field of novel through her treatment of ordinary people in everyday life. She intended to support the females in order to overcome the difficulties they confronted. In her writings, she provides many positive models of self-confident women as good examples to be followed. She wanted to depict the females and dig deep in their inner side in order to show the impact of society on their behaviours .The current study concentrates on the theme of love and marriage in her novel Emma . It can be seen in different relationships. Some of these relations are based on money purposes and others are built on pure love. Both of them can be illustrated through the relationships between the characters.

### المستخلص:

جين أوستن (1775-1817) كاتبة إنجليزية معروفة وتعتبر أول روائية تعطي السمة الحديثة الواضحة لمجال الرواية من خلال معاملتها للأشخاص العاديين في الحياة اليومية. كانت تنوي دعم الإناث للتغلب على الصعوبات التي يواجهنها. في كتاباتها ، قدمت العديد من النماذج الإيجابية للمرأة الواثقة من نفسها كأمثلة جيدة يجب اتباعها. أرادت تصوير الإناث والدعم بعمق في جانبهن الداخلي لإظهار تأثير المجتمع على سلوكياتهن ، وترتكز الدراسة الحالية على موضوع الحب والزواج في روايتها إيما. يمكن رؤيته في علاقات مختلفة. بعض هذه العلاقات مبنية على أغراض مالية والبعض الآخر مبني على الحب النقي. يمكن توضيح كلاهما من خلال العلاقات بين الشخصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الحب , الزواج , المال , المجتمع , الطب.

### Introduction

Jane Austen actually is one of the English novelists who firstly provided the novel with its definitely modern character throughout the treatment of people in the ordinary or everyday life. At the present time, many literary researchers could not imagine studying the modern novel without acknowledging the contributions of Austen to the form of art (Reinfandt, 2008, 709). Alex Woloch the expert on the history of novel and its theory, in his article "Stanford Literary

Scholars Reflect on Jane Austen's Legacy", declares that "Austen is one of the biggest literary figures in English ... She is somewhat like Shakespeare, her centrality is so established". Additionally, he stated that:

There is a level of intelligence in her work that the reader feels, and it has to do with her psychological perceptiveness and the sheer skill of her writing . (Woloch,2017).



Actually, Austen desired to achieve a goal concerning the writing of novels which were as real as possible to everyday life, and she started this procedure by investigating the behaviours of humans, character details and in what way they act in their societies (Pinion, 2001, 136). Yet, women throughout this period encountered difficulties as they wanted to make writing a job and were not to chase celebrity as well as the writing profession. They were disheartened by their families and husbands from the publication of their writings. As Judy Simons states that:

During a time when all social criticism, particularly that which aimed at the institution of the family in general and the place of women in particular, came to be associated with the radical cause. (Simons, 1997, 163).

This means that females of that period confronted public criticism, particularly those of refined birth did not pursue employment of any type, who were females that followed the recognized traditions of sophisticated society as well as good taste. While the writers of male kind during this period have continuously the ability to learn their technique in coffee houses or colleges, grouping themselves completely with other individuals with mutual tastes or interests (Southam, 2019).

## 2. Love and Marriage

In Emma, the theme of love and marriage can be seen in different relationships. Some of these relations are based on money purposes and others are built on pure love. Both of them can be illustrated through the relationships

between Mr. George Knightley and Emma Woodhouse, Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, Robert Martin and Harriet Smith, Philip Elton and Augusta Hawkins, and finally John Knightley and Isabella Woodhouse.

Concerning the relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley, it is started from the very beginning of the novel. Actually, after the death of her mother, Emma is lived with Mr. Woodhouse, her father,. The novelist describes her as "handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence" (Austen, 1841, p.1). Despite the fact that it is not common for a female to stay unmarried, particularly in the era of Austen, without taking into consideration the fortune that those females had, Emma did not show any concern to marriage. Concerning the great economic status that Emma belongs to, it is believed that "Austen situates Emma in a superior social position in order to allow her the freedom to 'act out willful errors for which she must take entire moral responsibility" (Butler, 1986, p.101). Being conscious of the truth that Emma does not desire to get married, she gets herself participating in matchmaking or being marriage broker. Matchmaking becomes an essential part of the life of Emma, but it leads her to a lot of faults. In fact, Emma's idea about matchmaking is a big fault because Emma is "a naive about both herself and the outside world; she must learn her own limitations and resist the temptation to remake her world within her imagination" (Lambdin, 2000, 43).



Furthermore, the matchmaking faults of Emma results in her understanding of the women simplicity generally, at the time of Austen, and their unqualified role to accomplish things which they supposed were under their control. Because men are literate and have the ability to manage a number of businesses, heritages or many further investments, females of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were thought to have the responsibility of their families management, their household chores besides their daily task which matchmaking. The failure of Emma in matching other persons additionally characterizes the gender failure at the time of Austen. This indicates that females of the 18<sup>th</sup> century have not the ability to achieve the responsibilities given to them at that period. They do not success in their everyday responsibilities and making a mass in community by hurting other persons. Despite the fact that Emma is a wealthy and self-governing woman, her situation does not justify her failures and faults.

However, the only man who is different from Emma and who is able to stop her deeds is Mr. Knightley. The latter is in fact an old friend of the family of Emma and Isabella's brother-in-law, the sister of Emma. Because he is much elder than Emma, Mr. Knightley has a perfect idea about the personality and nature of Emma. He dislikes the idea that Emma does some behaviours that are incorrect, as he claimed. Mr. Knightley continuously does have the propensity of criticizing Emma for her marriage broker role. For example, he declares that, "you are more likely to have done harm to yourself, than good

to them, by interference" (Austen, 1841, p.9). Mr. Knightley works on changing the way of Emma in identifying things. She starts to be more cautious and showing more esteem as she encounters other persons. She begins to recognize that Mr. Knightley is actually a very pleasant person, and his instructions alter her to be a good woman. Emma realizes the fact that she really has faithful emotions for Mr. Knightley; she recognizes that if the is a woman who must get married of Mr. Knightley, it should be herself:

It darted through her with the speed of an arrow, that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself. Her conduct, as well as her own heart, was before her in the same few minutes. (ibid. p.366)

Commenting on that, C. Barfoot (1982) in his book *The Thread of Connection: Aspects of Fate in the Novels of Jane Austen and Others*, declares:

The arrow is an arrow ... of love; what is intended for her as her real fate, however long suspected by the reader, and is revealed to the heroine herself in a flash of insight. (p.88).

Undoubtedly, Emma's marriage to Mr. Knightley is the kind of marriage which is really dependent on the true feelings from the opening of the story. Mr. Knightley has loved Emma at the time when she was a actually young lady. Commenting on that, C. Lambd in (2000) in his book *A Companion to Jane Austen Studies* states that:

Emma's union [with Mr. Knightley] is the most satisfying because it links two ultimately good characters whose personality traits lend support to each other. (p,44).



On the other hand, the relationship between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax seems somehow complex. Through this relationship, the novelist aims to display obviously the fact that the well-educated, intelligent girls are not appreciated and valued in a degree they deserve. In *Emma*, Austen shows Jane Fairfax as being a young girl of twenty- one years old, whose father and mother died at the time she was only a little child:

Jane Fairfax was an orphan, the only child of Mr Bates' youngest daughter. By birth she belonged to Highbury. (Austen, 1841, p.143).

Because of the fact that Jane does not have any siblings, she ties the relations with her family relatives, Campbells,: Jane had fallen into good hands, known nothing but kindness from the Campbells, and been given an excellent education. Living constantly with right- minded . (ibid.144).

Depending on the reality that Jane has lived as an orphan, the only hope for her was either to work and find an occupation as an educator or to marry so as to survive. Because of the idea that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the only job for a well-educated female was to work as an educator, Jane has no options except that. Although Jane realized that being an educator is not the best job for her, she must accept it once more, for the reason that she has no other alternatives at all. The period after Jane has abandoned the notion of getting married owing to her economic conditions and starting to accept the reality that she should work as an educator is the same time of the

appearance of Frank Churchill, where Jane secretly got engaged with him. Frank has inherited a huge wealth out of his aunt. This fortune provides him with a great pride and a large number of limits to his feelings and desires.

From the starting point of the story, the relationship between Jane and Frank begins. However, it is exposed firstly at the very end of *Emma*. The reality that the aunt of Frank would not agree for him to get married of a poor orphan and did not permit him to disclose his engagement to her. Furthermore, the interests of Frank to get the inheritance of the Churchill's possessions did not let him to reveal his undisclosed engagement in order to guarantee his future. For avoiding the condition of his engagement disclosing, Frank acts carelessly in his kindnesses to Jane throughout the flirting with Emma. These conditions all together brought make Jane disappointed too much, and as a result she took the decision of breaking her engagement with Frank. After the death his aunt, Frank comes back to Jane and realized that he really loves her. He offers her the proposal again, and fortunately she showed her acceptance to his engagement. Commenting on the marriage of Frank and Jane, it is declared that "marriage to Frank Churchill is only a good because it is better than the alternative-paid servitude as a governess" (Hall, 2017, p.105). However, some critics blame Frank for treating Jane harshly before revealing the engagement:



Throughout the book he seems to be punishing Jane Fairfax for having stopped to a secret engagement with him though he coerced her into it with treats of going mad . (Beer, 1974, p.46).

It is said that the marriage of Jane and Frank is not realistic, especially during the time of Austen, because such kind of marriage amongst the lower and the upper classes occurred only in a situation when:

The floundering aristocracy was enriched through their union with a wealthy merchant- class family, thereby making it incredibly difficult for a member of the lower or middle class. (Campbell, 2012, p.6).

Consequently, the Jane Austen attempts to show the idea that those types of marriages must be existed for the reality that financial issues ought not to be regarded as the lone mediations for getting married. The whole things are possible as long as the love is existed. Consequently, Austen transfers her intended message throughout this kind of marriage that the spouse must get married for the motives of love and the reciprocal respect regardless of the economic status for each of them. Money must not be regarded as the key basis for making somebody ingenious, desirable, and respectable and person. Ways in which people think cannot be bought by money. Intelligence and education make people adequately ingenious to live their life striving to get money and also give them the value that what they earn is a part of the heavy labor and fruitful outcome.

On the other hand, the relationship between Robert Martin and Harriet Smith is different. This relationship is dependent on the equal societal rank and is more truthful at the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Harriet actually:

was not clever, but she had a sweet, docile, grateful disposition, was totally free from conceit, and only desiring to be guided by any one she looked up to. (Austen, 1841, p.20).

Being naïve and modest, Harriet fell into the judgments of Emma, whose primary goal was to take control on the life of Harriet, modifying her way of life, involving her to an upper social position and a more comfortable or affluent situation, without taking any into consideration the feelings of Harriet and her spiritualistic situations. For instance, the words of Emma make Harriet alter her view concerning Robert Martin, an agriculturalist, who actually takes care about and loves Harriet. Being conscious of the reality that Harriet takes a fancy to and loves Martin, Emma uses all the persuasive resources and words to persuade Harriet of the idea of not marrying Robert Martin. Having the faith or the belief that her concepts were correct, Emma starts her activities to establish the matching between Harriet and Elton even without attempting to discuss this matter with Harriet herself. She also aims to improve Harriet:

Encouragement should be given...The acquaintance she had already formed were unworthy of her ... and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners. (ibid.18)



Moreover, Emma systematically sets herself to break down the admiration and estimation Harriet felt by for Martin because Emma believes that the marriage with Martin might limit the future of Harriet to a societal circle that Emma has not the desire for it: Emma says:

I want to see you permanently well connected- and to that end it will be advisable to have as few odd acquaintances as may be; and, therefore, I say that if you should still be in this . (ibid.25).

Harriet responses that "to be sure. Yes. ... I do not mean to set up my opinion against yours- and I am sure I shall not wish for the acquaintance of his wife" (ibid.25). The reply of Harriet proposes that she has previously exhibited the farewell of Martins in the submission to the supreme judgment of Emma. The methods of Emma are inequitable, not merely to the truant Martin and the undefended, unintelligent Harriet, but also to herself. The snobbish self-will of Emma is existent together with a sympathetic and philanthropic spirit.

The situation actually gets out of hand after Elton offers Emma the proposal, and not Harriet. This situation makes Emma change her opinion and regrets her behaviors. Being conscious of the whole circumstances, admitting her faults and regretting or feeling ashamed of what she did: "She touched—she admitted—she acknowledged the whole truth" (ibid.365). Later, Emma recommends Harriet that when she takes her personal decisions, she has to follow her true feelings as well as her heart.

Consequently, the relationship of Harriet and Martin run out in a marriage ceremony when they went throughout a very complex situation. Therefore, Harriet's and Martin's marriage symbolizes the kind of marriage that is dependent on the societal reality. Actually, Austen places the characters of the novel in a number of situations, confronting them with a lot of hindrances so as to match them, though they are from diverse social statuses.

From another perspective, the relationship between Philip Elton and Augusta Hawkins is totally based on interests. Philip Elton is describe as a "very pretty young man, to be sure, and a very good young man" (Austen, 1841, p.9). He is a priest. Despite the fact that he is not so wealthy, Elton is a very esteemed person because of the fact that he has a higher status in the state. The intentions of Elton are to get married of someone wealthy are achieved; besides he is delighted to demonstrate this everywhere:

He had caught both substance and shadow- both fortune and affection, and was just the happy man he ought to be; talking only of himself and his own .(ibid. p.160).

Similarly, Augusta Hawkins is described as:

The charming Augusta Hawkins, in addition to all the usual advantages of perfect beauty and merit, was in possession of an independent fortune, of so many thousand as would always be called ten . (ibid.160)

Therefore, the marriage of Augusta and Elton is essentially dependent on reputation and financial issues.



The reality is that Augusta inherited a high wealth out of her father, thus, Elton get married of her without carrying any distinct emotions for her or adequately knowing her to think of her as a lifetime companion. Likewise, Augusta get married of Elton simply for the reason that he is the owner of Highbury. This represents a big opportunity for her to display what she owns. She has faith in the idea that gaining money through marrying Elton will give her in a higher social position. This kind of marriage is regarded as being typical one during the 18<sup>th</sup> century where the primary thing in choosing a partner is not feelings and love. Consequently, Elton's and Augusta's marriage appears to be a very formal one, and their relation shows no sign of happiness ever after at all. Austen displays that the marriages which totally dependent on diverse social positions and money will not result in a reciprocal understanding to any couples, for the reason that the viewpoints of both of them are totally dissimilar and would not lead to an equal agreement at all.

Finally, the marriage between John and Isabella Woodhouse also symbolizes the typical type marriage in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The novelist portrays this kind of marriage as being a male- controlled marriage, the most common type for that time. Austen depicts this marriage through describing Isabella:

Mrs. John Knightley was pretty, elegant little woman, of gentle, quiet manners, and a disposition remarkably amiable and affectionate; wrap up in her family. (ibid.81)

Likewise, John is too careful father concerning his five children and who

always looks after them, however his conducts concerning his partner occasionally go beyond the all the limits. Isabella "represents an ideal of a woman of her time, weak, delicate and submissive, having a child every year, prepared to do anything to please her husband" (Dobosiova, 2006, p.14). depending on the reality that through the 18<sup>th</sup> century period the "socially, women were demanded to have children and to take care of their husbands" (ibid.15), Isabella represents an exact instance of that kind of woman. In John's and Isabella's relationship, Isabella is actually portrayed as a weaker character who obeys the rules of her husband. That is, the females in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and their husbands come to be one person from both the legal as well as the civil viewpoint. The reality that in the majority of occasions, Isabella is named by her husband's name, Mrs. John Knightley, obviously displays that Isabella obeys the rules of her husband and represented a full dependency on her partner.

John "indulges his family's desires for visits and vacations, although he would prefer to stay at home, especially if the weather is less than perfect. He can be quite forthright, which sometimes borders on rude" (Austen,1841,p.42). Being a very calm character, Isabella got used to the rules of her husband and had accustomed that lifestyle. Consequently, with John's and Isabella's marriage, Austen portrays the notion that even in the male-controlled families that things could function properly by relying on the facts of what persons like and in what way they choose to live. Isabella and John have strong feelings to each other.



Actually, John displays a great esteem concerning the family of Isabella; nevertheless he desires to follow the typical traditions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, where males were in fact the family leaders. On condition that Isabella is contented with her marriage, harmonizing with her partner and behaving respectfully with him is the lone matter that she thinks is to allow her marriage appropriately functioning. Isabella will never sacrifice her family or marriage with the purpose of showing dominance. She is totally pleased and contented with things she has and she lives her life peaceably.

### 3. Conclusion

As a conclusion, through all these relationships, the novelist portrays that the marriage was a paradox for females through the period of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was actually the most significant issue that could guarantee a affluent future for females; however, it was generally authorized. It was frequently dependent on the man's monetary possessions, and eventually led to the woman to be a lady of her own house.

It is obvious that, the theme of marriage, which is seen in *Emma* proves that Austen concentrates on one significant type of marriage; the one that is based on love. She uses a kind of contrastive idea in which she sheds light on the negative consequences of the marriage based on money in order to gain the attention of the readers to the marriage that is based on love. By doing so, she wants to highlight the idea that, the marriage based on pure and innocence low is the only one that can lead to happiness, pleasure and satisfaction.

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