

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Jane Austen's *Emma* as a Testimony to Female Identity

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By:

Pukar Bhandari

Class Roll No.: 10/2064

Exam Roll No.: 480144

T.U. Registration No.: 5-1-48-9-2001

Department of English

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

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Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that **Mr. Pukar Bhandari** with class roll no. 10/064, exam roll no.480144 and T.U. regd. No. 5-1-48-9-2001 has prepared this thesis entitled **“Jane Austen’s *Emma* as a Testimony to Female Identity”** under my supervision following the format as specified by the Research Committee, Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara. I therefore forward it to the Research Committee for final evaluation.

Mr. Shyam Prasad Paudel

Teaching Assistant

Department of English

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

Date: _____

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Letter of Approval

This thesis titled "Jane Austen's *Emma* as a Testimony to Female Identity"
submitted to the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus
by Mr. Pukar Bhandari
has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Advisor

External Examiner

Head

Department of English

Prithivi Narayan Campus,

Pokhara

Date: _____

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CHAPTER: ONE

The Context of *Emma*

The sole interest of this research is to study the novel *Emma* by Jane Austen from the feminist perspective. To study and examine the title character Emma Woodhouse's irresistible quest for equality and independence, which she does daring and challenging the traditional roles of males is the main objective of this thesis. Especially the task of matchmaking, usually done by males, is done by Emma Woodhouse. She is adamant in terms of equality, independence and justice. These elements of feminism have been reflected by the activities and opinion of Emma Woodhouse. She constantly supports Harriet to have better life and to choose better life partner. She argues with George Knightley in so many cases and agendas. She is an exceptional lady by ignoring marriage and fighting with existing social norms and values. Her sense of making judgement is amazing. The decision to stay single, denial of other's decision, constant search of female identity, and acceptance of every obstacles boldly uplifts Emma Woodhouse from an ordinary girl. Unlike the other women of the eighteenth century, Emma does not follow what the males tell her to do; instead she dares to question everything that her male counterparts say. This is especially seen in her relationship with George Knightley, Frank Churchill and Mr. Elton. The feminist elements of independence have helped not only Emma herself to be mature and responsible person, but the independence will make her a better person eventually, despite committing some errors. She commits a mistake but she is responsible for her mistakes also. Committing mistakes, she does not ruin but reforms her habits and dealings.

This thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first chapters introduces about the context of the novel *Emma*, Jane Austen, her life and work and uniqueness of her writing. The second chapter delineates the Feminism as a tool applied to analyze the novel and exploring the feiminist elements of Jane Austen. The third chapter is about textual analysis of the novel and lastely the chapter four is the conclusion of the main arguments put forward in the preceeding chapters.

Emma is a novel about the perils of misconstructured romance. The novel was first published in December 1815. Austen explores the concerns and difficulties of genteel woman living in Georgian Regency England along with a lively comedy of Manners among her characters. Lionel Trilling quotes about *Emma* in the following way:

Of Jane Auten's six great novels *Emma* is surely the one that is most fully representative of its author. *Pride and Prijudice* are of course more popular. It is the oen novel in the canon that everybody' reads, this most often reprinted. *Pride and Prijudice* deserves it popularity, but it is not a mere snobbery, an affected aversion from the general suffrage, that makes thoughtful readers of Jane Austen juged *Emma* to be the greater book-not the more delightful but the greater. It canot boast the brilliant, unimpeded energy of *Pride and Prijudice*, but that is because the energy which it does indeed have is committed to dealing with a more resistant matter. In this it is characterisrtic of all three novels of Jane Austen's mature period, of which it is the second.

(117)

Before the beginning of a novel Jane Austen said of *Emma*, “I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like” (Austen Leighs, *Jane Austen: A family Record* 187). So, a heroine of a novel *Emma* more or less resembles with Jane Austen herself.

It got mixed reactions when it was first published like Austen’s niece, Fanny knight, admitted she “could not hear Emma”. Her mother found “entertaining but not as ‘interesting’ as *Pride and Prejudice*, some reviewers were “delighted” with it while others considered “inferior”. *Emma* may be disappointing one those who expect great adventures and high romance. It is Jane Austen’s masterpiece, the culmination of her literary genius, but not because its events or activities are sensational. Its most exciting events are social gatherings in a small town 16 miles from London, engagements and weddings that takes place there.

The novel deals with one community, several families and the two major characters Emma Woodhouse and Mr. Knightley. The story reveals their friendship over 17 years and the courtship that leads to their marriage. Intertwined with simple story are the issues of marriage and freedom of choice, class consciousness and snobbery, morality, the evils of self- love and self deception and the consciousness of women. Austen has successfully represented the complexities of social life of early 19th century. The two most important relationships concern family and marriage. Both were impossible to avoid in her days. It was considered women destiny to marry. How the women go about planning and securing her marriage is the issue of *Emma*.

Pre-arranged marriages between families had become a usual tradition before Austen’s time. But by the 18th century freedom of choice had become more of a

factor. Jane Austen's heroine reflects this growing independence, a concept new for women that time germinating the seed of liberty, freedom and space for women.

In *Emma*, women or lady characters can exercise freedom of choice by the husbands they select or decline. For instances, Harriet can turn down Robert Martin's first Elton. The point is that women are worthy of such improving connections. They have earned by virtue of their good qualities, the rise in status such marriages will provide for them. Douglas Jefferson mentions about the openness of *Emma* as:

There is much to be said for a novel like *Emma* in which everything important in the heroine's conduct is seen in the light of common day. The openness of *Emma's* character and the openness of Jane Austen's presentation of it, combine to give this novel one of its great attractions. (*Emma Notes*, 119)

The novel deals with Emma's delusion and her gradual enlightenment before she can learn to recognize that Mr. Knightley represents what she does not have but needs. It presents us with Emma journey to increased self-awareness that will result in the happy union with Mr. Knightley.

Though she was indifferent to French Revolution, it didn't let down the prominence of Jane Austen. The political scenario was changing tremendously in her time period but she was quiet about all those happenings. Austen didn't give any space to violence and war in her novels. Though, it was painful, terrible and horrible to the readers. She was just obsessed with the social norms and values of 18th century and that she has presented in her novels. A writer of *A survey of English Literature*, Oliver Elton writes about *Emma*, "It was a sweet view-sheet to the eye and the mind

Englsh verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, with out being oppressive” (197).

Emma is Austen’s novel of practical type, not just a means of entertainment. It has got both delightful and diactic nature. It endeavours to look at life from a pratical point of view, no just the theoretical excitement. Then only life emerges and gives pleasure. *Emma* is a kind of massive reaction against the patriarchal society and Austen challeges those writers who assert biological defferences instead of accepting human genius. Scholar Le Roy Smith writes:

In *Emma* the two contests are clearly linked: the struggle within Emma is between internalized patriarchal value and her instinctive sense of selfhood, the self versus the world internalized rather than the self divided. (132)

Smith had a great anticipation in Austen’s style of writing, which might be a new approach and certainly it would bring a shake in the history of women writing and of women’s movement. He published a book title *Jane Austen and Drama of Women* in 1962 to disclose Austen’s extraordinary work. Smith enjoyed on Austen’s courage to oppose her severe society and her desire to remove the barriers between the sexes. Smith has recognized *Emma* as a novel of education in the same book. Regarding *Emma*, Smith writes, Austen has emphazied on an individual nature of person, Emma, who is more conscious about her society and family. He further addes that *Emma* is the story of sensitive being, who recognizes human value and who asserts her own identity innocently despite patriarchal society.

Emma has all of the ingredients of a Jane Austen novel; wit, warmth, irony, great laughable humour and dazzling characterizations and a microscopic reading. We

happen to find a wealth of minor details about people's daily lives which is Austen's typical writing.

Jane Austen; a Pioneer Lady Figure in English Literary Field

The whole English literary canon is indebted towards one female writer –Jane Austen. She occupies a prominent place in the history of the fiction. She was a contemporary to Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth and S T Coleridge. She widened the scope of fiction in almost all directions. It was on sixteenth of December, 1775 when the world got its ever first of England's great female writer. She was born in the village of Steventon in Hampshire. It was very interesting to learn that Jane Austen never got married and even never travelled outside of England. She spent her short valuable life living with her family and writing her distinct fiction. She was just 42 years old when left the world. She was the youngest child in a family of seven children. Jane Austen lived in Steventon parsonage in Hampshire where father the Reverend George Austen, was rector. Her father had been a good scholar, when he attended Oxford University. His wife was an energetic, capable woman, given to writing witty letters and some poetry.

Jane had five older brothers. The eldest James, who had a distinguished career at Oxford, was a writer himself. Edward second and Henry, the third son was the brother closest to Jane. Two other brothers, Francis and Charles joined the job in the British Navy. It is to be noted that the lives and experiences of seven different brothers provided Jane Austen with unlimited material for her writing.

The next whose name won't be missed out from Jane Austen's life is Cassandra, Jane's old sister by three years, was the novelist's closet companion and confidant. They almost shared every aspect of each other's lives clothes, bedroom,

and vacations and of course, secrets. It is none other than Cassandra who helped Jane Austen to continue her career as a novelist separate from her private life. Despite the size of Austen family, Jane Austen was not hampered. As an active participant in family life and an outside observer of human nature, she was able to draw a family circle and the country setting of her home for the imaginative wealth of details in her novels. Besides writing, she dedicated her life to domestic duties and responsibilities, and especially to being the companion and confidant of numerous nieces and nephews who found her extremely kind, sympathetic and amusing too.

It is very noticeable fact that neither Jane nor Cassandra ever married. It don't mean that they lacked opportunities or didn't get chance to get married as opportunities came in the form of picnic; parties and dances and certainly, in friends of their brothers. But in their late 20s, they were happy to consider themselves as an old maids. For them their family was pivotal. Both of them were happy, active and fulfilled to their life styles.

She almost spent her first twenty five years of her life in the rectory at Stevenson but had to migrate to Bath upon her father's retirement, with her parents and sister. The death of the father was unfortunate and later they moved to Chawton Hampshire which actually belonged to her brother Edward. Here, working mainly in the general sitting room, she composed the final drafts of all her major works; hurriedly hid the paper if a visitor or servant appeared. In 1816 her health began to fail, and in May 1817, she and Cassandra moved to Winchester for adequate medical attention. Despite weakness and, pain she remained cheerful to the end dying peacefully on July 18, 1817, aged forty and she was buried in Winchester cathedral.

Jane Austen's novels, the first published when she was thirty five and followed by five others in as many years, were the final fruits of an early and pains taking apprenticeship to literature. She had begun her career as a writer through the three small volumes of *Juvenilia*, volume the First (1793), *Love and Friendship* (1794), and Volume the Third (1795) and happened to become novel, *First Impressions* the original title of *Pride and Prejudice* finished in August, 1797. Her father offered to a publisher without success. Like wise, Jane Austen came ahead with *Sense and Sensibility* (1807) and in the same year she penned *Northanger Abbey*, a revised vision of which entitled *Susan*. She sold in 1803, for ten pounds to the publisher Crosby. *The Watson* (1817), a fragmentary progenitor of *Emma* and *Lady Susan* (1817, 1827), a biting epistolary satire, probably the germ of *Mansfield Park*. *Pride and Prejudices* appeared in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814, and *Emma* in 1815 (dated 1816). *Persuasion* was issued with *Northanger Abbey* in 1818. Finally, she was engaged upon the rough draft of the early chapters of a new novel. *Saditon* (1825) but remained unfinished owing to poor health.

Quantitatively, Austen just wrote six novels but all her novels were acclaimed highly. Besides novels, she has written essays, letters and stories too.

Jane Austen, primarily was a moral writer striving to establish criteria of sound judgment and right conduct in human relationships, she inculcates the related virtues of self-awareness and unselfishness. The greatness of Austen is admired by David Daiches as:

The greatest of all the novelists of manners of this or any other period, and one who raised the whole genre to a new level of art, was Jane Austen. With no exhibitionist critical apparatus such as Fielding's

theory of the comic epic, no pretentiously announced moral purpose such as Richardson kept repeating, and indeed with no apparent acorns that she was doing more than essaying some novels in an established social mode, this unpretentious daughter of Hampshire rector... (743).

Austen confined herself to the limited area of contemporary English social life which she knew well. She produced the brilliant novels of manners, although the Napoleonic War was going on throughout her writing career. She keeps mention of them out of her novels in which soldiers appear only as attractions for the girls or in some similar social capacity. In her novels, she turns into a microcosm of life in its social aspect. Dr. S. Sen clarifies the narrowness of Jane Austen as:

Her own little world and the everyday affairs and incidents connected with novels, like marriages, births and death and balls and dinners had completely engaged her attention during her lifetime. She has attempted to give as, in her novels, very close and faithful rendering of the life of this narrow world of her and the uneventful happenings in it. She also ignores the French Revolution, thought on account of it a dear relative of her had lost her noble French husband. The public abuses the political events and the kind of stuff which usually finds its way into history books, and no attraction for Austen and she tried to avoid them in her pictures of life, she was content with what complete success and this was content with what she could really do and do with complete success and this was that made, her the mistress of manners. (21)

The interesting thing about Jane Austen is that her novels have got universal significance though her novels deal with the domestic life. She is able to represent domestic life and affairs in a systematic way. Austen's novels show us the inner lives of her characters, and depict the contemporary system of patriarchy. As she is a moralist, she believes in right and wrong and tries to have social justice in the society. Austen is the writer of familial affairs as her novel explores the problems of a family in relation to patriarchal society of her age. Her novels are the mixture of fine satire and sentiment too. Albeit of her very constrained range of fiction, Austen has been successful in depicting a complete world creating two or three families of a certain society. Almost her novels are written on social and domestic background. She had an astute sense of observing the human behavior on how people behaved and interacted.

Her novels have neither romanticism nor sentimentality but they show a remarkable insight into the relation between social convention and individual temperament. For Austen, human world was base for her novels. In her novels, there is absence of bad or evil, totally composed of themes of love, marriage, money, social classes, self deception and misunderstanding. She just loved the world around her. Professor Trilling observes in his essay *Emma Encounter*:

Almost as it were self-incident, that high burry doesn't correspond to anything real in the England of that time, but has an ideal, an imagined states, that it is in fact. Jane Austen's lesion of social unit conceived in the interest of her social and moral purpose. (51)

Far ahead of her time in the techniques of narration, especially in the control of point of view, Jane Austen, through her Fidelity to life, her delineation of character,

and her ironic insight, produced a sophisticated comedy unsurpassed in the English novel.

The novels of Jane Austen had not an instant dominance but across the passage of time, the spirit of novels becomes more relevant and contextual. Contemporaries like Sir Walter Scott and Mary Russell appreciated Austen not only for her techniques but her shrewd sense of irony and satire, realism and eventually galvanizing the voice of female in next direction. Sir Walter Scotts doesn't hesitate glorifying Austen. He pens:

Jane Austen had a talent for describing the involvement and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can be myself like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary common place things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. (3)

It was Austen talent whose writings were flexible and carfted with liveliness in dialogue. She desired modification on conventional fact, that's why she is classic in nature. As defined by the T. S. Eliot, in order to be a good writer one should able to possess an ability of blendig objective correlative and sensibility. In the same manner, Jane Austen reflected all these in her novels as Shakespeare did in his drama. Her genius has been compared with Shakespeare. In this regard, T. B. Macaulay quotes:

Shakespeare had either equal or second. But among the writers who, in the point which we have noticed, have approached nearest to the master, who have no hesitation in placing Jane Austen a woman of whom England is justly proud. She has given us a multitude of

characters all, in a certain sense, common place all such as we meet everyday. (6)

Not every reader has responded positively to Austen. Probably the most famous rejection of Austen was penned by Charlotte Brontë:

Why do you like Miss Austen so very much? I am puzzled on that point. What induced you to say that you would have rather written *Pride and Prejudice* or *Tom Fones*, than any of the Waverley Novels? I had not seen *Pride and Prejudice*. I read the sentence of yours, and then I got the book and what did I find? An accurate daguerreotyped portrait of a common place face, a carefully fenced highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers, but no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy, no open country no fresh air no blue hill no bonny back. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses. These observations will probably irritate you, but I shall run the risk... (6, 7)

Jane Austen is not considered to be an innovative and creative writer regarding her way of writing. Her way of weaving the plots were simple and straight. She did not try ups and downs or zigzag way like that of stream of consciousness and epistolary method. Though she followed the traditional plot pattern of having hero and heroine who used to be get married in the end but she was well aware of the unromantic nature of daily life, and had no illusions about people being divided sharply into morally black and white. That means to say she was well habituated with evil aspects of the society behind the smiling faces.

Above all, Jane Austen is concerned with particularizing detail. In the duties, errands, engagements, irritations, worries and pleasures of daily domestic life, her novels are able to follow the exact curve of experience. The moral pattern is always strong in her novels. About the morality of Jane Austen, an expert Julia Prewitt Brown writes:

Jane Austen's novels convey an idea of everyday existence centered around the experienced marriage and family life... Yet part of the greatness of Austen's novels, as of many modern novels, lies in their unrelenting insistence that everyday existence is not a corner of the world. It is frequently remarked that more than almost any other novelist Jane Austen can be read as and reread with increasing delight. The quality comes from the sentence-to-sentence brilliance of the novels which speak of the moment-to-moment brilliance, the transitory meaning, of the everyday life she describes. (*Emma Notes*, 118)

In sum, Jane Austen is an uncommon sort of novelist of manners with a brilliant ironic wit, an affectionate sort of novelist, a novelist of ordinariness of human life, a mastery of plot structure, a lively and often subtle sense of character and a moral universe within which to set and pattern all her novels.

Uniqueness of Jane Austen

Comparing to our time, Jane Austen lived and wrote more than one hundred years before. She wrote about the people of her circle and projected the mode of social life. That time it could not draw the attention of many readers. She proved to be the darkhorse. The novels of Jane Austen are more popular today than those of the other novelists of her times, and it is remarkable that though in her life time she did

not receive much appreciative notice from the readers. As years have passed; the luster of her fame has steadily increased. And today she is recognized as one of the great novelists of the world.

Regarding the style and distinctive feature of Jane Austen, K.P. Mukarjee of Department of English, Banaras Hindu University expresses:

But even a quick reading of Jane Austen's novels doesn't fail to produce an impression of an inherent greatness in her fictional art. Her greatness is also her uniqueness, for in her own field she is without any peer. What we notice in her novels is a clear scenario of very fractional cross section of the late eighteenth century British society consisting of country squires and landlords, clergyman, soldiers and such other people belonging to the principal upper middle class. (*Introducing Pride and Prejudice*, 1)

Through these people she presents some of the great and vital problems of life, as these problems become magnified against the patterns of human relationship with a keen eye for realism. Austen catches the living spark of life and exercising a judicious choice of selection and exclusion puts to relief on one side the basic virtues of human life and on the other side the follies and foibles typical of mercenary society. K.P. Mukharjee further writes about the skill of Austen:

If human society and human behavior are the eternal subjects of fiction, the greatness of novelist depends on the degree to which he has been able to demonstrate a mastery over his subject. About Jane Austen, it must be said that she is almost unsurpassed and undefeatable. Jane Austen's style is a model of clarity and purity.

When she chooses an expression she takes care to see that it is precise and in balance with everything else. With the lucidity and clarity of expression, she makes it a point remains objective and if she at all expresses she does it indirectly. (2)

Thus the novels became imbued with a dramatic quality, the entire field to themselves. Quite naturally, dialogues play very important part and the dialogues are introduced by means of a device which has become very popular in which, the novelist expounds a character's views in terms obviously appropriate to his or her way of thinking but keeps to the sequence of tense belonging to indirect speech. Like wise, Dr. S. Sen in his book *Pride and Prejudice: A Critical Evaluation* has also admired Jane creativity as:

The structure of Jane Austen's novel grows naturally out of the material she chooses to employ therein and perfectly suits her outlook. As an artist she knows what is to be employed but knows still better what is to be avoided. (26)

The style admirably helps Jane Austen to magnify the ludicrousness of human pride and presumption and introduce a subtle theme with the hidden irony in it. The characters do not reveal merely about themselves but also the entire social milieu they belong to, when they express themselves in Jane Austen's pages. An impression of lively colloquialism is thus created.

The theme gets a unity of its own but at the same time there is a great variety in its treatment, affording a richness of shading and a delicacy of characterization that account for the great and lasting popularity of Jane Austen.

CHAPTER: TWO

Feminism: A General Survey

Feminism is one of the dominating and striking modes of philosophy collectively developed by women. Feminism is related to the feminist social movement that seeks equal rights with men and freedom to decide their own careers and life patterns. Late 90s was its heyday time but when we observe it thoroughly then its date goes back to Enlighten time period. The most important aim of growing feminist movement is to change society's prevailing stereotypes of women as relatively weak, passive, and dependent individuals who are less rational and more emotional than men. It seeks to achieve greater freedom for women to work and to remain economically and psychologically independent of men.

The origin of the word 'Feminism' happened from the French word 'Feminism' that means equal legal and political rights to both men and women. It entirely deals with women's feelings, ideas attitudes experiences problems and thoughts. Feminism is considered to be both an intellectual and political movement and uproar that try to guarantee justice for women and all kinds of discrimination and uneven treatment done to them, especially by male.

Feminism assumes that from very beginning of human civilization, society's treatment towards women have been wrong. Both law and theology had ordered their subjugation. They were restricted to have property in their own names, engage in business, or control the disposal of their children. They are taken to be as second sex, inferior, passive, weak, a body especially designed to engineer the domestic life only. Even great philosophers like Aristotle (884- 322Bc) and Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) devalued and demoralized women's status, intellectual efforts and

potentialities. Aristotle opines his ideas, “the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities” (Selden 134). Aristotle ideas were further supported by Aquinas, “Women are an imperfect man” (Selden 134). Orthodox gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective and decisive where as they cast women as emotional weak nurturing and submissive. For example, myths like Bible are biased in explaining about the creation of man and women. According to the Bible, god first created men then women from man's rib. The more we talk about women's rights and privilege the more there has been seen injustice towards them. Whether in the family; politics, academic or in the corporate world, women's access to leadership and decision making position has been excluded. Their prospect has been underestimated and suspected.

The belief that men are superior to women has been used to justify and maintain the male monopoly of positions of economic, political and social power, in other words, to keep women powerless by denying them from the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political, and inferior position long occupied, it is a patriarchal assumption, rather than a fact. It's clear, from the very starting of human civilization women were considered as inferior, second class and still women are thought to be an object to fulfill men's aspirations and anticipations, to serve them physically, sexually and mentally.

In Britain, Feminism find its beginnings in the mid-1600s when a political voice of and for women began to be heard. As an early of 1790s, the first recognizable feminist polemics, *Thoughts on the Education of daughters* and the more famous *A Vindication of the Rights of women* was written in England by Mary Wollstonecraft to express her dissatisfaction with the role of women in the home and in society. Wollstonecraft demanded an end to the double standards of male and female

behaviors. Additionally, she advocated women's rights to independence at work, education for women, and freedom from "domestic tyranny" and voice in civil and political life in order to free women from the role of subordination to man. At the mid of 19th, women were still rigidly excluded from the professions and from higher education, economically and socially, a woman was expected to confine herself to the private sphere and provide for herself by making an advantageous marriage.

In the passage of time, feminine consciousness gradually emerges among women and makes them realize the inhuman treatment of patriarchal system. Few decades only, women have gradually felt a need to launch a united movement against these injustices, inequalities and violence so as to eliminate discrimination and shorten the hierarchy between the two sexes. The theme of Feminism was picked up at top and galvanized by Germaine de Staël's *Literature considered in its Relation to Social*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of one's Own*, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second sex*, Elaine Showalter's *A literature of Their Own*, John Stuart Mill's *The subjection of Women*, American Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth century* and so on.

Men have got controlled the conceptual area and determined social values and structures of most of the institutions. Quite clearly seen that male has power of naming, defining and exploring. He keeps an authority to discuss and direct female. A woman is considered from masculine perspectives. They have been told in such a way that their happiness lies in giving up everything to male service. It means their dedication and service to their home and to their husband is only their prime duty. Not this much only what we examine in patriarchal society, women are sexually exploited. In heterosexuality, men occupy the first or upper position. Social perception has been made as when women have physical relationship with the men, it is considered that

they are surrendering themselves to the dominace of men. So, men have glorified and made bigger in terms of sex. Regarding the sexual power of male over female, Freedman claims:

Sexuality, then, is a form of power. Gender as socially constructed embodies it, not the reverse. Women and men are divided by gender made into the sexes, as we know them, by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalize male sexual dominace and female sexual submission. If this is true, sexuality is linchpin of gender inequality. (60)

Breaking the silence of women in the patriarchal ideology is Feminism. It is a part of women's movement which is an aggressive conscious feeling of women who begin to reject their own passively. The basic point is that “Western civilization is purposively patriarchal (ruled by the father) that is, it is male and conducted in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains: familial religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic” (Abram's 94). Michele Zimbist Rosaldo, a well known scholar in her book *Woman, culture and society*, says, “a female infant is victimized by the concept of to be a mother in future where her brothers are left to be restless to seek out horizontal ties with peers which help them latter ‘to be a man’ and be a sufficient” (25). In association with Feminist criticism, Toril Moi, another strong feminist says, “Feminist criticism then is a specific kind of political discourse. A critical and theoretical practice committed to the sexism not simply a concern for gender in literature” (204). Likewise, another female critic Elaine Showalter has stated:

Feminist criticism has demanded not just the recognition of women's writing, but a radical rethinking of the conceptual of literary study
feminist criticism is international in its source and feminist critics cross national boundaries. (181)

The root cause of feminism was Patriarchy or Male- Chauvinism itself, where women were considered to be as second class. They were restricted within the four walls of house only. Going to school; collages, seeking career as journalist, doctors, engineers or officers, involving social activities having speech etc. were all like dream. Women were suppressed and sabotaged from every side. As a result, it exploded with a bang in the name "Feminism" that raised the social, cultural, economic and political consciousness of women equal to the height of male. Robinson Victoria defines patriarchy as:

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial social, ideological, political system in which men-by force direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labor determine what part women shall or shall not play and in which the female is every where subsumed under the male. (57)

It was a challenge for all women to withstand against such patriarchal society. The Feminist movement is also known as the Women's Movement or Women's liberation which refers to a series of campaigns for reforms on issues such as reproductive, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, women's suffrage, sexual harassment and sexual violence. The movement's priorities vary among nations and communities and range from opposition to female genital cutting in one country or the glass ceiling in another. The sole concern of feminisim was with the question how

men socially and physically dominate women. Virginia Woolf in her book *A Room of One's Own* says, "Women are simultaneously victims of themselves as well as victims of men and are upholders of society by acting as mirrors to men" (4). She was quite clear regarding the fact that women had faced social and economic obstacles to their objectives. She demanded her own space and area where she could do everything freely. The feminists are revolutionarist. Clearing the concept of feminist criticis, a writer and critic Susan and Gilbert has stated:

The feminist criticis wants decodes and demystify all the disguised questions and answers that have always shadowed of the connections between textuality and sexuality, genre and gender, psychosexual identify and cultural authority. (334)

Women have been used as a model or an object. They have been inspired to become morally corrupt. Men are using them for fulfilling their wishes. They were taught be dependent. Mary Wollstonecraft, in her book *A Vindication of Rights of Women*, highlights the situation of women's education during her time as:

The conduct and manners of women, in fact evidently prove their minds are not in a healthy state; for like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flauntig leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade disregarded on the stalk, long before the season they out have arrived at maturity. (7)

She doesn't like the educational system which was proved to be wrong for the women to be grown in fully mature women. As a result, it fueled to the outrage for

women. It helped women to raise a collective voice. The birth of feminism was essential to ease their agony and pain.

The objective of feminism was to end the traditional concept that thought women as inferior to men physically and intellectually. It has brought about sweeping social and cultural change and has had an impact on familial relations, religion, and the place of women in the society. They were hurry to end every kind of discrimination done against them. Feminism erased their passivity and gave an opportunities know to their infinite potencialities. So, feminism was for the sake of women rights and human equality. All women who are just struggling againt all kinds of domination and oppression are thought to be feminists. Eventually the feminist movement continues to support and ecourage women to pursue their goals as individuals who deserve equal opportunity.

Femininism is a broad trem in itself. We happen to see different strands of feminism. Some of the noticeable strands of feminism are Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Liberal Feminism, Black Feminism, Eco Feminism and Lesbian Feminism. Going through the overall strands of feminism, we can conclude, in the 1970s, many feminists were concerned with developing theory which could help explain women's oppression and which could indicate how that oppression could be challenged.

By the second half of the 1980s, many theorists had turned away from the search for over arching explanation's subordination and were analyzing particular issues and problems. Still, the debate has not ended rather has expanded covering all circumference of discussion and subjects.

Jane Austen, a Pioneer of Feminism

Jane Austen has the reputation of only writing about young women whose only interest in life was marriage and is often derided because of it however, this is not true. She has written about the relationship between men and women, the problems of women in her day and had some scathing criticism of society. Especially she has been able to reflect the situation of affected women.

One question is usually raised to her, “Was she a feminist then?” The answer is, could be 'No' in today's sense of the word as meaning those who believe that men and women should be considered equal. Jane Austen would be amazed to see women studying at university, joining the workforce, and even being Prime ministers and presidents.

However, it can be argued that she was a forerunner of the feminists. Her heroines were not only interested in marriage and children, even though this was the only acceptable career for women. Emma, for example, tells Harriet that she doesn't want to get married at all and those women with their own money always respectable. She boldly says:

I must see somebody very superior to any one I have been seen yet; to be tempted... I don't see any such person. I would rather not be tempted. I cannot really change for the better. If I were to marry, I must expect to repent it. (*Emma*, 109)

Elizabeth, who will be dependent on her family and at the mercy of Mr. Collins who holds the entail to the family house if she never marries, only wants to marry if she can find the ‘the very deepest love’. Fanny refuses Henry Crawford, a wealthy suitor, in spite of family outrage. Elizabeth actually refuses two proposals-

one from the pompous Mr. Collins and one from the very handsome, wealthy Mr. Darcy. Marriage has been given importance in *Pride and Prejudice*. It was to be accepted forcefully to ensure the better future. If candidate was wealthy, manner and behaviour were considered by the ladies. That was their obligation not interest. Women's existence was solely dependent by what kind of husband they do get. Referring to *Pride and Prejudice* academician Viven Jones asserts:

... that the status and education of women is one of Austen's main subjects in a world where the definition of proper womanhood was much discussed. As Austen's novels so clearly show, middle-and upper class women particularly were dependent on their fathers or on marriage for their livelihood. (141)

Representing the crystal clear situation of the women in the novel was the first major symptom of Jane Austen being feminist. Austen's main aim was to introduce the real happenings of women so that it might be felt by men. The below lines taken from her next novel *Mansfield Park* are also not free from the domination done over women:

Maria, with only Mr. Rushworth to attend to her, doomed to the repeated details of his day's details of his day's sport, good or bad, his boast of his dogs his jealousy of his neighbours, his doubts of their qualification, and his zeal after poachers... subjects which will not find their way to female feelings without some talent on one side, or some attachment on the other. (51)

Austen's heroines, apart from Catherine Rose in *Northanger Abbey*, are all intelligent and serious women, not silly. Catherine Rose is not so brilliant but exercise

good judgment of character by disliking John Thorpe. Similarly Viola Ashford in her writing '*Was Jane Austen a feminist?*' quotes about ability of Jane Austen as:

It is possible to argue that Jane Austen believed that women should have careers after she had on herself. Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility*, remarks to Edward how much she envies men being able to have careers. In spite of all this, Jane Austen will continue to be derided by many feminists and many men as well which is a pity. In is understandable if they don't like her writing but deriding her for the wrong reasons is only stupid. (1)

She lived in a period at the turn from the 18th century to the 19th century, and that era was a period of mixed thoughts, which conflicted all the time. Among all the conflicts, the most important one was the disparity in social status between men and women. Not only men's status was in the centre of the society but also common people thought it was right that men were much more important than women were. Under these circumstances, women became commodities. Their world was in their houses and their jobs were to attend their husbands. Facing this problem, Jane Austen could not do anything but fight with her own pen. In this context, a critic Cao Yu in his book *Literary Analysis: Feminism in Emma* asserts the following sentences:

Jane Austen's feminist consciousness were the culmination of a line of development in thought and fiction which back to the start of the eighteenth century, and which deserved to be called feminist since it was concerned with establishing the moral equality of men and women and the proper status of the individual women as accountable beings. She sharply pointed out that the economic situation decided women social

status, which had made her different from other feminists, pressing on gender character of women. (2)

In order to change the women's living condition, Austen pointed that women should clearly realize that they should consider mutual love besides loaves and fish. And that would need sense. She thought that only when they reached the balance between sense and sensibility would they achieve the same balance between thoughts and material.

In Victorian society, it could be imagined that if a woman could get married, and could marry a rich man even though the man was not her true love, her marriage could also change her status. Austen dragged people back to the real world and created a new kind of women. They never took idea of marrying a man as a life-devoted purpose. They purposed true love, which was based on mutual equality and respect. From women's liberation, feminist consciousness was helpful for women to themselves and realized their ideal conscientiously. From the practical society, it provided women with theoretical basis for realizing their aim. Specifically speaking, feminist consciousness contained the different and complex women's values they have thought on the career, the right, the attitude towards happiness, the view of marriage and the value, etc. Jane Austen novel was basically a biography and a mature one.

Austen reappraised and had the esteem for women's value. Advancing and emphasizing feminist consciousness was an inexorable trend for the development of women's liberation. Thus, they occupied an important position in British Literary history. Jane Austen was different from the other women novelists of her age in which she possessed a keen realistic insight and she ruthlessly exposed and severely criticized some maladies of the society, so her novel was characterized by the unique

feminine and keen realistic insight. However, she was also different from the other female novelists because she wrote from a keen feminine visual angle, which male novelists often failed to do. Her novels were concerned about women's lives and their unfair condition in society, especially in education, marriage, etc. Feminists' consciousness focused the women characters' inner lives during their self-development written by women writers. Jane Austen's novels were often compared with Shakespeare's comedies, and she always described people's vivid characters and their attitudes towards marriage, which symbolized reconciliation and harmony. The novel had been concentrated throughout to make us judge between material and moral criteria.

Thus to fussy her as feminist writer, its not feasible. She is a true pioneer of feminism, either directly or indirectly through her wonderful writings.

CHAPTER: THREE

Emma as a Testimony to Female Identity

Literature is said to be the mirror of a society. What happens in society that is reflected in the work of literature. While analyzing *Emma* also it is necessary to be contextual. The then time should be taken into consideration very well. Ending of eighteenth century and beginning of nineteenth century was that period of time, where women's roles and actions were confined within four walls of a room. They were submissive and their status was always determined by what kind of husband they get. That mean to say they were not considered as significant beings.

Although, the feminist movement is a recently developed theory of 80s decades, but here the thesis has been endeavoured to be dissected from a feminist perspective. Albeit late discovery, feminist theory was already hinted by Jane Austen in several years ago which was her genius and the product of intellectual cerebrum. Jane Austen is best known for her wonderful skills of presenting women in the novels or her all novels have been forwarded by the lady characters. The feminism that we are discussing today was already initiated by the Jane Austen. Those ladies writers of that time could not revolt against patriarchy and male domination as today's ladies are doing. But they were seeking some means and medium through which they could ease their suffocation of male chauvinism. Literature became their best way to express.

When *Emma* was written, feminism had not been popular and women had innocently accepted their roles as Feminine. Walking out of the roles of domesticity would be crime. Any lady coming out of the four walls of a house and daring to do the social works or like that she was tagged as "over smart" or "morally corrupt". To be a lady writer in the midst of such atmosphere was nothing than walking on the

edge of blade. But who could stop Austen from producing the novels which were later proved to be philosophy of feminism.

Those who had an intense insight took *Emma* as manifesto of Feminism. *Emma*, for many readers, is both delightful and didactic. She chooses to reveal her vision through the mode of social comedy in very small setting, but the depth and precision of observation make that vision universal. Austen deals with the sophisticated social life for it, she selects her family circle to show the weakness of society. In this concern, Elizabeth Drew praises her as, “she is much more penetrating psychologist and a much more finished and subtle artist” (Drew, *The Novel: A Modern* 109).

The title of the novel has been christened after the central character of the novel called Emma Woodhouse. The character Emma Woodhouse more or less resembles Jane Austen herself. Jane Austen was so desperate to link herself with the character Emma as she had stated, “I am going to take a heroine who no one but myself will much like” (Austen – Leigh, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* 187). So from one point, Emma Woodhouse of *Emma* is none other than Jane Austen herself. She introduces her central character Miss Emma Woodhouse as:

Emma Woodhouse, clever and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to quite some of the best blessings of existence, and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vexes her. (37)

Austen makes Emma full with the words like handsome, clever and rich. Her physique is perfect more than that she is perfect by her action and leadership. The story takes place in the village of Highbury. Austen has given more importance to her

lady characters and their dealings to their milieu. Leaving all other characters, around 14 to 15 characters are noticeable, in that also Emma Woodhouse is the most important character. She is the heart beat of Hartfield. Twenty one year old lady Emma is an active, energetic and full of aspiration and anticipation accompanying her widower father Mr. Woodhouse. Emma very well understands her society and the patriarchal norms and values. Jane Austen has created *Emma* as a reaction against her contemporary society. Emma has carried on that kind of role which was usually done by male in the then time. She is free; guided by her own rationale, keeps an ability to choose a potential life partner but never considers for herself. To enter into the world of matrimony was compulsory task for every Victorian lady because they were preoccupied by the concept that matrimony was the only honorable thing for a woman to do. Those only insure their future. They were always in haunt of such husbands who are financially or economically sound. Thus Victorian ladies were nothing else than mere commodities. They were always in shadow. Their reputation, qualification, skill and potentialities had no value unless they married to a wealthy businessman, or so like that. Their identities were solely linked with the identities of their husbands and vice versa.

But our heroine Emma Woodhouse discards all these assumptions. She is financially independent, the daughter of richest man in town, and continues dominating her family. Emma presents her astute sense of equality between men and women by refusing the notion of marriage. She argues with her father like, “I promise you to make none for myself, papa; but I must, indeed, for other people. It is the greatest amusement in the world!” (43).

She loves an act of matchmaking but when it is her turn, Emma refuses boldly to prove that single women can still have significance as a person. Emma plays freely

in her role. The work done by the men is done by Emma Woodhouse in the novel. She has opted the role of matchmaker for her friends but equally she is determined not to get married again. It seems to be contradictory, but notion of not getting married is an instance of feminist attitude. She chooses other, but she does not let other to choose herself. This is what Jane Austen had tried to show to us. The fact of Emma Woodhouse not getting married has kept a silent relation with Jane Austen herself as Jane Austen also remained unmarried throughout her life. The theme of matchmaking is abundant, it confuses us whether *Emma* is just a story of domestic human behaviors, but if examined from feminist side it is not just that much only. Marriage of Miss Taylor, her long governess friend, with Mr. Weston was not liked by her father Mr. Woodhouse. Mr. Woodhouse had become selfish and could not see safe future of Miss Taylor. He says, "Poor Miss Taylor! - I wish she were here again. What a pity it is that Mr. Weston ever thought of her!" (39). Emma does not like the comment given by her father to Miss Taylor challenges him arguing:

I cannot agree with you, Papa, you know I cannot. Mr. Weston is such a good humoured, pleasant, excellent man that he thoroughly deserves a good wife; and you would not have had Miss Taylor live with us forever and bear all my odd humours, when she might have a house of her own. (30)

Getting married means new name, new home and new identity in reality, this was thought by Emma Woodhouse. For Miss Taylor, remaining in the Mr. Weston, it was not possible. So Emma plans Miss Taylor's setting before four years which does successfully. She compares herself with other and finds herself most bold and courageous. That's why she is adamant for not getting married which is the symbol of independence in that society where patriarchal rules. In the context of marriage, she

says it is not compulsory and one can enjoy all the experiences of a married woman. It is clear when she argues with Harriet Smith:

If I know myself, Harriet, mine is an active, busy mind, with a great many independent resources and I do not perceive why I should be more in want of employment at forty or fifty than one, and twenty. Woman usual occupations of hand and mind will be as open to me then as they are now; or with no important variations. If I draw less, I shall read more; if I give up music, I shall take to carpet, work. And as for objects of interest, objects for the affection, which is in truth the great point of inferiority, the want of which is really the great evil to avoid in not marrying, I shall be very well off, with the children of sister. I love, so much, to care about. (78)

Anyone can survive a meaningful life without being married. There is misconception that marriage is one and only the way of one's introduction. But Emma is not in that category that runs after marriage only. She is determined not to get married and dares to challenge all types of social norms and values. She keeps a kind of division among others. She tells Harriet if she needs to be get married then that man won't be ordinary and simple. By the term 'active, busy mind' and 'many independent resources' mean she wants her potential bridegroom as the combination of mind and money.

It is seen that most of the women of Highbury are just mistress of their husband's home. Emma tells that marriage is usually done for partner, for her she has got nephews and a niece as a partner. She is not afraid of her later age as being an old maid. Old maid will become a matter of ridicule only if she is destitute, Emma thinks

in this way. She is not worried being an old maid because she has enough money to support herself throughout her life. Emma answers Harriet reminding about an old maid:

‘But still, you will an old maid! And that’s so dreadful!’ Never mind, Harriet, I shall be a poor old maid, and it is poverty only which makes celibacy contemptible to a generous public! A single Woman, with a very narrow income, must be a ridiculous, disagreeable, old maid! The proper sport of boys and girl; but a single women, of good fortune, is always reputable, and be as sensible and pleasant as any body else. And the distinction is not quite so much against the candour and common sense... to content the mind, and sour the temper. (109)

Thus, her confidence of becoming single is quite solid. Emma seeks a kind of equality between husband and wife. It is possible then when husband understand wife and vice-versa. Women should be considered as a significant being that what all Emma wants. Understanding the current socialization of her society is the great wit of Emma Woodhouse, because it was the only way to proper marriage. Her valour is an acute challenge to society. She demands a certain kind of changes in a marriage. Orthodox matrimony is just a way of subordinating women, making them as secondary human beings. So, Emma is looking for an ideal marriage where her status would be guaranteed. Let us examine the following dialogue between Emma and Mr. Knightly:

You are very warm to Mr. Martin, but, as I said before, are just to Harriet. Harriet’s claims to marry well are not as contemptible as you

represent them. She is not a clever girl, but she has better sense than you are aware of, and don't deserve to have her understanding spoken of slightly. Let me tell you, that in the degree she possesses them; they are not trivial recommendations to the world in general for she is, in fact, a beautiful girl and must be thought so by ninety-nine people out of a hundred.

Upon my word, Emma, to hear you abusing the reason you have, is almost enough to make me think so too. Better be without sense, than misapply it as you do. (89-90)

The Eighteenth century society paid importance to those ladies who were beautiful and submissive, physically. They were remarked as an "ideal wife". The gentlemen of the Eighteenth century preferred weak, submissive, feeble, beautiful and coy women, so that they can dominate them. They were fond of having authority towards them. Face was only given priority because in the next part, parties, meetings and gathering in public places were the proper places where they could demonstrate the faces of their wives full of boast telling "see, I have the beautiful wife than yours". This made women like an object. Women, too, were satisfied getting that type of husbands who are financially sound and publically recognized. Emma knowing all these matters is afraid of the typical condition of women in her society and losing freedom and independence. She states the actual reason for not marrying as:

I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's husband, as I am of Hartfield: and never, never could I expect to be so truly

beloved and important so always first; so always first and always right
in any man's eyes as I am in father's. (109)

For the several records Emma doesn't like getting married. First, her domestic love and care for her father and the second knowing the reality of women after marriage. The notion of Emma remaining as a single is extremely contrasted with her surroundings. That society, where matrimony used to ensure one's status and position, that society where women used to dream superior class husband in such Austen's lady character Emma surprises us withstanding against all patriarchal assumptions.

Marriage was the highest accomplishment in eighteenth century. Married women used to get a fair treatment comparison to unmarried women. Austen mirrors the social phenomena of eighteenth century addressing Mr. Elton treatment:

Everybody in and about Highbury who had ever visited to Mr. Elton was disposed to pay him attention on his marriage. Dinner-parties and evening-parties were made for him and his lady; and invitations flowed in so fast that she had soon the pleasure of apprehending they were never to have a disengaged day. (291)

Emma is that type of girl who turns into full responsible lady since her childhood. The role of Mr. Woodhouse is the guardian for the name sake only. She receives neither nether compay nor other responsibilities from her father. Even he doesn't like Emma matchmaking job and says:

My dear, I wish you would not make matches and foretel things for what ever you say always comes pass. Pray do not make any more matches, they are silly things and break up one's family circle grievously. (43).

But Emma does not give up simply. She worries to other more than herself. She does't step back in her determination and ambition. She says no to "marriage" means saying no to feminine role. Emma is interested in all the activities which a single man does. Like liberty to travel, to have job, involving in social affairs and so on. These all things are so dear to Emma that she cannot compromise it with any cost or value. All these spirits are scattered in the following conversation between Mr. Woodhouse and Emma where Mr. Woodhouse represents the traditional perspective of married women whereas Emma backs up liberal attitude for them:

'But my dear papa, you are no friend to matrimony: and therefore why should you be so anxious to pay your respects to a bride?'

'No, my dear, I never encouraged anybody to marry, but I would always wish to pay every proper attention to a lady.'

'....A bride, you know, my dear, is always the first in company, let the others be who they may.'

'Well, papa, if this is not encouragement to marry; I do not know what is?'

'My dear, you do not understand me. This is a matter of mere common politeness and good breeding and has nothing to do any encouragement to people to marry.' (281-282)

Jane Austen's concept of presenting women in the fictional world has helped a lot in awakening the general situation of women. Austen presented the plight and agony of the eighteenth century women. Through the character like Emma, Jane Austen hinted women to be like her. Austen's Emma is a courageous young girl. Her world is like the world of the third world female. Emma is the central character not

because she is richer or pretty but because of her purposeful actions towards her family and society. She has involved in the most delicate social custom, marriage. The role staged by the men or the matter which is the privilege of men is thoroughly enjoyed by Emma. Actually she wants to assert her sense of equality between men and women. Women are object but women can be subject too in the case of matrimony. The general trend, where man used to become active in matrimony has been violated by Emma. So for this she is valiant women.

Emma contrives the business of the carpet and tries other to make independently by employment. She keeps an exceptional idea about marriage. She is actually after an ideal marriage where she could get love, money and assurance of one's social level. Emma seems to be class consciousness and little bit conservative to the modern readers but the time period when Emma was written, marriage was one of the best way to introduce them in the society. The lady like Emma Woodhouse would be considering as the luckiest one who keeps an ability of choose a husband. Since eighteenth century women were limited of their parents for the marriage. The parents were in haunt of good husband with good home. In such condition, love would be totally ignored and neglected. Harriet Smith as described by Austen:

Harriet certainly 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. Her early attachment to herself was very amiable and her inclination for good company, and power of appreciating what was elegant and clever. (56)

Harriet is guided by Emma all the time. Emma is keen to find out the right husband for Harriet. Elaborating the correct and the right husband, Emma tells Harriet:

This is an alliance which, whoever-whatever friend may be, must be agreeable to them, provided at least they have common sense, and we are not to be addressing our conduct to fools. If they are anxious to see you *happily* married, here is man whose amiable character gives every assurance of it; if they wish to have you settled in the same country and circle which they have chosen to place you in, here it will be accomplished; and their only object is that you should, in the common phrase, be *well* married, here is the comfortable, fortune, the responsible establishment the rise in the world which must satisfy them. (101)

Thus for her, an ideal marriage is an amalgam of 'happily married' and 'well married'. That means if a woman got happiness personally, socially and financially, that is the best marriage. This situation was not in reality but Austen's imagination paved a way where women could walk, freely and independently.

Emma is vibrant match-maker. She is worried about her dearest friend Harriet Smith. Harriet Smith was beautiful, innocent and naïve whose family background was unknown. In such time period, it was difficult for a lady whose parental history was not clear. A number of questions were questioned for such people. Here, Emma plays a role of caretaker. Emma intends to get a good husband for Harriet. She did not want Harriet to be emotional and romantic. Rather desires Harriet to act rationally and practically. Robert Martin, a silent lover of Harriet is not supported by Emma because

he is economically not sound and tries to join the connection of Harriet with Mr. Elton, for only the reason he is economically well established. Though Emma is proven to be wrong in case of judging Mr. Martin and his feelings towards Harriet. Nonetheless, the inner desire of Emma is clear and pure. She wants Harriet to be settled with all requirements that usually the eighteenth century women desired. Emma makes Harriet as equal to man by letting her two proposals to be chosen. One Mr. Martin, next Mr. Elton. Emma wishes Harriet to get some social esteem. She says to Harriet, "I would have you firmly established in good society, as to be independent even of Hartfield and Miss Woodhouse. I want to see you permanently well connected" (60).

Therefore, by playing a role of matchmaker, Emma hopes to project that in matrimony, a woman can become a matter of subject, not only merely a matter of object.

A hot argument takes place in between Mr. Knightley and Emma Woodhouse about Harriet's refusal of Robert Martin's proposal. Mr. Knightley does not like this act of Harriet and accuses Harriet as being foolish and stupid. While Emma defends Harriet and says:

Then she is a greater simpleton than I ever believed her. What is the foolish girl about?

'Oh! to be sure', cried Emma, 'it always incomprehensible to a man that a woman should ever refuse an offer of marriage. A man always imagines a woman to be ready for anybody who asks her.' (27)

But playing the role of matchmaker, Emma challenges the conventional trend as it was solely done by males only. Emma doesn't want to be dominated and

oppressed. She even desires other not to be dominated. Harriet is frequently advised by Emma about the women existence and important of women saying, “A women is not to marry a man merely because she is asked, or because he is attracted to her, and can write a tolerable letter” (81). This dialogue has awakened Harriet to the worldly reality of a new age where human self identity is important. Emma thinks that marriage is that relation in which both men and womem should have no equal execess but not dominace of one.

Emma gives priority to her own experience and knowledge. She does not like to be dependent upon others. Mostly Mr. Knightley suggests her in so many cases but her determination to think and act freely and independently despite Mr. Knightley severe suggestion is the proof of her independence. It is not necessarily needed that Mr. Knightley’s advices are correct all the time. It can also be he wants to guide Emma in his style which she does not like at all. Though Mr. Knightley has been presented as a noble and gentlman from the very chapter of the novel, his advice, decision, judgement and attitude are discarded by Emma, a heroine of her free will. Once Mr. Knightley comments severely on her impolite behaviour towards Miss Bates, Emma never listens to him as she dicusssees with him in the following way:

‘To be sure-our discordancies must always arise from my being in the wrong.’

‘Yes, said he, smiling- ‘and reason good. I was sixteen years old when you were born.’

‘A material differences then’, she replied-‘and no doubt you were much my superior in judgement at that period of our our lives.’

‘I have still the advantages of you by sixteen year’s experience, and by not being a pretty young woman and a spoiled child. Tell your aunt, little Emma that she ought to set you al better example.’

‘That’s true’, she cried-‘very true little Emma, grow up a better woman than your aunt.’

‘A man cannot be more so’, was his short, full answer.’ (121-122)

In these discussions, Emma dares to challenge the Mr. Knightley vision. She is a master of her own will. Emma is confident that her activities won’t have any kind of consequences, if so she thinks she must me right.

In reality, Emma is not a mature girl. She commits so many mistakes. But she has been learning from her mistakes. She has been presented as childish, stubborn and error committing girl. In each steps of her action, she becomes more responsible and improves herself. Her tendency of learing from the mistakes eventually make her as more rational, dynamic and independent, which are the true qualities of women who dare to revolt against all kind of social restrictions established by so called males.

One instance can be taken in the case of matchmaking of Harriet with Mr. Elton. From the initial phase, Emma respects Mr. Elton deeply. Emma was in search of a delicate and beautiful girl for the vicar of her village. It could not be other than Miss Harriet. She thinks it is her duty to find him a deserving wife who will make him a useful person of the society. She imagines that Harriet could be the perfect macth of Mr. Elton. Emma imagines the marriage could be an excellent. But it was Mr. Knightley who warned about Mr. Elton. He argues that actually beneath his good looking and amiable manners, Mr. Elton is not the the perfect man. Emma contemplates Harriet would achieve social respct and Mr. Elton would achieve a

comfortable domestic life. In this context, Mr. Knightley was right because he was sure that Mr. Elton won't marry to Harriet because Harriet did not possess any kind of socio-economic background. Emma was shaken when Mr. Elton says, "Miss Smith! I never thought of Miss Smith in the whole course of my existence-never paid her any attention, but as your friend... Oh! Miss Woodhouse! Who can think of Miss Smith, when Miss Woodhouse is near" (150).

Emma thinks Mr. Elton for Harriet but Mr. Elton thinks Emma, not Harriet. Emma was surprised to learn this fact what she thought about Mr. Elton, it all came nothing. If Emma would be a general girl then she would be impressed by Mr. Elton but she is not like an ordinary girl who could be manipulated easily. Rather Emma manipulates Mr. Elton by upgrading the level of Harriet to decide about her life and choices herself. She expresses:

You must be the best judge of your own happiness. If you prefer Mr. Martin to every other person; if you think him the most agreeable man you have ever been in company with, why should you hesitate? You blush Harriet. Does any body else occur to you at this moment under such a definition? (79)

These quotations carry the themes of feminism. A girl is awakening a next girl to come out of the shell for their dignity and pride. Emma's suspicion was confirmed and proved when Mr. Elton returns back from his journey out of town with a fiancée, Augusta Hawkins which is richer than Harriet. She learns from her own experience. She could have believed in the words of Mr. Knightley, but refuses for what reason? The reason was that Emma tries to find out from her observation and efforts. This shows that she is not naïve and innocent who would be persuaded easily. This is

enough to say that she carries the attributes of true feminist. Emma's ability to fathom Mr. Elton's real character shows that she chooses to experience things on her own stand, with the possibilities of making mistakes than to be submissive to all Mr. Knightley opinions or sayings.

When Emma's scheme fails, she tries next match making for Harriet with Mr. Frank Churchill. Frank Churchill seems to be the perfect gentleman. He is physically attractive and his manners please her. Austen describes him as:

Frank Churchill so long talked of so high in interest, was actually before her, he was presented to her, and she didn't think too much had been said in his praise; he was a very good looking young man: height, hair, address, all were exceptionable and his countenance has a great deal of the spirit and liveliness of his fathers; he looked quick and sensible. She felt immediately that she should like him and there was a well-bred ease of manner, and a readiness to talk, which convinced that he came intending to be acquainted with her, and that acquainted they soon must be. (202)

However, Emma's good impression of Frank Churchill does not last for a long time. Austen comments, "Emma's very good opinion of Frank Churchill was little shaken the following day, by hearing that he was gone off to London, merely to his hair cut" (216). She concludes that he only cares about pleasing her and that he does not seem to care about others' feelings. It was further intensified by another context where Frank Churchill delays in coming to Highbury to visit his father, Mr. Weston and to pay his respect towards his stepmother, Mrs. Weston. Let us examine the following conversations:

‘He ought to come’, said Emma, ‘If he could stay only a couple of days, he ought to come, and one can hardly conceive a young man’s not having it in his power to do as much as that... one ought to be at Enscombe and know the ways of the family, before one decides upon what he can do’, replied Mrs. Weston, ‘One ought to use the same caution, perhaps, I believe, certainly must not be judged by general rules. She is so very unreasonable and everything gives a way to her.’
(143)

Emma hates that type of guy who is not accountable towards his family. Here, Frank Churchill seems to be aloof from family which Emma does not like. She thinks that a man with his youth and his resources should have made the visit to his own father even before he is asked to. Emma assumes that his absence is his proof of negligence towards his father and it shows that he is basically not a good character. She wants Frank Churchill to act like a real male. When Emma learns a secret engagement to Jane Fairfax, she was hurt. She herself was directed towards him as both of them were physically good looking, they share the same age, and they have many similarities in character. More importantly, they share the position in the society they were both socially respectable and rich.

With all these reasons, Emma believed that Frank Churchill and she will be an ideal couple. She was betrayed. Frank convinces her by showing his interest. He always sits beside her in the parlour; he secures her promise to dance the first to with in a dance party, and he never misses seeing her ever since his arrival in Highbury. Even Mr. and Mrs. Weston also think that their son admires Emma and suggest him this idea. But when the reality of Frank Churchill comes out Emma becomes extremely upset. By doing so, Emma thinks he didn’t deceive her only but also to Jane

Fairfax. What causes Emma to think of Frank as low characters in not his secrete engagement but his manners and attitudes done towards women.

The people like Mr. Elton and Frank Churchill are the typical man of the eighteenth century who thought women to be an object with whom they can play. But Emma comes out of such people. That's true she does a mistake in her judgement and recognition of people but she learns from her mistakes which make Emma exceptional and distinct from other ordinary girls. Emma's independence in making judgement has caused her to make mistakes but as result, her mistakes actually bring a better understanding of her feelings. When she knows Harriet's desires for Mr. Knightley and behaviour of Frank Churchill both bring her in next stage of her life. She begins to realize Mr. Knightley whom she often used to have hot discussions; used to suggest her all the time, guides her in different circumstances, finds her inner real feelings for him. An ability to distinguish among Mr. Elton, Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley shows that she has reached in that phase of her life from where she can take serious decision of her life. Emma's recognition of Mr. Knightley is another good example of Emma's ability despite of her young age.

Her sense of responsibility is unique. Emma handles every matter successfully despite coming near to mistake. She thinks twice before she steps into an action. Whenever she guides to Harriet she also learns the lesson of life. Emma becomes mentor of her too. She directs, makes decisions, and advices, while Harriet listens, follows and regards her as her superior. Even she senses the responsibility of her father Mr. Woodhouse, a widower. Her marriage could be a way for her father's loneliness. Therefore, Emma becomes a responsible and dutiful-for one reason other depends on here. One striking example of Emma sense of responsibility towards Harriet and her father is seen from what runs through Emma's head after Mr.

Knightley's proposal of love to her. Jane Austen presents the environment in the following words:

As long as Mr. Knightley remained with them, Emma's fever continued; but when he was gone, she began to a little tranquilized and subdued – and in the course of the sleepless night, which was the tax for such an evening, she found one or two such very serious points to consider, as made her feel, that even her happiness must have some alloy. She hardly knew yet what Mr. Knightley would ask she even wept over the idea of it, as a sin of thought. While he lived, it must only an engagement, but she flattered herself that if divested of the danger of drawing her away, it might become an increase of comfort to him- and her mind had to pass again and again through every bitter reproach and sorrowful regret that had ever surrounded it. (421)

Emma can be taken as a very good example of human relationship. We happen to see a kind of harmonious relationship between the characters. Emma has acted as the blood circulation of Highbury. Emma thinks that other people are like her. Most of the time she is deceived but she copes with the situation tactfully. Her sense of independence has helped her to develop self awareness and responsibility. By her excessive display, she influences other, especially to Harriet to be like her. Harriet changes herself in the course of time despite Emma's guidance. Harriet eventually decides Mr. Martin to be her partner. Harriet's ability to choose a life partner symbolizes that now she is free and independent like Emma to have her own decision about the life. Actually, it was Emma Woodhouse who taught her the way of living. Pretty and well-behaved girl innocent girl, Harriet follows the footsteps of Emma

accepting Mr. Martin as an ultimate choice. Some particular time come where Harriet shuns Emma's judgement and knowledge.

Needless to say, Emma Woodhouse is a role model. She is unique, distinct and ideal to other. Her action, activities and transaction reflect sights of one true feminist. She truly carries the elements of feminist; Equality, Independence and Justice- these all are what Emma know. She is not afraid of society. Albeit, she possesses drawbacks but her drawbacks are forgetful. In her drawbacks also we see good wishes of someone else. She does mistake. We see her becoming more mature and practical, notwithstanding her immature age.

Emma's strong determination in making judgement and decision on her own is nothing except a revolt against an atmosphere of male chauvinism of the eighteenth century, inspiring later generation.

CHAPTER: FOUR

Conclusion

The intelligence of the eighteenth century people had not reached in that height who could delve the underlying theme of Jane Austen's novels. When she was alive, she was not recognized as the novelist. She gained reputation as a novelist of trivial matter and domestic gossip. But as the time passed, slowly and slowly people started to know her novel's real essence. One by one Jane Austen novels got popularity. Her novels were started reading widely. Numerically she wrote just six novels but was enough to establish her as genuine novelist.

Today, Jane Austen is best known for her unique representation of women in the novels. All her six novels contain women as the protagonists. She glorified women; women value and talked women's rights and position. Jane Austen's one of the successful novel is *Emma*. *Emma* is the package of the feminism. Jane Austen has skillfully crafted the character Emma Woodhouse who takes the flame of feminist elements throughout the novel.

Emma Woodhouse, as the central character of the novel, is a young, beautiful and bold girl in her twenty-one age. She is a loving and kind-hearted daughter and sister. She shows sympathy upon her maids and she socializes with her neighbours. She is a good daughter, sister, mistress and neighbour. Her action and abundance display in the novel makes her noticeable. As a social worker, a matchmaker and home governor, Emma is always dominant and influencing one. She is a visionary lady who carries the elements of feminism. For it, she challenges the traditional and orthodox social patriarchal norms and values. She doesn't fear questioning these values and follows her own decision. Acting the role of matchmaker, she wants to

have equality between men and women. She demands as the men chooses to women, women should get right to choose men too. The feminist elements of equality are reflected through her effort to show her significance as a single women, and her effort to empower Harriet to take control of own life. Emma Woodhouse doesn't want to get married by someone else but she tries to choose others as her possible husband. She thinks in the case of matrimony, women should be changed from the matter of an object to subject. Emma is so bold she takes the responsibility of Harriet and her father also. Her confidence to guide and taking charge of her family, society as well are the authentic proofs to say Emma possesses the qualities to be a feminist.

Next, Emma Woodhouse's feminist qualities can be seen with the dealing of George Knightley who frequently advises Emma throughout the novel. He has been presented as noble and sincere man but Emma does not like his interruption. Rather Emma likes to commit mistake but doesn't accept any kind of interference. Likewise, Mr. Elton and Frank Churchill are also affected by Emma. Her courage to admit mistake and more significantly learning from the mistake to understand her own feelings and the sense of responsibility of her action is the most admirable fact of Emma Woodhouse.

As the feminist elements, equality and independence are important which are reflected through the character of Emma Woodhouse who opposes the stereotypical characteristics of men and women in the eighteenth century. Emma denies the stereotype of women as the subordination of men, and she proves that she independently makes decision of her own and takes responsibilities of those decisions. She decides not to marry gives judgement to other people which the women of her time never did. She does mistake but indeed her mistakes are forgettable and ignorable. What she dared is more important. She matures herself from her own

mistakes. The seeking of equality between men and women is the most important matter of a novel.

Emma is an expression of Jane Austen's feelings of suffocations in an age where a woman's role was defined by subjugated domestic chores. They were neglected mentally, economically and physically by society as inferior beings. Their involvement outside the home was not allowed. The anti-feminists wanted to keep women where they always had been because they always suspected women and neglected them as simple machines that were fit for motherhood.

Many people did not know Jane Austen as writer. She confined herself within the four walls of her house where she has produced several brilliant characters that were ready to represent the world of female. Jane Austen did not fight physically against her patriarchal society but has slapped the so called gentleman of the eighteenth century sharply through her writings. Among her six novels, *Emma* is one of the significant novels. The character which Jane Austen has created Emma has played a variety of women's role; female, feminine and feminist. Feminist brought feminism as the politics for the upliftment of women. Feminism does not teach us to fight against men but to aware men about the existence of women and their role in the society. It preserves, promotes and upgrades the consciousness of women. This is what *Emma* is about. Therefore these discourses done on the novel justify *Emma* as a testimony to female identity.

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