

Women identity in Jane Austen novels: Emma, Pride and prejudice

Syed Zareena,

Research scholar

Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur,
Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract

Jane Austen's novels are generally well-known owing to their themes, which question the validity of conventions in a society that lowers the place of women. In other words, Austen satirizes the values of her era by both manipulating the problems that women face and by constructing appropriate characters who contribute a lot to the reflection of female voice in her novels. What makes most of Austen's heroines' symbols of female identity is that they share nearly the same features which are vital in constructing a self-realizing female figure in the society. Similarly, Deborah Kaplan observes that most of Austen's heroines are independent girls who have common characteristics such as liveliness, wit, intelligence and charm. The heroines of Pride and Prejudice and Emma, especially Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse respectively, are characterized as unconventional ladies who have revolutionary points of view about the place and value of women in man-oriented societies. Especially their approach to the relation between marriage and financial issues, which degrades women's individuality, is extremely modern. It is obvious that they have an awareness of feminine identity.

Keywords: women identity, individuality, characteristics Jane Austen novels.

Introduction:

Jane Austen's novels are generally well-known owing to their themes, which question the validity of conventions in a society that lowers the place of women. In other words, Austen satirizes the values of her era by both manipulating the problems that women face and by constructing appropriate characters who contribute a lot to the reflection of female voice in her novels. What makes most of Austen's heroines symbols of female identity is that they share nearly the same features which are vital in constructing a self-realizing female figure in the society. Similarly, Deborah Kaplan observes that most of Austen's heroines are independent girls who have common characteristics such as liveliness, wit, intelligence and charm . The heroines of Pride and Prejudice and Emma, especially Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse respectively, are characterized as unconventional ladies who have

revolutionary points of view about the place and value of women in man-oriented societies. Especially their approach to the relation between marriage and financial issues, which degrades women's individuality, is extremely modern. It is obvious that they have an awareness of feminine identity. Joseph Litvak has a further remark on the issue and asserts that Jane Austen's characters; especially the heroines have a parallelism in all her novels because all of them are the rewritings of conventional heroines. It is obvious that Austen understands perfectly the psychology of both women and men. While constructing the characters of her novels, she manipulates both her knowledge and observations about women and femininity and men and masculinity. Therefore, all her characters, male or female, serve Austen's aim which is to regulate equal opportunities between genders. That is to say, Austen's characters interact with one another and they learn from each other. Thus, sisterhood has a crucial part in her novels in terms of reacting against the patriarchal ideologies. Again, Kaplan reveals that close female friendships appear in most of Austen's novels. It is utilized as a way of women's giving affection and support to one another. However, Austen does not portray sisterhood as a political constituency; rather she shows that women are aware of themselves as a distinct group from the men in the society and are discontented with patriarchal and hierarchical social relations.

Thus characterization in Austen's novels is important to acknowledge her satiric views about the image of women as "so-called" secondary human beings in the man dominated societies. Each character is constructed delicately in order to highlight the individuality of women, which necessitates an understanding of feminine psychology. Similarly, Nicholas Marsh comments on the issue and argues that Austen's novels often convey major themes of self-deception and self-knowledge. Such a style of characterization has a psychological dimension, which is created within a novel of manners. In a novel of manners, the novelist observes and reports her characters' behaviour. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the characters' inner worlds and reactions to the events is crucial so as to understand the construction of Austen's characters. Again Marsh asserts that: Jane Austen does not only report characters' feelings, their thoughts and decisions; but the text is dominated by the formulated, conscious level of mind: what characters think to themselves and how they reason their decisions rather than the complex, self-contradictory impulses and sudden unexplained emotions. In other words, Jane Austen's construction of characters has a double dimension. First, she creates an independent heroine who reflects how and why genders should be equal in the society. Then, she makes her heroines interact with the other characters in order to reveal their difference and unconventional attitudes.

Although her heroines are witty and revolutionary in their perceptions, they lack self-education at the beginning of the novels, which is completed while the novels proceed. That is why, Elizabeth suffers from an excessive pride and Emma is attached to an extreme imagination at the beginning of the novels. However, they gain the necessary self-knowledge

at the end, which is described by Frank Brandbrook as: The heroines of Jane Austen are subjected to disillusionment and enlightenment about themselves and the others and an education of candour. They are trained by experience to be honest about their feelings. Emotional sincerity is supplemented by intellectual honesty on such questions such as the importance of money and rank. Heroines: A comprehensive analysis of the heroines of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* might be necessary to realize how Jane Austen's heroines act as the symbols of female voice. For example, Elizabeth's wit and her unconventional and liberal talks signal the clues about the exposition of female identity. Kaplan observes that confident in conversations and sure of her opinions, Elizabeth does not hesitate to convey either her certainty or her views. For instance, after being in Mr. Darcy's company only a few times, she overtly tells what her opinion is about him while talking about books: "I am sure we never read the same books, or not with the same feelings".

It is obvious that Elizabeth has a dominant character and she can express her ideas without caring for ridiculous clichés of the era. However, since propriety carries a crucial place in Austen's novels, Elizabeth always possesses respectful manners in her interactions with the others. Nevertheless, while dancing with Mr. Darcy at the Netherfield ball, she orders him to speak: It is your turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy.– I talked about the dance and you ought to make some kind of remark on the size of the room, or the number of couples. It is quite unconventional for an eighteenth century woman to initiate a conversation. However, Elizabeth refuses the silence and the secondary place of women that is forced on them by the society. Moreover, she has enough courage to talk about her own thoughts and wishes in life unlike the conservative ladies of the era. Similarly, Yasmine Goonerate describes Elizabeth's independence as: Elizabeth's views on marriage, on society, and her own position in society reflect her independent spirit and her critical intelligence, and they are masked (for her own safety) behind the external surface of good manners, polite acquiescence to her superiors in age and status, and her feminine difference that society expect to see.

However, although she has a certain sense of propriety most of the times, Elizabeth sometimes forgets the social responsibilities of the era mostly because of her sisterly affections. Therefore, it can be said that she gives greater importance to what is sympathetic and necessary than the pure propriety. For instance, when she hears that Jane is ill at Netherfield, she walks there in order to see her sister. Going from one estate to another on foot is totally absurd according to the daily conventions of the era. Thus, when Elizabeth tells how she will go to see Jane, Mrs. Bennet finds her idea completely ridiculous. Her reaction to Elizabeth reveals the significance of social obligations among the neighbours: 'How can you be so silly' cried her mother 'as to think such a thing, in all this dirt! You will not be fit to be seen when you get there.' 'I shall be fit to see Jane – which is all I want.' It is clear that Austen makes use of the culture of women in expressing female voice in her novels. Therefore, it is inevitable that sisterhood is vital to dramatize the solidarity of women among

themselves. Likewise, as Kaplan remarks that emotional intimacy and frankness characterize the relationship of Elizabeth with the other ladies in the novel, especially with Jane. Elizabeth and Jane have such closeness and backing that Elizabeth can even understand Jane's feelings by simply observing her manners. When she sees the expression on Jane's face in a crowded ballroom, "Elizabeth instantly read her feelings. The relationship between these two sisters is mutual because they empathize with one another. Therefore, it is not strange to see Elizabeth walking three miles to Bingley's house, after she learns that Jane is ill. Austen narrates her trip as: Elizabeth continued to walk alone, crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over the puddles with impatient activity and finding herself at last within view of the house, with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face of glowing with the warmth of exercise.

Likewise, Alistair Duckworth describes Elizabeth's concept of morality as something personal. Friendship and love are important for her because she cares a lot about the mutual reciprocation of kindness and concern by two people, sisters or friends. Furthermore, another feature that makes Elizabeth an unconventional heroine is her awareness of her own soul as a woman. In other words, she gives importance to reflecting her thoughts and feelings, and thinks critically about the place of women in society. She has positive attitudes and affections towards femininity and has a talent to express her feminine identity in society. Those qualities of Elizabeth discriminate her from the other heroines of the novel. For example, the conversation between Elizabeth, Miss. Bingley and Mr. Darcy about what should be the exact features of a woman, properly demonstrates their different points of view about female identity. Elizabeth refuses the ideas and conventions of the society that disregard women's place and value.

On the contrary, Miss. Bingley accepts these values of society with a strong belief in their function and necessity: 'A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expression, or the word will be half-deserved.' 'All this she must possess,' added Darcy, 'and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.' 'I am no longer surprised at your knowledge of only six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing any.' 'Are you to sever upon your sex as to doubt the possibility of this?' 'I never saw such a woman. I never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as you describe united.' Mrs. Hurst and Miss. Bingley both cried out against the injustice of her implied doubt, and were both protesting that they knew many women who answered this description, when Mrs. Hurst called them to order, with bitter complaints of their inattention to what was going forward. As all conversation was thereby at an end, Elizabeth soon afterwards left the room. 'Eliza Bennet,' said Miss. Bingley, when the door was closed on her, 'is one of those young ladies

who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex by undervaluing their own; and with many men, I dare say, it succeeds.' What Elizabeth tries to express is indeed their artificiality while describing a lady's characteristics. It is obvious that Elizabeth disagrees with Miss. Bingley and Mr. Darcy because she thinks no woman can fit in with their criteria. Her intervention implies that all those features in their lists do not aim at improving women's image in the society. Rather, they reflect their conventional view of how a lady should be in order to be accepted in society as a good wife.

Moreover, Miss. Bingley's very last remark about Elizabeth that she intends to draw men's attention by talking so unconventionally is indeed a sign of her narrow-minded conduct. Miss. Bingley's harsh criticism reveals the attitude towards independent women in society. She intentionally puts Elizabeth in an "odd woman out situation" due to her own delusions about feminine ideal and value. The clear comparison of Miss. Bingley and Elizabeth Bennet gives clues about how Austen constructs her characters. Her characters have a double-sided vision in order to reflect all the facets of a conservative society. Moreover, with the help of this double vision, Austen satirizes the problems both about and within the females. Likewise, Marsh observes that the list of qualities which women are expected to carry according to Miss. Bingley and Mr. Darcy includes different criteria. Physical "feminine" features such as the "certain something in the air and manner of walking" are combined with learned information "knowledge of languages". Yet, when their own internal features are considered, the views expressed by them seem to have no ground.

Apart from all these qualities, another important notion about Elizabeth that makes her an independent heroine is that she is aware of the fact that being a man in itself creates the opportunity for the "power" in male dominated societies. For sure, this chance is something that women cannot possess. Elizabeth reacts against this discrimination by "talking" and "expressing" her own ideas liberally. For instance, while talking with Colonel Fitzwilliam, she openly states her ideas about Mr. Darcy. She believes that gentlemen like Mr. Darcy gain particular advantages in the society only due to their gender. Besides, she criticizes those advantages: I wonder he does not marry, to seduce a lasting convenience of that kind. But, perhaps his sister does well for the present, and, as she is under his sole care, he may do what he likes with her. Austen criticizes the inequality between genders by drawing attention to the rights and opportunities that men have in society. Elizabeth's observations about the privileges of Mr. Darcy over Miss. Darcy reveal the supremacy of males. Similarly, Deborah Kaplan observes that in order to convey an awareness of sexual inequality and overt expression of its unfairness, the heroine speaks with a "female voice". Thus, it can be concluded that Austen makes use of the problems about the power struggles between genders in her novels so as to generate an appreciation for the equality between sexes. That is why, Elizabeth acts beyond the fixed roles of her era and questions the injustice between the rights that men and women possess in the society. On the other hand, like many of Austen's

heroines, Elizabeth is not infallible. She makes mistakes throughout the novel while being internally educated. In other words, Elizabeth's profound pride that is observed at the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice* shifts to a mood of respect at the end of the novel. Likewise, Generate affirms that conscious of her intelligence and proud of her critical eye, Elizabeth thinks too well of her own judgments'.

As a result, she makes mistakes. However, her faults are not faults of character, rather they are the faults of judgement. Elizabeth is morally superior to her society despite her faults. That is because she does not accept the fixed roles assigned to women by society. In other words, living in a male dominated society leads to an excessive pride in Elizabeth's character as a way of struggling with the problems of suppressed femininity. However, at the end of the novel, Elizabeth realizes her own delusions and develops a more conscious female voice. Similarly, Emma Woodhouse is also an unconventional heroine who is independent and witty. However, Emma is a complex heroine. That is because it is hard to grasp whether her thoughts and observations are correct or not owing to her excessive imagination.

Yet, Lionel Thrilling states that the reader inevitably is attached to Emma since she impresses the reader by her energy, style and intelligence. On the other hand, Austen's choice of adding counter heroes such as Mr. Wickham and Frank Churchill to both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* can be thought as a way of criticising excessive social obligations. Both Wickham and Churchill stand for the expression of errors of judgement. For example, Wickham deceives Elizabeth with his ability to assume good manners. Likewise, Nardin states that Wickham's basically bad moral character is not obvious from his manners as he acts in accordance with social propriety. That is because; the artificiality of Wickham's manners is not released until Darcy's letter that explains 47 the realities about him appears. John Odmark points out that through Wickham, Austen creates an ironic point of view in the readers' minds about two related systems of values by which characters are judged: social conventions and moral virtues.

In *Emma*, Frank Churchill has Wickham's role. He is not sincere in his manners. For instance, he hides his affair with Jane Fairfax. Moreover, in his conversations with Emma, he mentions Jane's negative sides in order to please Emma. His manners are snobbish most of the time and even Emma can realize the absurdities in his actions. The ridiculousness of his behaviour is well exemplified, when he goes to London just for a haircut. In other words, Austen involves both Wickham and Churchill in her novels in order to draw the readers' attention to the disparity between the men who act conventionally and those who behave rationally. **Minor Female Characters:** Apart from constructing independent heroines and sensible heroes, Austen creates minor characters, especially female ones who properly express the female voice in her novels. Nicholas Marsh points out that the characterization of secondary figures in Austen's novels contributes to the readers' understanding of the more

complex principal characters . In both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, it is important to analyse the minor characters in order to understand society's approach to femininity. Austen employs these secondary characters with great care in order to create an environment in which all the facets of female problems are revealed. In *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth's independent and questioning mind is presented in contrast to Jane's trusting and objective conduct. Similarly, Robert Lindell observes that *Pride and Prejudice* is the story of two mutually devoted sisters. Both sisters have "sincerity", and they both share the same "prejudice". Yet, Jane Bennet is more tender-hearted than Elizabeth Bennet.

It is clear that Elizabeth is very much fond of her sister. With the help of their relationship, Austen points out the significance of female solidarity. Jane's candid personality is crucial in the novel when Elizabeth needs to be comforted. For example, Elizabeth feels frustrated after Jane and Bingley's argument and Charlotte's decision about marrying Mr. Collins. However, Jane tries to cheer her up: 'The more I see the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it; and everyday confirms my belief in the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense.' 'My dear Lizzy, do not give way to such feelings as these. They will ruin your happiness. You do not make allowance enough for difference of situation and temper.' (*Pride and Prejudice*) In other words, the relationship between Elizabeth and Jane demonstrates the importance of sisterhood and the women's effect on one another. Another woman whom Elizabeth cares for a lot is Charlotte Lucas. Since Elizabeth has a more open state of mind, she criticises Charlotte's consideration of marriage as insurance. Apparently, the counter views of these two close ladies about marriage reflect the different views of women about the need for marriage. Although Charlotte is a sensible, good-natured lady, she has deficiencies in terms of gaining a female voice. That is the result of her fear about the future.

As a middle-aged lady, the only way to ensure her future life depends on marrying a suitable man. This is how the narrator gives Charlotte's feelings as: Her reflections were in general satisfactory. Mr. Collins, to be sure, was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary. But still, he would be her husband. Without thinking highly either of man and matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honorable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. (*Pride and Prejudice*) It is obvious that Charlotte feels uncertain about her future. Therefore, as a conventional lady, she thinks that the only way of guaranteeing her future is marrying. Austen exemplifies properly the social pressure over women, which disregards feminine identity, with the help of Charlotte's marriage. Apart from Jane and Charlotte, Lydia is another significant female figure as a foil to Elizabeth. She is the counter-heroine of the novel who symbolizes the results of the lack of female education. Lydia Bennet simply thinks about satisfying her needs and she does not care about the propriety of her behaviours. Her

elopement with Wickham evidently shows how she disrespects her own identity as a woman. She ignores her own morality by being involved in such a disgraceful action. Thus, the difference between Elizabeth's and Lydia's independence is clear. Elizabeth chooses to act autonomously as a reaction against the patriarchy. On the contrary, Lydia's independence is completely for personal satisfaction.

Likewise Alistair Duckworth points out that Lydia's youth and her animal spirit form her chief attraction and her judgment. She is too immature to be expected to make moral decisions. Therefore, a moral contrast is drawn in *Pride and Prejudice* between Lydia and Elizabeth in both maturity and intelligence. The minor characters of Emma also have the function supporting the main characters. Jane's and Charlotte's role for presenting sisterhood in *Pride and Prejudice* is substituted by Harriet in *Emma*. According to Yasmine Goonerate, Emma and Harriet's relationship clarifies certain features of Emma's personality. Their friendship exposes and indulges Emma's fondness for power and her desire to dominate all the people around her. Although Harriet is not an intelligent girl, she is humorous and sympathetic. Austen introduces her as: She was a pretty girl, and her beauty happened to be of a sort which Emma particularly admired. She was short, plump and fair, with a fine bloom, blue eyes, light hair, regular features, and a look of great sweetness: and before the end of the evening, Emma was so much pleased with her manners as a person, and quite determined to continue the acquaintance. Harriet's major contribution to the novel is helping Emma to realize her faults in life.

In other words, when Harriet tells Emma that she is in love with Mr. Knightley, Emma starts to realize the mistakes in her judgements. Harriet whom Emma manages throughout the novel leads to an awakening in Emma's mind. Her reaction to Harriet's confession of love vividly shows how Emma begins to understand her faults: Her own conduct, as well as her own heart, was before her in the same few minutes. She saw it all with a clearness which had never blessed her before. How improperly had she been acting by Harriet! How inconsiderate, how indelicate, how irrational, how unfeeling had been her conduct! What blindness, what madness, had led her on! Apart from Harriet, Jane Fairfax is another heroine who reveals a lot about the representation of female identity. Fairfax is dramatized as elegant, cultured and intelligent. She has talent in music and she has been educated to become a governess, one of the few jobs women were allowed to do in the eighteenth century.

It is noticeable that her qualities are higher than anyone else in the novel. However, she is not as economically independent as Emma. Jane Austen vividly points out that "very few hundred pounds which she inherited from her father made independence impossible" for Jane Fairfax. Therefore, although Jane Fairfax deserves higher respect than Emma, she cannot receive it from the neighbours due to her position in society. Her involvement in the novel is vital to mirror Emma's personality. For a heroine like Emma, it is expected that she would be

friendly towards Jane rather than Harriet. On the other hand, because of her snobbery, Emma gets jealous of Jane because Jane is more talented, sophisticated and even beautiful than Emma. The characterization of Jane Fairfax is indeed crucial in demonstrating the perceptions about women in conservative societies. Alison Sulloway expresses Jane's position in society as: Jane Fairfax struggles with a profound depression brought on by her impending banishment from her lover and from "all the rational pleasures of a rational society" and the "judicious mixture of home and amusement".

If a person, especially a woman, lacks society's standards such as money or rank, it is really difficult for her to express her female identity even if she is well educated. Joseph Litvak observes that in Jane Fairfax's character, the readers can see the anxieties and pain of a single woman as governess. That is because female education is only considered as something, which aims at improving feminine qualities as wives. As a conclusion, Austen reflects the need for the defense of women's rights in her novels. Apart from manipulating proper themes in her works that reveal the problems of femininity, Austen gives importance to construct appropriate characters so as to reach a point in terms of expressing the female voice. Likewise, Nicholas Marsh asserts that many of Austen's characters are memorable because they have a characteristic way of expressing their thoughts.

Conclusion

This study has aimed at analysing the elements used by Jane Austen to reflect the significance of gaining a female voice in society. In order to show how Austen focuses on the value of having an autonomous female voice by dealing with the subject matters of the era with a satiric language and by creating independent heroines, the novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* have been analysed. Studying the two novels revealed that the approach that Jane Austen utilized while producing her works and her own philosophy of life can be expressed as feminist. That is because; she criticized the view that disregards women's individuality in society in her novels. Austen's style of producing her novels differs from her contemporaries since she reflects her heroines with an identity in society. She carefully designs her heroines as independent young ladies who are intelligent, lively and charming. Although her heroines might have delusions in life, they can clearly express their points of view and question the values of their society as well as patriarchy.

That is why, Deborah Kaplan states that Austen's heroines talk with a "female voice". Austen structures her novels by satirizing the daily conventions of the era. In other words, Jane Austen's novels are "social satires", which emphasize how male-dominated societies underestimate the power of femininity. Moreover, they point to the ridiculousness of the social requirements and the inconsistency of laws about women's rights. However, Andrew Wright observes that Jane Austen is not an angry satirist. Although she creates laughable and silly characters, at the same time, she shows that they are deeply human and capable of

loving. Since Austen conveys her thoughts with a satiric language, it is important to observe elements of satire such as comedy and irony in her works, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. First of all, as far as comedy is concerned, the absurdities of daily conventions about women are reflected with the help of funny characters such as fools and clowns. In both novels, fools act in accordance with the daily conventions and they do not question the necessity of them. Thus, the artificiality of their manners and the irrationality of their utterances create the comedy of the novels. Creating foolish characters that have improper manners is indeed a way of criticizing society.

Tony Tanner asserts that: Bad manners were not simply a local or occasional embarrassment to be laughed at: they could be symptoms of a dangerous sickness in the society, which could ruin it from within through neglect, transgression and omission. On the other hand, clowns are different from the fools because they are presented as humorous and witty people whose utterances lead to a questioning of the social situations in readers' minds. Another element of comedy that is used by Austen to create an environment in which gaining female identity is encouraged is "laughter". Thus, Austen constructs independent heroines who are aware of the power of laughing. In both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, heroines laugh whenever they wish, as a reaction to society's perception about the place of women.

Therefore, laughter in Austen's works symbolizes the power of female voice because Austen's heroines express their own identities through laughing. Moreover, laughter in both novels gives clues about the educational level of women. Since Austen creates two sisters, Elizabeth and Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice* who laugh in different ways, it is obvious that Austen differentiates the laughter that results from the reaction against patriarchy from the laughter of pure pleasure. Although Elizabeth's laughter stands for an autonomous identity, which is a result of her level of education and maturity, Lydia's laughter is an outcome of her fondness for satisfying her needs.

As a result, laughing in Austen's works has a connection with female sexuality. However, it is important to point out that although Emma's or Elizabeth's laughter involves sexual instances, Elizabeth's laughter is not as sexually vulgar as Lydia's. Apart from employing elements of comedy, an ironic point of view is manipulated by Austen while picturing the subject matters of her era. In order to reflect the problems about female identity in society, two methods of constructing an ironic point of view, "focalization" and "narration" are used by Austen in both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. Austen employs focalization or showing in the conversations and narration or telling in the explanatory parts so as to enrich the artistic organization of her works. Furthermore, Jane Austen criticizes the subject matters of the era with the help of her ironic point of view. It can be said that the most favourite theme that Austen deals with in all of her novels is marriage. The first issue about marriage is the economic difficulties of women that force them to marry in order to guarantee their future.

That is because, women are economically depended on men; their fathers, husbands or brothers. Besides, the number of jobs that women can do is restricted. Thus, they need to marry so as to have enough financial support to continue their lives. Harrison Steeves observes that Austen approaches marriage as: Miss Austen is questioning the brood-mare conception of marriage, which was so important a part of property and class philosophy of the time, and so casual a part of unthinking fatalism of the lower classes. Society's perception of marriage is presented through the comparison of romantic or materialistic marriages in both novels. Austen appreciates romantic marriages in which love and respect carry more importance than money.

On the contrary, marriages which are the results of economic considerations are criticized. Moreover, while pointing out the problems about marriage, Austen focuses on the difficulties that women face about inheritance and status. As women cannot legally own any property by law, they are forced to get married. Besides, Jane Austen ironically deals with aristocratic concerns that are important in proposing marriages or constructing social relationships. Moreover, in addition to the themes, which are presented in a satiric way, Austen creates appropriate characters who reflect the problems about female identity in society. Jane Austen constructs her characters, both women and men, with an understanding of psychology. In her character representations, not only causes of character growth but also the details of behaviour can be observed.

Lawrence Lerner describes her style of characterization as: Human personality is no mystery to Jane Austen. She does not believe that the springs of action are beyond the discovery of common sense, or that the feelings of others are concealed from us by their complexity and our limitation. For this reason she values plot not only for its aesthetic delights but also for its usefulness in explaining. The psychology of society and individuals are combined in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* so as to draw attention to the need for developing independent female identities in order to construct healthy societies. In other words, Austen examines the needs and values of society and judges them logically with the help of her characters. Besides, Jane Austen focuses on the individuality of women by creating independent and witty heroines such as Elizabeth and Emma. Both ladies are unconventional considering their points of views about the place of women. That is to say, Elizabeth and Emma are able to express their feelings and thoughts unlike conventional ladies. As a result, they can reflect their feminine power in society. Moreover, both Elizabeth and Emma care about sisterhood, which is important in constituting an autonomous female identity among women. However, both ladies suffer from delusions of judgment throughout the novels. Elizabeth and Emma's mistakes are due to their pride and imagination, respectively. Yet, at the end of the novels, they develop more conscious and mature selves with the help of their husbands.

Furthermore, Austen's employment of appropriate heroes as husbands to Elizabeth and Emma plays an important role in the reflection of female voice. That is because, Jane Austen believes that there should be a balance in society between genders. Heroes of Austen, Mr. Darcy and Mr. Knightly symbolize the men who appreciate women who have self-esteem. Since these gentlemen do not value money or class more than the ideas and characters of their future wives, they act unlike conventional men. Besides, as a foil to these gentlemen, Austen creates counter-heroes such as Mr. Wickham and Frank Churchill. They contribute to the novels a lot because Austen creates a comparison of men who disregard the place of women and the ones who value the power of women. In addition to heroes, Austen creates minor heroines such as Charlotte and Jane in *Pride and Prejudice* and Harriet and Jane Fairfax in *Emma*. The exploration of female identity is supported with the help of these ladies. Especially, Charlotte's views about marriage are important in reflecting the problems that women face in society.

References

- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Penguin, 1994.
Emma. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Bonell, Henry Houston. *Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Jane Austen; Studies In Their Works*. London: Longman, 1974.
- Bowen, Elizabeth. "Jane Austen". *The English Novelists; A Survey of the Novel By Twenty Contemporary Novelists*. Ed. Derek Verschoyle. New York, Hartcourt, Brace & Co, 1936.
- Brandbrook, Frank W. *Jane Austen and her Predecessors*. London, Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- Mudrick, Marvin. *Irony as a Form. Jane Austen: Emma*. *Jane Austen : Emma*. Ed. David Lodge. London: Macmillan, 1968.
- Odmark, John. *An Understanding of Jane Austen's Novels*. Worcester: Billing and Son Ltd. 1983.
- Suloway, Alison G. *Jane Austen and the Province of Womanhood*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.
- Trilling, Lionel. *Emma and the Legend of Jane Austen.. Jane Austen: Emma*. Ed. David Lodge. London: Macmillan, 1968.