

FEMALE VOICE in JANE AUSTEN:
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE and *EMMA*

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ABSTRACT

FEMALE VOICE JANE AUSTEN :
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This thesis analyses the devices manipulated by Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* to foreground the ‘female voice’. The thesis argues that in these novels satire including irony and parody is used as a tool for revealing the place of women in eighteenth century England. In addition, themes and characters by which feminist conversations are constructed are also dealt with.

Keywords: Female Voice, Irony, Jane Austen

ÖZ

JANE AUSTEN’IN *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* VE *EMMA* ROMANLARINDA KADIN KİMLİĞİ

Tanrıvermiş, Mihriban

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışma *Pride and Prejudice* ve *Emma* adlı romanlarda, Jane Austen’in kadın kimliğini oluşturmak için kullandığı araçları incelemektedir. İki romanda da on sekizinci yüzyıl İngiltere’sinde kadının yerini açığa vurmak için kinaye sanatı ve komedinin bir yergi aracı olarak kullanılması incelenmektedir. Buna ek olarak, feminist diyalogların oluşturulmasında kullanılan temalar ve karakterler de incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kadın Kimliği, Kinaye, Jane Austen

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen who started writing, as a tool for entertaining her family members is now considered as one of the greatest pioneers of the feminist movement in English literature. Born in 1775, in a small town in southwest England where she spent most of her life, Austen was the seventh child of a middle class family. Thus, Jane and her siblings were raised according to the rules of middle class. Her father was an intellectual and sensitive man who encouraged all his children in their love of reading and writing. Her mother was also known as a woman who was talented in producing literary works such as poems and short stories. Indeed, writing for the whole Austen family was a way of entertainment. Thus, Jane Austen began to write consistently to amuse her relatives. Since she had a gift of observing her environment and picturing the life she saw vividly, Miss Austen reflected the distinction between genders in England. Actually, it is this critical point of view, which now results in Austen's being regarded as a member of feminist tradition.

Jane Austen is considered significant in the feminist convention because she reflects the condition of middle class women in an animate way in her novels. She writes as a critical judge of her own society. As Henry Bonell asserts Austen's style is simple but not naïve, her themes are profound and not superficial; her language is satirical but not above sincerity and good humour. Thus, Austen is different from her contemporary women writers because she does not passionately identify herself with any of her characters and none of her books are written in the first person. Rather than employing a kind of strong imagination or sense of duty to the characters, she gives them an impersonal freedom (387). In other words, as Bonell states in another context in his article "*Her Wonderful Charm*"; if Charlotte Bronte had written *Emma*, Emma's story would have been narrated in an atmosphere of rebellion and Harriet would have suffered from the treatment of Emma. Or else, if George Eliot had written *Pride and Prejudice*, Lydia would have been forced to

turn back to her father's home owing to a feeling of family duty and social helplessness (387).

It is regarded that the voice of certain social types is heard through dialogues in Austen's works. Such a style conveys the message through conversations that are mostly established on every-day language and associations and this style has led to a comparison of Austen and Shakespeare. Lord Macaulay, a contemporary critic of Jane Austen, makes the following interpretation:

Shakespeare has had neither equal nor second. But among the writers who have approached the nearest to the great master, we have no hesitation on placing Jane Austen, a woman whom England is justly proud. She has given us a multitude of characters, all in a certain sense, commonplace; all such as we meet everyday. Yet, they are all perfectly discriminated from each other as if they were the most eccentric of human beings.

(qtd. in Wright 18)

However, at about the same time, Charlotte Brontë dismisses Austen with a considerable feeling of superiority with the following commentary about *Pride and Prejudice*:

An accurate daguerreotype portrait of commonplace face, a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck; I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses. (18)

According to Andrew Wright, what Brontë confuses is the distinction between dispassion and superiority. Austen's calmness with which she writes of "the delicate flowers" leads Brontë to believe that Jane Austen is an author of mere surface (20). Besides, Brontë ignores that Austen identifies herself with her descriptions and she creates her characters as if they were alive. Moreover, in her

novels Austen can handle the Shakespearean elements, which are depth, range, and impersonal detachment that necessitate humour.

Therefore, for Austen, humour is a way of criticizing both the class she belongs to and the social settings she lives in. Her novels do not satirize through correction but they lead the reader to an investigation of generalized forms of comic delusions. At this point, Bonell testifies that Austen's chosen field to ridicule the social ironies of life is comedy. Her stories and characters are amusing. There is no storm, stress, no solutions for fashionable problems, or no death in her novels. What she deals with is the paradoxes of life, with which she is familiar (401). She observes the shortcomings and follies of world with a keen eye and echoes them in her novels noticeably. Likewise, Jane Nardin makes a further remark that the concept of satire for Jane Austen is merely the humorous awareness of incongruity that is usually called "irony". Irony is characteristically the yardstick by which she measures the adequacy of moral positions in the society (2).

In the *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, "satire" is defined as the ridicule of any subject -an idea, or institution- to lower it in the reader's esteem and make it laughable (147). Likewise, Arthur Pollard asserts, the aim of satire is to reflect the complexities of life within a highlight of ridicule and fantasy. A good example of satire is Cervantes' worldwide famous work, *Don Quixote*. The greatness of *Don Quixote* lies in its immense variety, its absurd and profound comments on life. It offers such richness of content and style that is established on the key elements, imagination of the hero and the chivalric romance (217). In a way, the basic feature of satire is the irony that is found between reality and appearance. Here, the irony controls Don Quixote's mood of escape from the fundamental problems and responsibilities of life. Likewise, Austen's *Emma* shares the same characteristics with *Don Quixote* to some extent. *Emma* also suffers from an excessive imagination, which makes her think that she is always right in her observations of life. According to Wright, *Emma* is always wrong but she always thinks that she is right. Therefore, *Emma* is considered as a comedy of self-deception (33).

As a form of satire, Austen mostly employs irony and comedy as a weapon against a culture that looks down on women and as a tool for revealing the voice of women. At this point, it is important to define the meanings of "irony" and

“comedy”. In the *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, “irony” is defined as a device by which a writer expresses a meaning contradictory to the stated or ostensible one. To achieve an ironic tone, the writer may make it clear that the meaning he intends is the opposite of his literal one. Or else, the author may construct a discrepancy between an expectation and its fulfilment or between the appearance of a situation and the reality that underlies it. Whatever the technique is, the writer demands that the reader perceive the concealed meaning that lies beneath his surface statement (132-133). As far as comedy is concerned, Austen’s novels are high comedies. Again, *Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines “high comedy” as a term, which is applied to satiric comedy whose appeal is primarily intellectual. It works with intellect and wit. In general, high comedy is graceful, witty and urbane (109).

Austen’s novels contain an elegant state of social criticism of the community in which she lived because they touch on women’s place and outlook. She utilizes an ironic humour while creating her heroines. Especially, Emma Woodhouse and Elizabeth Bennet represent both the voice and the view of the author herself and the middle class women. That is, Austen chooses a particular social problem about women and she solves that problem from the point of women’s thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Her treatment of each woman is different. She knows how to draw the spectators’ attention to the qualities of her heroines. That is why Emma is seen as the most important lady of Highbury and Elizabeth’s brilliance is quickly realized by Mr. Darcy. Moreover, Elizabeth Bowen makes a further remark that Austen sees her heroines in an enjoyable light and she reflects their liveliness and fun. However, she is also able to reflect the sides of her characters without buffooning or devaluating them (109). As a result, Jane Austen is regarded as a feminist author owing to her questioning the philosophy of the era about the position of women.

One of the reasons that make Jane Austen a feminist writer is that she values the place of women in domestic life. Furthermore, she portrays women as capable of acting independently against the patriarchal system. However, what Miss Austen has done is not a direct reaction against the place of the female in the middle class society; rather she reflects women’s liveliness, intelligence, charm, and significance as an active member of community through her heroines. Deborah

Kaplan talks about Austen's independent female representations against the patriarchal images of the society. She states that especially in *Pride and Prejudice*, Miss Austen creates Elizabeth Bennet as a reflection of active feminine in response to the power of patriarchal ideologies. Since Elizabeth is sure of her opinions, she is confident in her conversations. Thus, Kaplan asserts, "To convey awareness of sexual inequality and subtle and overt expression of its unfairness, the heroine speaks with a female voice" (189). What she defines as "a female voice" can be observed in the rebellious and unconventional talk of Austen's heroines.

Representing "the female voice" is a way of identifying women's place in the society. The female voice is the expression of the female experience and view. It is the reflection of the "female identity". The best way of expressing female self-awareness emerges through literature. Therefore, the female voice is established by constructing a self-conscious and a self-defining character against the patriarchal system. Likewise, Elaine Showalter talks about three phases that are followed while producing a literary work in order to construct a "female" identity:

First, there is a prolonged phase of '*imitation*' of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and '*internalization*' of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of '*protest*' against these standards and values, and '*advocacy*' of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of '*self-discovery*', a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity. (13)

The qualities that make Austen a feminist writer lie in her manner and methods of conveying a universal message of the female voice. Austen's style of producing her novels is parallel with the phases that Showalter names in order to construct characters that have a female voice. In Austen's novels, the significance of social roles and the discrimination between genders while developing social roles can clearly be observed. Besides, Austen's construction of her characters and the interaction between those characters reveal that she is aware of the values of her time. The protest of her heroines against the secondary place of women shows that Austen creates heroines that have a self-conscious identity.

On the other hand, Jane Austen has always been criticized for her muteness and coyness in sharing the universal message of female voice with her audience. She does not convey her criticism directly although she manages to insert a female voice in her work. Such an indirect approach might be explained with a reference to Austen's biography. As a middle class woman, Austen's rights for expressing her thoughts were restricted by the rules of the community in which she lived. That is to say, her sister Cassandra was the only person who was close enough to Jane to know about her inner world, her real feelings, and thoughts. Actually, most of the writings of Austen were later gathered from Cassandra's archive after Jane's death. The pressure of social regularities was so strong that she could not even use her name in the first publications of many of her novels. For instance, the first publication of "*Sense and Sensibility*" appeared on the shelves without her own name. Yet, the place of the author's name on the cover page was filled by an interesting expression "By A Lady". According to Margaret Kirkham, particularly the usage of the word "lady" is important since it implies that although Austen does not want to be known publicly by her own name, she wishes to identify her gender (15).

Nevertheless, Austen's efforts to react against the patriarchal values of eighteenth century England make her a feminist writer of modern times. If feminism is an advocacy of women's rights or claims in life, then Austen's heroines are acting to reach this aim. Similarly, Gerry Kelly declares that her novels contain feminist elements since her heroines protest, however mutely, against the social, legal and economic injustice of male dominance, restriction of women's property rights and female economic dependence on men. They indirectly reveal how courtly culture underestimates women, leaving them with little alternative access to power. Her novels criticize the too-active image of men and illustrate the limits of passivity for the female identity (24). Unlike some feminist critics who would like to see women as living in a morally separate world, Austen does not create a distinctive social and moral universe for women. Austen's morality does not support worldly self-interest and fashionable standards for self-enhancement.

All the novels of Austen depict social situations and institutions that are contrary to women's exercise of making full use of their abilities. Thus, the daily lives of women and their thoughts and emotions are the themes of her novels. She is a sympathetic judge of her own society and she evaluates particularly the social outlook of women and their position in the community. Austen lived in a small world in which the values were never questioned. However, she was brave enough to deal with a class whose habits and tastes were different from those that the author created in her works. She uses satire in the sense of good humour and social irony to reflect her revolutionary ideas. As Deborah Kaplan states, Austen has known that her perceptions and values are at times in opposition and she seeks to avoid renderings not only of ridiculously incompatible novel conventions but also of overtly conflicting cultural perspectives (201). The female voice; female identity is not as apparent in the text as patriarchal values but readers often discover the obscured female voice. That is, they tend to consider the deep female voice as something more meaningful and existent than what is seen on the surface of the text. Thus, Austen achieves a level of conceptualising the different moral perspectives of heroines in a framework of social relations.

Austen constructs her characters accurately in order to disclose the full expression of this female voice. Jane Nardin testifies that such a way of embodying characters in her passages results in a "rhetoric irony" which carries a definite and unambiguous meaning. Rhetoric irony is indeed an element of style by which the speaker says something more or something less, or something different from what he or she actually means. In a way, the author leaves the audience to deduce his or her actual meaning from the immediate context. However, another type of irony which is the "irony of viewpoint" can also be applied to Austen's works. Irony of viewpoint is an outcome of Austen's own philosophy of life that involves an inequality between ideal and actuality, social pretence and moral reality, and between the way people act and the way they ought to (5).

As a result, it can be suggested that Austen increases the effect of irony by creating an artistic organization in her novels. For instance, the first two sentences of *Pride and Prejudice* is a brilliant example of Austen's ironic style.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

(Pride and Prejudice, 5)

According to Pam Morris, the opening voice is that of the narrator. Such a voice leads to a kind of identification between the writer and the narrator. The narrative voice is a part of the artistic construction of the work. It is a third-person narrator in that the voice speaks from outside the story and refers to the characters inside the story by name or by the third person pronouns: he, she, or they. (32) Therefore, the narrator, who is able to see the thoughts of all the characters, is omniscient. As far as irony is concerned, a more knowing viewpoint is crucial to reflect the dramatic effect of the work. Again, Morris states that the first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* is in ironic tone because the narrator mocks the social requirements of the era. It is obvious that the narrator does not share the values and attitudes of that world, but she finds a source of good deal of comedy in them (33). At this point, Shlomrith Rimmon-Kenan makes a distinction between the narrative voice and the speaker of the text. According to Rimmon-Kenan, in the third-person of consciousness, the centre of consciousness or the reflector is the “*focalizer*” while the user of the third person is the “*narrator*” (73).

The tone of irony is reinforced by means of a different narrative mode, which generates a passage of dialogue between the characters. According to Pam Morris, a writer can either make the narrator tell what happens directly by describing the feelings and the reactions of the characters. Or else, the writer can use a more *dramatic* method in which the readers seem to see or hear the characters (33). In other words, a writer can both tell the story openly or can simply show what happens and make the readers get the message out of that particular scene. Rimmon-Kenan states that the issues of telling and showing can also be named as *narration* and *focalization*, respectively (72). Furthermore, Morris affirms that although “telling” is clear and economic, “showing” is more effective in involving

the reader imaginatively with characters and producing an active response of sympathy and judgement (34).

Austen's consciousness of female identity is accomplished by her manipulation of satire, irony, and comedy in her works. She constructs the awareness of her heroines, mainly by letting them "laugh". According to Gabriela Castellanos, Austen's heroines do not clearly rebel against social demands. However, they do something more revolutionary; they laugh. Austen structures her novels so that the heroine can laugh at the idealized constructions of the society (47). She deals with ironies of language that can be found between the lines of conversations. With the help of an ironic language, she attacks the presuppositions of the society that commonly hold a traditional cultural view over women. Therefore, her irony produces laughter. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet defends her need and right for laughing. Similarly, Emma not only makes others laugh but she laughs at herself by making jokes about her character. Both Elizabeth's and Emma's laughs are the expressions of joy and a great pleasure. Laughing in Austen's novels is presented through a series of ironies between the intellectual and moral excellence of the feminine protagonist and the social situations in which women cannot have roles they are capable of performing.

Two of Austen's novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* are the excellent examples of how playfully Austen refuses the silence and position of women in the society. With the help of the subject matters and styles of these two novels, Jane Austen questions the place of men and women in the society. Austen establishes an ironic level by utilizing the daily conventions of England as a source of her novel, such as economic and educational place of women. Besides, she creates characters that reflect every facet of the society or the conventions of those days. Therefore, the issues about the passivity of women have a significant role in the dialogues that include ironical speeches. One of the difficulties of women in those days was to get married in order to gain a social power. That is to say, marriage in the eighteenth century was an economic necessity for women. Thus, it was not a matter of romantic or personal choice. According to Mary Evans, Austen in her novels takes two important steps towards the modern feminist view of marriage. First, she

questions the necessity of romantic clichés and then she points out various times in her works that marriage is a social and material contract (46).

In her novels, Jane Austen deals with the power relations between the female and the male. Both female and male characters have equal characteristics. Most of Austen's male characters like Mr. Darcy or Mr. Knightly act against the conventional limits of masculinity. In other words, they do not act entirely within the boundaries of a gender-oriented society. For example, they do not play flirtatious games with young ladies or they do not talk with romantic clichés. Most importantly, they value the characters and ideas of the women with whom they are in love. The female characters of Austen usually have enough self-esteem to reflect their ideas in public. They are funny but witty ladies who struggle against the patriarchal ideologies that dismiss women's rights. Although, at the beginning of the novels they follow the ordinary flow of life, there is a moment in which they start to search for the discovery of their own self. Once they reach that level of consciousness, they build a more mature female voice.

Furthermore, Jane Austen is talented in balancing the social roles of her characters with their inner feelings and thoughts. Likewise, Elizabeth Bowen makes the following commentary about how she unites the social and personal feelings of her characters:

Her people were young, vitally young, and when one is young these things are very important. A malaise, a regret, a reverse, what one thinks of somebody, what somebody seems to think of one, either muffle or decorate an entire day. The interaction of social and personal feeling was her subject and her diagnosis was correct. (109)

However, Mary Evans testifies that what differs Austen from the contemporary writers of the era is that she does not focus on the idea that women can educate themselves to become equal to men. Rather, she is suggesting to women that like men they should find a way of being a unique subject in life and gaining a personal autonomy of thought and choice, in other words "a voice" (53).

Consequently, this study will focus on the devices such as satire including irony and comedy, themes and characters by which feminist conversations are constructed, which Jane Austen manipulated to foreground the “female voice” in her novels namely *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*.

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE of COMEDY and IRONY

This chapter is going to focus on the devices employed by Jane Austen in her works *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, like the use of satire in the sense of humour and comedy, and irony through which Austen reflects the voice of women with a critical eye.

In her novels, Austen deals with the notions of eighteenth century England about the place and the value of women in the middle class. With her talented ironic language and keen observations of life, she ultimately satirizes how the daily conventions of the era devalue the female identity. According to Harrison Steeves, the voice of admirable women is the voice of Jane Austen. With the help of the ironic humour of Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse, Austen's comic perceptions reach their peak. That is because she credits her women by giving them a comprehensible function and she does not make them conservative young ladies. Austen's plot structure approaches its problem and solves it from the women's point of view; their thoughts, their feelings and their interests (372). Austen manipulates the subject matters of the eighteenth century with her ironic language in order to reflect the paradoxes of feminine self-esteem. As a result, satiric elements such as humour and comedy play an indispensable role in Austen's novels since it is the best way of mocking the social conventions of the era.

2.1. The Role of Comedy

It can be suggested that Austen's novels have a comic style in common. To reflect the female voice in her novels, Austen draws the reader's attention to the misperceptions of the era about the devaluation of female identity by utilizing elements of comedy. Austen's way of depicting the daily crisis of women does not disturb the readers because there is no space for the dangers and tensions of life in her works. Rather, she wants to concentrate on the traditional obstacles for women

in the society, which she reflects through comedy. For instance, marriage has an important place in her novels because in Austen's times, it was a matter of social alignment and material constructs. Vivien Jones describes this point as:

Jane Austen's novels are *romantic comedies*. That is, they are love stories with happy endings. 'Comedy' here is used not so much to suggest something which makes us laugh, though Jane Austen's novels often do that as well, but as the opposite of 'tragedy'. In other words, it describes a positive, celebratory view of life, one which represents happiness and ideals as possibilities. Jane Austen's novels are often compared with Shakespeare's comedies. If you are familiar with any of these, you will know that the plays end with a similar way; with marriages which symbolize reconciliation and harmony. (50)

Consequently, one of the reasons for the popularity of Austen's novels is their sense of comedy. *Pride and Prejudice* is a comic novel since Austen organizes her work according to the humorous confusions in life. For that reason, Steeves states that *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel that is established on *the comedy of manners* and *the comedy of characters* (343-354). Again, the *Dictionary of Literary Terms* explains that in "the comedy of manners", the actions of those who oppose or ineptly imitate the manners of that society are the subjects of good-humoured ridicule and laughter (43). Steeves makes a further remark that the comedy of *Pride and Prejudice* lies in its fabric and since the story has a moral direction, comedy is a medium of moral judgements. The concern of *Pride and Prejudice* is with personal rather than fashionable conduct that provides a reason for a new descriptive term "novel of social satire" (343-345).

Again, in *Emma* the point of focus is faults of human beings that are reflected through the heroine of the novel. It is obvious that Emma continually makes many errors and she comes to various misperceptions about everyone in the novel including herself. Austen systematically narrates how a person who lacks enough self-education and confidence might come to wrong decisions about life. However, Emma gains self-esteem at the end of the novel since she realizes her own identity and power. However, Emma's search for identity turns out to be a

comedy for the readers due to her mistaken but witty judgements. In other words, Emma's mismatches and her rumours add a comic role to the novel. Gabriella Castellanos makes a further explanation:

Emma thinks Mr. Elton is courting Harriet, while Mr. Elton thinks Emma is encouraging him as Emma's suitor. Mr. Knightley thinks Emma loves Frank but Mr. and Mrs. Weston think Emma and Frank are falling in love with each other, and even Jane Fairfax thinks Emma is attached to Frank while all the time Emma is hoping Frank will fall in love with Harriet. During a leave-taking visit he pays her, Emma thinks Frank is hinting at his love for Emma, while Frank thinks Emma has discovered he is in love with Jane Fairfax. Emma later thinks that Harriet loves Frank, while Harriet thinks Emma knows that Harriet is in love with Mr. Knightley. (193)

Nevertheless, Emma is not the only character who makes mistakes in the novel. Other characters such as Mr. Woodhouse and Mr. Knightly have mistaken opinions about others from time to time. However, the mistakes and misconceptions of the other characters in the novel are really important for Emma, the heroine, as they serve for Emma's search for identity.

In the process of the heroines' exploration for their selves, Austen employs humour and the elements of comedy such as fools or clowns and laughter in her novels. The first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice* shows a verbal battle between one of the ridiculous characters of the novel, Mrs. Bennet who acts as a fool and her indifferent husband Mr. Bennet. The conversation that follows the worldwide opening sentence of the novel reveals many clues about the construction of the society and its rules. "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (5). Again Castellanos remarks that the statement ironically combines the viewpoint of the fortune hunting parents of marriageable women and the language of Austen's times (120). After this statement, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet talk about Mr. Bingley's arrival in the neighbourhood:

'Why ,my dear, you must know. Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north England;'

‘What is his name?’

‘Bingley’

‘Is he married or single?’

‘Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year . What a fine thing for our girls!’

‘How so? How can it affect them?’

‘My dear Mr. Bennet’ , replied his wife, ‘how can you be so tiresome! you must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them.’

‘Is that his design in settling here?’

‘Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so ! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes.’

(Pride and Prejudice 5)

The conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet reflects the attitudes in the society towards marriage in eighteenth century England. Mr. Bennet repeatedly pretends to ignore social conventions and Mrs. Bennet insists on his obeying them. However, Mrs Bennet needs to persuade her husband to visit Mr. Bingley because according to the daily conventions, women cannot initiate social relationships. Thus, the dialogue continues: “Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for *us* to visit him, if you don’t ” (6). According to Castellanos, Mrs. Bennet acts as a fool who only thinks about the society’s claims. However, Mr. Bennet stands as an eccentric individualist and performs the role of “clown” whose utterances lead readers to question the certain social codes and languages (121). At the end of this chapter, Austen makes a further comment on the character of Mr. Bennet as:

Mr. Bennet was so an odd mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character

(Pride and Prejudice 7)

Thus, Mrs. Bennet is reflected as a fool who cannot even understand her husband. Mrs. Bennet is very much stuck to the idea of showing off in the neighbourhood and finding wealthy husbands for her daughters. Accordingly, Austen portrays Mrs.

Bennet as “a woman of mean understanding, little information and uncertain temper” (7).

Apart from Mrs. Bennet; Lydia and Mr. Collins are significant characters in *Pride and Prejudice* concerning their roles as stereotypes of the era. That is because; Mrs. Bennet is Austen’s instrument by which she laughs ironically at the conventional beliefs about marriage and women. Lydia Bennet, like her mother, often plays the role of fool as she only thinks about finding a rich husband and flirting. Lydia’s primary aim in life is to get married. For Lydia, conversations about the relationships between men and women are the sources of great fun. In the following speech, although she has not seen her elder sisters Jane and Elizabeth for weeks, her first concern is to learn whether her sisters have found young and rich husbands or not:

And in the first place, let us hear what has happened to you all since you went away. Have you seen any pleasant men? Have you had any flirting? I was in great hopes that one of you would have got a husband before you came back. Jane will be an old maid soon. I declare. She is almost three and twenty! Lord; how ashamed I should be of not being married before three and twenty!

(Pride and Prejudice 171)

It is obvious that Lydia has no sisterly feelings. She does not even recognize how her elder sister, Jane is hurt by her unsuccessful affair with Mr. Bingley. Rather, she tries to mock Jane by implying that she is about to be a spinster. Lydia does not care about feelings. She believes that marriage is the most enjoyable achievement in a woman’s life.

Another fool of the novel is Mr. Collins, the only male-blood cousin of the Bennet sisters, since he always talks with clichés. For instance, while proposing marriage to Elizabeth whom he neither loves nor really knows, he names many reasons, none of which carry any signs of “love”:

My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced it

will add greatly to my happiness; and thirdly- which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness.

(Pride and Prejudice 85)

It is obvious that, Mr. Collins's words that he utters during a marriage proposal demonstrate the ridiculousness of clichés. Among his reasons, the last statement is the most shocking one because he clearly states that he wants to marry since his patroness, Lady Catherine Lucas advises him to.

Both Mrs. Bennet's and Lydia's functions as fools are the results of their lack of education. Austen carefully designs these two women and chooses them from different generations to criticise the constant lack of female education in the society. Mrs. Bennet and Lydia are unaware of the necessity for female consciousness due to their narrow-minded perceptions. In a way, they are the reflections of an inadequate education taken by women in Austen's times. Castellanos makes the further remark:

The novel's attitudes to these disruptive females, Lydia and Mrs. Bennet, are ambivalent, for they are shown as the distorted products of a mistaken education of women, as such contrasted to Elizabeth and Jane in sense and moral attitudes and made to act as subversions of a social order contrary to women. (128)

Although *Emma* is considered to be established on more mature and detailed narrative techniques and language since it is the last novel of Austen, it is also a novel of social criticism about the place of women like all the novels of Jane Austen. Therefore, *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* share the same artistic features as far as fools and clowns are concerned. Emma, the heroine, is the clown of the novel since she tries to define her inner self through her delusions. She is a witty girl but she makes the reader laugh at her manners all the time due to her excessive imagination. Castellanos asserts that the complexity of the moral universe in *Emma* is based on the contrast between the heroine's subordinate social position because

of her gender and her predominance in the community as one of Highbury's highest-ranking citizens in terms of social class (178). Thus, a female character that possesses power at home but lacks that power outside produces the irony of the novel. The major irony of the novel is a result of Emma's self-delusions due to the inconsistencies of these power relations. Since she has power in the domestic context, she believes that she can change the world around her. That's why; she tries to control Harriet's life and aims at finding Harriet a "suitable" husband whom Emma should approve. Marvin Mudrick describes Emma as:

Emma is an arranger, a manager of other people's affairs. Accustomed to look after her father's every whim and to forestall his every possible discomfort, she tries to extend this duty over her circle of friends and acquaintances as well. (110)

At the beginning of the novel Emma is introduced as a representative young woman of her class: she is snobbish, half-educated, stubborn and selfish. Her first thought is about class and authority because she lacks self-education. Thus, she teases Mr. Martin and advises Harriet not to marry him:

Dear affectionate creature!-*You* confined to the society of the illiterate and vulgar all of your life! I wonder how the young man would have the assurance to ask it! He must have a pretty good opinion of himself.

(*Emma* 42)

Emma is always wrong about Harriet. In fact, Emma frequently makes mistakes not only about Harriet and herself but she also comes to wrong judgements nearly about everyone in the novel. For instance, Emma creates a disgraceful slander about Jane Fairfax that Jane has an affair with a married man. That is because; she envies Jane since she has high qualities. In other words, Jane is more educated and mature than Emma. It is clear that Emma lives in an imaginative world. Alistair Duckworth describes her imagination as:

First, she attempts to match Harriet with Mr. Elton, only to find the Highbury vicar proposing to her instead. Then, she considers Frank Churchill as a husband for Harriet, only to discover that he is secretly engaged to Jane Fairfax. Finally, she discovers to her horror that she has been unwittingly promoting a match between her friend and the man she wishes to marry. (150)

However Emma is a round character and she changes a lot throughout the novel. At the end, she gains an inner sight and consciousness because she gets rid of her snobbery that makes her control the lives of others. Besides, although Emma keeps making mistakes till the end of the novel, she gets lessons from her mistakes. Her snobbery and imagination turn into regret when she realizes she has had no right to interfere with others' lives. For example, when Harriet declares her love for Mr. Knightley, Emma confesses that she should not have prevented Harriet's marriage to Mr. Martin:

Had she not, with a folly which no tongue could express, prevented her marrying the unexceptionable young man who would have made her happy and respectable in the line of life to which she ought to belong; all would have been safe.

(Emma 313)

The fool of the novel is Emma's father, Mr. Woodhouse who perfectly symbolizes lack of authority. He is comic because he has fears that make him an inactive old person. Mr. Woodhouse's main contribution to the novel is his need for protection like a child. Emma is aware of her father's need for herself and tries to protect him from any harm. Whenever something that would disturb Mr. Woodhouse's comfort is about to happen, she carefully takes the necessary precautions so as not to worry her father. Thus, it can be concluded that Emma and Mr. Woodhouse seem to have changed their roles. The change of roles between father and daughter results in deep illusions in Emma's mind that makes her suffer from an excessive imagination about the extents of her power. Apart from this role, as Castellanos points out, Mr. Woodhouse's way of communication represents a

common stereotype about male and female conduct. He always repeats polite clichés like “You do us a great deal of honour today!” in order to initiate a conversation with the ladies. Besides, Austen portrays him as “the kind-hearted, polite man who might sit down and feel he has done his duty, and made every lady welcome and easy” (189). Thus, Mr. Woodhouse has a role in the novel that reflects the absurdities of clichés in conversations.

In addition to fools and clowns, Austen employs “laughter” as a tool for criticising the society. In Austen’s works, the readers are welcomed to laugh at the ironies in social conduct. Besides, Austen uses laughter to give women self-consciousness in the society. Although the attitudes towards laughter, especially female laughter, are severe in Austen’s times, Austen encourages both her heroines and the readers to laugh. Elvira Casal explains that many of Austen’s contemporary writers regard laughter as vulgar since it is connected to a kind of contempt towards authority or a lack of self-control. Female laughter, mostly is associated with folly, therefore too much laughter makes a woman indelicate (1). Yet, Austen believes in the power of laughter and employs three different dimensions of laughter in *Pride and Prejudice*.

First, she manipulates laughter as a means of wit and ridicule which are the results of social inconsistencies. The role of laughter in Elizabeth and Darcy’s relationship shows the change in their characters as the novel proceeds. At the beginning of the novel, Elizabeth thinks that laughter is a way of communicating with others. Thus, she says:

Mr. Darcy is not to be laughed at! That is an uncommon advantage, and uncommon I hope it will continue, for it would be a great loss for me to have many such acquaintances. I dearly love a laugh!

(*Pride and Prejudice* 47)

She openly states that laughter is so much important for her to conduct a friendship with a person. Elizabeth cannot laugh at *everyone* as her laughter indicates that she feels closeness towards a person. Thus, Elizabeth believes that she cannot laugh at a person like Mr. Darcy who seems humourless and serious. However, at the end of

the novel, both lovers discover the true nature of laughter. Elizabeth learns to laugh without biases and Mr. Darcy gains a sense of humour.

Next, Austen uses laughter in another context to reflect the educational level of the women in the society. It is obvious that Lydia's laughter shows a sign of foolishness and an impropriety of reflection. Thus, Lydia's laughter is different from Elizabeth's because Austen's use of laughter shifts from gaining a self-consciousness into the mirroring of a lack of education and viewpoint. In the letter that Lydia leaves behind after her elopement, she says: " You will laugh when you know where I am gone, and I cannot help laughing myself at your surprise tomorrow morning as soon as I am missed " (223) . According to Casal, the letter expresses no regrets, no sensibility to the moral dimensions of what she is doing. Lydia is not even aware that her behaviour might trouble or disappoint her family. Unlike her sister Elizabeth, Lydia devaluates the power of laughter because she does not think or discriminate through laughter (3).

Lastly, apart from indicating social inconsistencies about the place of women and the problems resulting from feminine lack of education, laughter in *Pride and Prejudice* has an association with female sexuality. In other words, the contrast between Lydia's and Elizabeth's laughter indicates their perceptions about sexuality. As Casal observes Lydia's laughter is a reflection of her rampant sexuality. That is because, for Lydia, laughter is a way of flirting with young men and seducing them (3). The letter she leaves after her elopement with Mr. Wickham shows her pleasure in getting married: "I will write to them and sign my name "Lydia Wickham." What a joke it will be! I can hardly write for laughing" (223). Being "Mrs. Wickham" gives her such a great pleasure and Lydia vividly reflects her delight through laughter.

Although, Elizabeth's laughter involves sexual instances, hers is not as sexually vulgar as her sister's. Nardin observes that Elizabeth's excessive reactions to Mr. Darcy indicate sexual attraction between them (8). For instance, when Mr. Darcy talks about his character she says: "Implacable resentment *is* a shade in character...I cannot *laugh* at it" (47). Since Elizabeth is aware of the power of appropriate laughter, she manipulates laughter as only a means of showing closeness. Nardin adds that Elizabeth describes Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham in

different ways throughout the novel. She repeatedly uses the adjectives “soft” and “gentle” to describe Wickham, which reveals that she does not find him sexually attractive. On the other hand, Mr. Darcy is characteristically “firm”, which is a sign of sexual interest (8). Moreover, Mr. Darcy’s similes are as important as Elizabeth’s laughter as they indicate his pleasure that he finds in Elizabeth’s company and her smiling face. However, at the end of the novel, Austen knowingly makes Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy get married because as Mary Evans remarks Jane Austen does not approve of sexual unions between men and women that are outside marriage although she has critical views about the beliefs of her time that force women to matrimony so as to guarantee their future (75).

As far as laughing is concerned, there is a slight difference between the role of laughter in *Emma* and in *Pride and Prejudice*. That is because; in *Emma* laughter is used in order to direct the readers’ attention to Emma’s self-delusions. Therefore, laughter in *Emma* is quite ironic since the heroine laughs at both herself and the others while the readers are laughing at her. Castellanos indicates that: “One central point in a careful reading of the text is the interaction of Emma’s laughter and ours with her and at her, and ultimately at ourselves” (184). Because of her snobbery, Emma laughs at everyone, apparently to tease them. It is paradoxical that while she is mimicking Miss. Bates or humiliating Robert Martin, the readers laugh at her. Yet, like Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, Emma also discovers the power of laughter at the end of the novel. Thus, laughter is employed throughout Austen’s novels to reflect the progress in heroines’ characters in terms of gaining an identity.

2.2. The Use of Irony

The expression of female identity in Austen’s novels is not only achieved by humour and comedy but it is also established on an ironic view by which Austen criticises the secondary place of women in the society. The daily conventions and social requirements of Austen’s times underestimate the female power, which Austen satirizes with her talented ironic language. Thus, the readers are provoked

to think about the attitudes towards women in eighteenth century England. Similarly, Mary Evans states Austen's view of gender dynamics in the society as:

Austen's thesis is consistent with the principle of moral equality between the sexes: men and women must act according to the same values, and the same misbehaviour of one sex is no excuse or reason for the misbehaviour of the other. (44)

Since Austen reflects her ideas ironically, she is a difficult writer. Nicholas Marsh describes Austen's style as a web of alternative meanings around her views. Whatever the words she uses on the page, they repeatedly imply different meanings to the readers (198).

What makes Austen's style ironic is her critical eye on the social regularities of the era. In order to talk about an ironic viewpoint, it is crucial to identify what irony means. Again, Nicholas Marsh defines *irony* as following:

Irony exists where there are two or more related meanings or attitudes to be understood from what is written in the text. These two meanings could seem to contradict each other; yet the text not only suggests both meanings, but also suggests that they both have some validity. Irony is the relationship between these different meanings and attitudes in a work of literature. (198)

As a result, an ironic language has a double voice. Austen generates the double-voiced irony with the help of two related methods, *focalization* and *narration*; showing and telling, respectively. In both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, Austen employs these two methods of artistic organization in order to create the most appropriate ironic view by which she reflects the outlook of women in the society.

Pride and Prejudice reveals the conflicting views on women in the society and proposes a struggle for women to gain self-identity. In order to reflect her ideas, Austen carefully designs the narrative mode of her works. She uses focalization so as to create an impression on the readers with the help of characters.

Austen reveals more than expected through conversations in her works as can be seen in the following dialogue:

‘I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chuses of the girls: though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.’

‘I desire you will do such things. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half-so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference.’

(Pride and Prejudice 6)

An attentive reader can notice that Elizabeth is her father’s favourite daughter because she shares her father’s ideas about marriage. Yet, Lydia is her mother’s favourite as their perceptions of marriage are the same. Although, Austen does not directly tell her views about the Bennets, she implies them through the characters’ words. Again Pam Morris declares that in chapter VI, the dialogue between Elizabeth and Jane closes with a paragraph of “telling”:

Elizabeth listened in silence, but was not convinced; their behaviour at the assembly had not been calculated to please in general; and with more quickness of observation and less pliancy of temper than her sister, and with a judgement too unassailed by any attention to herself, she was very little disposed to approve them.

(Pride and Prejudice 12)

The paragraph plays with the divisions of “who speaks” and “who sees”. It is the narrator’s voice that speaks but the reader sees through Elizabeth’s eyes (35). In other words, Elizabeth is the focalizer and Austen is the narrator. The reason for using a character as a focalizer is to increase readers’ sympathy in order to create readers’ involvement in the story.

Likewise, in *Emma* most of the narration is focalized through Emma's perception. Emma's choice of words and point of view make the novel ironic. Castellanos claims that Emma's voice is closer than any other character's to the narrating voice. Ironically, the character most often laughed at by the narrator is also Emma although most of the actions are seen through her eyes (190). Again, in *Emma* dialogues and exploratory parts carry the same importance as in *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of an ironic viewpoint. Walton Litz talks about the source of information in *Emma*:

Basically information comes to us in *Emma* from three sources: dramatic action and dialogue, exposition of Emma's thoughts and reactions, and direct summary of what is generally known and believed. (146)

Apart from the information, which comes from major characters like Emma, information coming from the minor characters is also important in order to understand the plot organization of the novel. For example, although Jane Fairfax is a significant character in terms of reflecting female voice, she rarely expresses her own feelings and thoughts. Most of the information about Miss Fairfax comes from her aunt, Miss Bates. She describes Jane and the Bates family so perfectly that the reader feels the necessary sympathy both for the niece and the aunt. While the dramatic scenes direct the readers' attention to the realities of plot, the expository passages that tell of Emma's thoughts and feelings inform the reader about Emma's personality and her development. For example, Emma wishes to entertain Jane Fairfax by offering her to go out with her in the carriage but Jane refuses Emma and wanders around alone. Austen reflects Emma's inner feelings about this event as:

She was sorry, very sorry. Her heart was grieved for a state which seemed but the more pitiable from this sort of irritation of spirits, inconsistency of action, and inequality of powers; and it mortified her that she was given so little credit for proper feeling, or esteemed so little worthy as a friend.

(*Emma* 296)

Moreover, it can be remarked that Austen uses language very playfully. She not only employs different narrative techniques but also chooses her vocabulary delicately in order to establish an ironic view. Even on the first page of *Pride and Prejudice*, an ironic word game can be observed:

‘Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way! You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.’

‘You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.’

(*Pride and Prejudice* 6)

The conversation about Mrs. Bennet’s nerves might be interpreted that Mr. Bennet cares for her wife’s nerves. On the other hand, it can be concluded from Mr. Bennet’s words that Mrs. Bennet has been repeatedly complaining about her nerves since they got married, his wife’s mentioning of her nerves all the time is not only ridiculous and funny but also tiring for Mr. Bennet. Consequently, it is clear that playing on the words to manipulate different meanings is Austen’s instrument by which she draws the readers’ attention. Marsh makes a further commentary about the function of this type of irony as:

Jane Austen does not tell us a single view; she gives us several different views, which often seem contradictory, and she makes us think about them without resolving them. (204)

Furthermore, since Austen narrates her stories from several points of view, it can be suggested that she has multiple visions in her works, which convey her message of female identity. The first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* reveals a social belief; “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife” (5). That is, a wealthy man is expected to get married. However, the sentence reflects both the society’s view and Austen’s ironic attitude towards the social obligations. Likewise, Pam Morris declares:

The opening assertion ironically reserves what is surely going to be a driving impetus of the narrative... One voice says that there is a hint of darker irony in the suggestion that any such man is immediately regarded by the families of neighbourhood as the 'rightful property of some one or other of their daughters'. Another, less complacent voice says that in reality the only 'a property' rightfully belonging to a woman is the hope of acquiring a husband, wealthy if possible. (33)

As a result, it can be concluded that Austen ironically deals with the subject-matters of the era that regard women's place as secondary in the society. Likewise, John Odmark describes Austen's ironic style and asserts that:

The basis of Austen's irony is usually shown to be the conflicting systems of norms and values in the world portrayed, the contrast between the author's values and those in the little country village of her setting, or a combination of these possibilities.... As a rule irony in Jane Austen's fiction has been defined primarily in terms of content. (1)

Moreover, marriage is her favourite theme due to its being a conflicting institution in Austen's times. Austen questions the need of marriage and concludes that the society's view of marriage devaluates the female identity. That is because, in Austen's time, the only way of financial security for women was getting married to a wealthy man. Both in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, the theme of marriage is employed so as to reveal the economic dependency of women. Likewise, Morris states that in a social world where the only possibility of movement in a woman's life is through marriage, in a woman's "career", choosing a partner in life is as serious as a man's choice of a partner in business (52). However, Austen criticises this belief in *Pride and Prejudice* with the help of Elizabeth's refusal of Mr. Collins' proposal. Elizabeth rejects Mr. Collins because she has no feelings for him. It is clear that Elizabeth's denial makes her a brave girl for the readers; however, her mother needs to warn Elizabeth due to her behaviour:

If you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way, you will never get a husband at all- and I am sure I do not know who is to maintain you when your father is dead. I shall not be able to keep you!

(Pride and Prejudice 102)

Furthermore, married couples in *Pride and Prejudice* might be categorized as couples of *romantic* marriages and couples of *material* marriages. In order to disclose the disparity between the matrimonial standards of the era and the factual spirit of marriage, Austen generates these two types of couples. “Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy” and “Jane and Mr. Bingley” are the merry couples of the novel. They establish their marriages not only on wealth and status, but also on love and respect. Morris observes that with the help of these couples, Austen ironically implies the ultimate goal of marriage. In their marriages, romantic love is represented as a magical transformation in the lives of the heroes and the heroines. In other words, in their marriages, family authority, social status and economic considerations are supported by romance (55). It can be concluded that marriage for both Elizabeth and Jane shifts from a material alignment into a way of expressing their desire and femininity.

On the other hand, the marriages of “Charlotte and Mr. Collins” and “Lydia and Mr. Wickham” are due to financial reasons. Mr. Collins’ existing richness makes him an appropriate match for Charlotte. In their conversation with Elizabeth after her engagement with Mr. Collins, she makes her reasons clear for such a marriage:

I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins’s character, connections and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage status.

(Pride and Prejudice 100-101)

It is obvious that, Charlotte's words summarize the beliefs in Austen's time about the reasons to get married. In the eighteenth century middle class society, for Charlotte and for many of other girls, if a man had pleasant qualities, a woman was expected to be happy with him. However, Elizabeth is totally against the way Charlotte approaches marriage. She believes that marrying a man like Mr. Collins who is "conceited, pompous, narrow-minded and silly" in order to feel safe in the future degrades a woman's self-respect:

She had always felt that Charlotte's opinion of matrimony was not exactly like her own, but she could not have supposed it possible that when called into action, she would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage. Charlotte, the wife of Mr. Collins, was a most humiliating picture!

(Pride and Prejudice 101)

Elizabeth displays that Charlotte's basis for marriage is merely wealth-orientated, which devaluates the nature of love and marriage. Thus, since Charlotte marries to Mr. Collins gain a "worldly advantage", Elizabeth regards her behaviour as something that humiliates one's own dignity.

Similarly, Lydia and Mr. Wickham's marriage is materialistic because it is established on receiving benefits. Although they have eloped, Wickham would not show any interest to get married to Lydia. Indeed, Mr. Darcy persuades Wickham to marry Lydia by giving him a certain amount of money that is enough to pay all his debts. Since Wickham "was not the young man to resist an opportunity of having a companion" (244), he accepts this marriage. However, it is ironic that Lydia knows nearly nothing about Mr. Wickham and she thinks that he has a large fortune and high status: "He was her dear Wickham on every occasion; no one was to be put in competition with him" (244). The only thing that she has in mind is that she has managed to conclude her elopement with a man by marrying him long before her elder sisters get married. As a result, she is really proud of herself.

On the other hand, in *Emma*, Austen does not make use of married couples to criticize society's notions about marriage. As W.A Craik observes, there are not any comically inconsistent marriages in *Emma*. The couples seem very happy

(135). However, Austen's ironical views about the society's perception of marriage are revealed through Emma's words. In Austen's times, marriage was a symbol of class and property, thus finding a suitable match was a goal for many young ladies. Yet, Emma rejects matrimony at the beginning of the novel since she is a financially independent girl:

'I do so wonder Miss Woodhouse, that you should not be married, or going to be married! So charming you are!'

Emma laughed and replied.

'My being charming, Harriet, is not quite enough to induce me to marry; I must find other people charming- one other person at least. And I am not only, not going to be married, at present, but have very little intention of ever marrying at all.'

'Ah! So you say; but I cannot believe it.'

'I must see somebody very superior to any one I have seen yet, to be tempted...'

'Dear me!- it is so odd to hear a woman talk so!'

'I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Were I to fall in love, indeed, it would be a different thing... Fortune I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want: I believe few married women are as half much mistress of their husband's house, as I am of Hartfield.'

(Emma 73)

Emma's thoughts reveal that Austen criticizes the social views about marriage. Emma asserts that she does not need to marry as she has enough fortune to continue her life. Yet, she states that she can get married only if she has emotional closeness. On the contrary, Harriet represents the conventional views of women about marriage in this dialogue. What Emma believes is quite shocking for Harriet as she is not accustomed to hearing women who talk as independently as Emma. For Harriet, young and charming ladies are expected to find themselves good matches in order to assure their future. As a result, the contrast between Emma's and Harriet's perceptions of marriage is Austen's way of creating an ironic environment so as to criticize the society.

However, Emma's independent ideas of marriage are due to her high rank in the society. She has no financial anxiety because she is the heiress of Highbury.

Besides, rank is not a problem for Emma since she belongs to a noble family. She has power both inside and outside of her house. Therefore, she is used to managing people and tries to control Harriet's life as well. She rejects Harriet's marriage with Mr. Martin since she believes that Harriet can get married to a "better" man. Thus, she encourages Harriet and tells her that Mr. Elton has deep affection for her. After reading the charades that are sent by Mr. Martin, though they are addressed to Miss. Woodhouse, Emma concludes that they are written to Harriet. More importantly, she makes Harriet believe in her false judgements. So, Harriet cries with excitement:

That Mr. Elton should really be in love with me,—me, of all people, who did not know him, to speak to him, at Michaelmas!... Dear me! When I look back to the first time I saw him! How little I think!

(Emma 59)

Craik observes that in Emma's mind everything has been accomplished except the actual proposal. Consequently, she tries to arrange a meeting for Mr. Elton and Harriet (143). Yet, it is ironic that when Emma talks with Mr. Elton she realizes the truth. Moreover, her encouragement of Harriet for such a marriage results in Mr. Elton's mocking of Harriet, which is indeed Emma's fault. Mr. Elton remarks:

Everybody has their level: as for myself, I am not, I think quite so much at a loss. I need not totally despair of an equal alliance, as to be addressing myself to Miss Smith!

(Emma 102)

Mr. Elton's excessive reaction against Emma's thought that he might marry Harriet is because of society's strict beliefs about rank. Austen criticises the perceptions of the era about class ironically with the help of Emma's attempt to construct a match between Mr. Elton and Harriet.

Furthermore, while satirizing society's views about marriage, Austen attacks aristocracy and the laws of the era about women's position in the society. Aristocratic considerations are criticized by the representation of Lady Catherine

Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice*. Lady Catherine Lucas who is Mr. Darcy's aunt, reflects how upper-class people believe that they have a right to control everything in the society. For example, after hearing the rumour about the engagement of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, she asks Elizabeth to stop her relationship with her nephew because she believes that the best match for Mr. Darcy is her own daughter:

'I will not be interrupted! Hear me in silence. My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. They are descended, on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and, on the fathers' from respectable, honourable, and ancient, though untitled families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid. They are destined for each other by the voice of every member of their houses; and what is to divide them? The upstart pretensions of a young woman without family, connections and fortune. Is this to be endured?'

'In marrying your nephew I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; and I am a gentleman's daughter: so far we are equal.'

(*Pride and Prejudice* 274)

It is clear that Lady Lucas reflects the importance of "class" in the society when she attacks Elizabeth and, the Bennet family. However, Elizabeth points to the importance of "personality". For Elizabeth and for Austen, having a genteel character is better than belonging to an upper class.

Moreover, apart from criticising the aristocracy, Austen deals with the legal problems of women such as inheritance in *Pride and Prejudice*. The Bennet girls legally own nothing after their father's death. Mrs. Bennet's obsession to find wealthy sons-in-law is due to the difficulties related to inheritance. That is because, in accordance with eighteenth century laws, women could not have their own property. Thus, since the Bennets have no son, when Mr. Bennet dies, all his property will pass on to his nearest male relative who is Mr. Collins. In chapter seven, before Mr. Collins appears in the novel, Austen describes the situation as:

Mr. Bennet's property consisted almost entirely in an estate of two thousands a year which, unfortunately for his daughters, was entailed, in default of heirs male, on a distant relation; and their

mother mother's fortune, though ample for her situation in life, could but ill supply the deficiency of his.

(Pride and Prejudice 24)

In other words, since women could not own any property by law, only sons of a family were to provide their mother and unmarried sisters with allowance, bed and board after the father's death. Thus, it is obvious that the laws did not give any value to women but considered them as a property of men; husbands or brothers. Mrs. Bennet reacts against the laws hopelessly by describing them as "the cruelty of setting an estate away from a family of five daughters" (50). As a result, Austen focuses on the absurdity of laws by employing problems related to inheritance that forces women to get married to insure their future.

Similarly, Austen ironically criticises aristocratic considerations such as wealth and status that were very important in marriage proposals and social interactions in *Emma*. For example, Mr. Knightley states that Emma is wrong to discourage Harriet about Mr. Martin's marriage proposal as Harriet lacks a good breeding:

What are Harriet Smith's claims, either of birth, nature or education, to any connection higher than Mr. Martin? She is the natural daughter of nobody knows whom, with probably no settled provision at all, and certainly no respectable relations.

(Emma 48)

Mr. Knightley's words, as a member of aristocracy, reflect how much importance is given to breeding and class by the society.

Apart from marriage, status also determines the social interactions of people. In order to be considered as a member of an aristocratic family, the family's income needed to come from landed property, not from trade in the eighteenth century. Thus, members of good families were socially accepted even if they had financial problems. For instance, the social approval of Miss. Bates, who is poor, is higher than that of the Coles because she belongs to a respectable family. On the contrary, although the Coles have a certain property, they are not as socially

acceptable as Miss. Bates since they have no connection with high-rank families. Emma's views of the Coles after she hears that they will hold a dinner party summarize the visions of society well:

The Coles had been settled some years in Highbury, and were good sort of people – friendly, liberal, unpretending; but, on the other hand, they were of low origin, in trade, and only moderately genteel... Nothing should tempt her to go, if they did... The Coles were very respectable in their way, but they ought to be taught that it was not for them to arrange the terms on which superior families would visit them.

(Emma 156)

As a conclusion, Austen satirises the upper-class concerns that degrade female identity. Mary Evans observes that Austen's perceptions about society's views demonstrate an understanding of the processes through which social life is maintained. In her novels, Austen questions the nature of social hierarchy and the proper extent of social power. (66) In other words, what Austen emphasizes in her novels is that feminine power or female voice must be taken into consideration in order to construct healthy societies.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPORTANCE of CHARACTERIZATION

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 (185). 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 (126).

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 (195). 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 (28). 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. (28)

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. (112)

3.1. 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 (186). 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" (75). 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.

(*Pride and Prejudice* 74)

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. (85)

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.’

(Pride and Prejudice 27)

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 (192).

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” (77). 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.

(Pride and Prejudice 28)

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 (119).

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 severe 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.’

(Pride and Prejudice 33)

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 modern

languages”. Yet, when their own internal features are considered, the views expressed by them seem to have no ground (134).

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 criticises 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.

(Pride and Prejudice 144)

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” (189). 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, Goonerate affirms that conscious of her intelligence and proud of her critical eye, Elizabeth thinks too well of her own judgements. 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 (87). 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 (153). Like Elizabeth Bennet, Emma also has courage to reflect what she has in her mind without caring how the others might evaluate her. She possesses independent manners, which make her quite revolutionary. For example, in her conversation with Harriet about marriage, she reveals her female identity:

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's usual occupations of eye and hand and mind will be as open to me then, as they are now; or with no important variation. If I draw less, I shall read more; if I give up music, I shall take to carpet-work.

(Emma 67)

Emma's ideas vividly reflect that she has a belief in her feminine resources. She is aware of the power of her mind and intelligence. As a result, she rejects the socially accepted rumours, which degrade the strength of female identity.

Emma's thoughts are very significant because they show that women can use their energy and intelligence at any age. Actually, Emma possesses self-respect for her talents. Similarly, Thrilling observes that Emma has self-love that reveals her virtue and self-preservation (154). Moreover, Austen's choice of words to

introduce Emma includes qualities that can be thought as masculine considering eighteenth century standards:

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

(Emma 5)

Thrilling, again, emphasizes that Emma is not a conventional heroine because she is a new kind of female character. Her self-love acquires a kind of power, which shows that she is not a limited and passive girl (154). Especially her ideas about marriage are due to her power that she gains both in domestic and social environments. Emma's supremacy is something individual as she is conscious of her own female self. Moreover, she is influential in society because of her rank. She also has a domestic power at home since her father is a passive man. As a result, it can be said that unlike Elizabeth Bennet, she thinks that she can control everybody around her.

Although Emma is a snobbish person who likes to manage others, it is certain that she cares about sisterhood like Elizabeth Bennet. Emma has warmth for Harriet Smith because she is a good companion for Emma. It can be thought that the reason for their relationship might be Harriet's being easily manageable. However, it is clear that the basis of their relationship is that Emma loves Harriet by heart. Thus, she tries to do the best for her friend. Marvin Mudrick states that Emma observes Harriet's beauty with far more warmth than anyone else. It is unexpected for a heroine like Emma to have a friendship with Harriet who lacks the intellectual qualities Emma values a lot. However, Emma can easily excuse Harriet's low birth because of her affections (113):

The misfortune of your birth ought to make you particularly careful as to your associates. There can be no doubt of your being a gentleman's daughter, and you must support your claim to that station by everything within your power, or there will be plenty of people who would like to take pleasure in degrading you.

(Emma 24)

It is clear that Emma encourages Harriet about gaining an identity. She recommends Harriet not to worry about her breeding, rather she advises her to discover her own power.

On the other hand, Emma is indeed the most fallible heroine of Austen because of her excessive self-love. She perceives life from only her side because she has an assurance of power in life. Again, Mudrick describes her point of view and argues that:

Emma is moved to play God, but without tenderness or social caution, she falls into every conceivable mistake and misjudgement. She must feel herself to be in control and centripetal, the confidence and adviser of all. (117)

In other words, Emma experiences the delusions of her own individualism. By creating a heroine like Emma, Austen exemplifies the results of a person's having excessive power and privileges. Thus, although Emma has a conscious determination to express her opinions, she does not know the boundaries of her power. Yet, like Elizabeth Bennet's growing up throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, Emma also discovers the ways of balancing her power with the realities of life while the novel continues.

At the end of both novels, *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*, the two major heroines, Emma Woodhouse and Elizabeth Bennet get married to Mr. Knightly and Mr. Darcy, respectively. Although they both seem to have unconventional attitudes towards the institution of matrimony, Jane Austen purposefully makes them get married. That is because with the help of the marriages of such heroines Austen affirms that marriage should not depend on the social necessities of the era; rather she focuses on the idea that it should be a personal choice. Similarly, Elizabeth Bowen asserts that:

Emma and Elizabeth only discover their own states of heart towards the close of the novels they animate...Elizabeth's and Emma's awakenings to love are excellently in character. Nothing dims Elizabeth's gallant wit: she goes on gently pulling Mr. Darcy's leg.

With Emma “the dread of being awakened from the happiest dream was perhaps the most prominent feeling.” (109)

Jane Austen is a good observer of her environment. Particularly, as a woman she understands and describes skilfully the need for marriage for a lady in male-dominated societies. Therefore, marriage is an important theme in her novels so as to reveal the vitality of involving in a matrimonial state both for women and men in such communities. As a result, it can be said that the heroines of her novels represent the female side of society. Likewise, men of her novels cannot simply be studied as men. Rather, they act as the symbols of how the healthy relationships might be constructed between feminine and masculine groups in society.

3.2 Heroes:

Austen creates two heroes Fitzwilliam Darcy and George Knightley for her open-minded heroines, Elizabeth and Emma, respectively. Both Mr. Darcy and Mr. Knightley seem to have identical characters. They share the same sense of concern while approaching the women they are in love with. Although both men are wealthy and belong to a socially high rank, their first considerations before getting married are not money or class. That is because both gentlemen are attracted to witty women who can express their thoughts independently. In other words, Mr. Darcy and Mr. Knightley are not the stereotypes of narrow-minded patriarchy but they are created as the negotiators of the gender dynamics in society. What makes them different types of heroes is that their approach to romance is unlike the common heroes of Austen’s contemporaries. Mary Evans observes that Austen’s heroes do not act in plays, or read aloud in excessively dramatic ways, or amuse themselves by playing at flirtatious games (50).

It is clear that Austen does not believe in the sincerity of romantic clichés uttered by the gentlemen of the era while talking with a lady. Again, Evans asserts that Austen focuses on the artificiality of those clichés in her novels:

What becomes clear from reading Austen is that she is highly suspicious of those encounters between men and women which seem to be located outside reality- where common cause is made in terms of identification with or sympathy for a particular poet, or a particular point of view that is expressed not through the direct exchange of ideas between individuals but through the meditation of a third (absent) party- a poet or a novelist. (51)

Unlike the conventional gentlemen of the era, Austen's heroes are realist in their conversation with the heroines. Although they do not hesitate to involve in arguments with them, they are never rude or improper in their manners. Rather, they have genteel attitudes and they show their respect for the ideas of the ladies. For example, in the following conversation, which takes place after Darcy's marriage proposal, Elizabeth openly states her ideas about Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth believes that Darcy has treated unfairly to an innocent man, Mr. Wickham. Therefore, Elizabeth refuses his marriage proposal with a plain and sharp language but Darcy's reaction shows that he has respect for Elizabeth's ideas:

'You have reduced him (Mr. Wickham) to his present state of poverty- comparative poverty. You have withheld the advantages which you must know to have been designed for him. You have deprived the best years of his life of that independence which was no less his due than his desert. You have done all this!'

'And this,' cried Darcy, as he walked with quick steps across the room, 'is your opinion of me! This is the estimation in which you hold me! I thank you for explaining it so fully!'

(Pride and Prejudice 150)

Nardin observes that Elizabeth's mistake is her estimation of Darcy's behaviour as rude and selfish. That is the result of her prejudices about his manners. However, Darcy is a polite and sensible man and being well mannered is a part of his self-image. The reason for Elizabeth's prejudices is that Darcy hurt her feelings when he interfered with Jane and Bingley's relationship (57).

When *Emma* is considered, Mr. Knightley shares the same features with Mr. Darcy. Austen constructs Knightley's character as someone who is sensible, proper, kind and energetic. Nardin, again, remarks that he is a sensible man who appears coolly, judges calmly and acts decisively (156). His approach to Emma is like a tutor and it is inevitable that he affects Emma's personality positively. For instance, when Emma insults Miss. Bates, he warns her about the impropriety of her action:

‘Emma, I must once more speak to you as I have been used to do; a privilege rather endured than allowed, perhaps, but I must still use it. I cannot see you acting wrong, without a remonstrance. How could you be so unfeeling to Miss. Bates? How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation?’- Emma, I had not thought it possible.

(*Emma* 283)

At this point, Nardin testifies that the overall effect of Mr. Knightley's concern for Emma's conduct carries great importance. With the effect of Knightley on her sense of value, Emma learns to evaluate the events and react more properly. (114) Moreover, Jane Austen's representations of female voice do not only depend on constructing revolutionary heroines. With the help of her heroes, she reflects her ideas on the equality between genders. Both Darcy and Knightley are characterized as men who appreciate clever and open ladies. As a result, it can be said that Austen on purpose constructs such gentlemen in order to reveal her ideas about how gender dynamics should be balanced homogeneously in society.

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 (58). That is because; the artificiality of Wickham's manners is not released until Darcy's letter that explains

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 (11). 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.

3.3 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 (31). 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 (36). 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 107)

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 honourable 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 98)

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 (98).

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 (153). 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.

(*Emma* 18)

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!

(Emma 308)

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 (123). 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". (72)

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 (132).

As a conclusion, Austen reflects the need for the defence 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 (30).

CHAPTER IV

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 criticised 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" (189). Likewise, T. B. Tomlinson reflects Austen's talent of creating her heroines as:

Jane Austen's own originality is best described as an extraordinary turn of mind that can make Emma, or Elizabeth Bennet, at once a person to be reckoned with, manifestly alive and real throughout the length of the novel, and at the same time an issue, a generalizing tendency, a habit of thought and action, an idea. (25)

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 (27). 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. (18)

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. (377)

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 criticised. 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. (149)

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 judgement 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. Knightley 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. Besides, Jane Fairfax's being socially less accepted than Emma despite her education and talents clarify the society's values and beliefs.

Lastly, although Jane Austen lived long before the discovery of feminist approach in literary criticism, it is clear that she developed quite revolutionary ideas about the representation of female voice. In *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, Austen reflects her thoughts about the place and outlook of women that are unlike the daily conventions of her era. Besides, Austen emphasizes that there should be balance between genders in society. She encourages women to gain a female voice in society with which they can act autonomously. In other words, Jane Austen points out the significance of equality between genders in the eighteenth century, which is something revolutionary considering the values of her time.

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