

## PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PORTRAYED IN JANE AUSTEN'S *EMMA*

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Received: 11 July 2019

Accepted: 03 September 2019

### Abstract

This paper investigates the bildungsroman phenomenon as depicted in Jane Austen's *Emma* (1817) by consulting Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development as a framework of analysis. The most two conflicting readings in this regard could be best seen in Buckley's (1974) claim which excluded *Emma* from the bildungsroman, for the genre has always been associated with the protagonist's physical quest seeking maturity and social integration. However, Kohn (1995) read *Emma* as a domestic bildungsroman when he argued that Emma did not have to travel physical distances to achieve her maturity. For Kohn, Emma matured within her social sphere. This paper particularly traced Emma's psychological and social development since this type of development is the basic ingredient of any bildungsroman novel. This paper argued that Emma cannot be read as bildungsroman not because the protagonist did set on a quest, as Buckley claimed, but mainly because Emma did not develop a sense of psychological or social maturation. After placing Emma in Erikson's developmental stages, the study revealed that she did not really mature neither she realized her own identity. This paper proposed that *Emma* should not be classified as bildungsroman because the heroine distorted the real meaning of maturity and social integrity.

**Keywords:** bildungsroman, identity, maturity, development, Psychosocial, social integration.

### 1. Introduction

The terms "bildungsroman" genre and the "coming of age" genre are widely used interchangeably (Akman, 2010), and best known for familiarizing the readers with the protagonist's journey and the phases he/she passes from early childhood to adulthood. It is worthy to say that the protagonist is sometimes already an adult but still immature. Accordingly, the most significant issue lies in achieving maturation rather than growing old. The main purpose of such a genre is to present the protagonist's progress from the very beginning of the story till the last minute showing through different encounters and challenges how he/she is different at the end of the story from that at the beginning. The transformation is remarkably significant because it includes moral, psychological and social change. The transformational state is not the mere purpose of the genre; what matters most is the process which the protagonists go through to change. The ultimate purpose of the genre is to show how the protagonist integrates in society realizing his potentials to obtain self-actualization and to achieve social-reconciliation. This study aims to trace Emma's journey to maturation in the light of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development basically to see to what extend

Emma could be read as bildungsroman. This study brings an original tool to analyze the novel since the psychosocial development is the main theme of every bildungsroman novel.

## 2. Literature review

Since its publication in 1815-7, Austen's *Emma* has been one of the most interpreted literary works. The novel hides a variety of issues that are still significant today. Critics, scholars, and students have always been interested in the novel which has been read over two hundred years up to now. Austen was the first to criticize the novel when she declared that she was about to write about a heroine that no one would much like but herself.

Shannon (1956) described Austen as a moral writer "striving to establish criteria of sound judgment and right conduct in human life" (131). Shannon proposed that Austen reflects her moral teachings in *Emma*. He believed that *Emma* is a novel which reveals a convincing development of the protagonist from immaturity to rational and heartfelt maturity which reflects the protagonist's coherent and harmonious psychological development. Shannon assumed that *Emma* is carefully woven since the protagonist shifts from being young, self-indulgent and thoughtless to be caring, rational and mature grown-up. Although it is a last-minute change, the hints are marked early in the course of the novel. Lascelles (1939) examined Austen's interest regarding moral development; she claimed that the moral development is not only bound to the protagonist, but to all the characters around her. Lascelles detected the moral climate of the whole village to be shown in the novel. Likewise, Litz (1965) argued that the moral development is mainly attributed to *Emma*, where she shifts from fallacy to self-recognition, from imagination to reality. Butler (1986) confirmed Litz's statements stating that the book is the greatest work at that time and read *Emma*'s journey as a survey within the society to identify the true conceptions from the fake ones. Butler asserted that Austen locates *Emma* in a higher social status to give her the license to make "willful errors" in order to be forced to gain the complete moral stability (251). On the other hand, Kettle (1965) opposed critics who view *Emma* as a narrative means to present a moral development. According to Kettle, the main issue of the work is marriage. The novel starts and ends with marriage. Kettle said that the problem with recognizing *Emma* as a moral story is that the moral is forever attached to the events happening in the story. He detected a limited idealism in the novel. Kettle added that it is actually the realistic depiction of incidents that makes the reader emotionally concerned with the moral subjects depicted in the novel. For Kettle, the morality which is depicted in the novel is applied to the critics' contemporary world while the events of the book are shown realistically. Psychologically, Jackson (2000) said that *Emma*'s psychological development is an example of Jungian individuation of being an independent undivided integrated individual. Jackson asserted that *Emma* has shifted from a state of illusion to a state of reality. As a supporter of the psychological maturation in *Emma*, Li-Jun (2017) conducted a study to prove that *Emma* is a Bildungsroman through investigating her moral and psychological growth. The author stated that *Emma* achieves her maturity by realizing her shortcomings. Socially, he claimed that *Emma* progressively grows to identify herself late in the book. In the same year, Nayeypour claimed that *Emma* is a Bildungsroman for the protagonist witnesses a psychological development through her personal experiences and relationships illustrated in her sympathetic behaviour towards others. However, it seems that *Emma*'s psychological and moral growth is not a matter taken for granted for all critics and scholars. Jeffers (2005) argued that *Emma* has never developed a psychological growth; the protagonist's insulting behaviour towards other characters in the novel is evidence that shows the absence of her psychological growth. Jeffers also believed that the major concern

of Austen is to make Emma “nubile” (109). Likewise, Adam Roberts affirmed that the impact of the psychological force made Emma just “less shallow” (183).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Erik Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development

Erikson (1968) formulated his theory of Psychosocial Development which is considered a revolution regarding the developmental thought (Hoare, 2002). He was the first to explain how the social world dwells within the psychological structure of any individual. Erikson (1959) confirmed that it is difficult to understand the individual away from his or her social sphere stating that “Individual and society are intricately woven, dynamically related in a continual change.” (p.114). Erikson’s theory identifies the psychological development in a social domain where he presented the human growth and development when he stated “I shall present human growth from the view point of conflicts, inner and outer” (1968: 91-92)

The internal and the external conflicts drive the individual to be stronger and to seek integration. Erikson assumed that a crisis can occur at each stage of development (as seen in Table 3.1) where each of these stages has its own challenges and needs to be solved and fulfilled. The success of each stage is tightly connected to the success in the next stage, while failure in a stage means more challenges in the next stage and the consequences of the first failure will trouble the success of the next stage.

Table 3.1: Erikson’s Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development

Age	Crisis	Virtue
0-1 year	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope
2-3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Willpower
4-5 years	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose
6-12years/ Latency	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competence
Adolescence	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity
Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love
Middle Age	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care
Old Age	Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom

(The table has been compiled in Erikson (1962: 239-257), Pervin (2003: 189), and Mcleod (2008)

The main focus of this study is on the stages of latency, adolescence, and young adulthood, since they better fit the ages of the protagonist under investigation. According to Erikson, in the latency stage:

The combination of adult expectations and children’s drive toward mastery sets the stage for the psychological conflict of middle childhood, industry versus inferiority, which is resolved positively when children develop a sense of competence at useful skills and tasks. (Berk, 2009: 330)

This indicates that when the child successfully completes a task or a skill, his overall sense of self will develop positively, and if the child does not complete the task successfully, he will develop a sense of inferiority which leads to the lack of confidence and low self-esteem. In Erikson’s theory, the adolescence stage marks the process of identity formation where the main clash is between identity formation and role confusion. According to Erikson (1963) the late adolescence is the most critical and influential period of identity formation where “the

young adult, emerging from the search for and the insistence on identity, is eager and willing to fuse his identity with that of others." (p.263)

Erikson proposed that identity could be associated with any developmental stage through life when the individual starts thinking of his career, relations, and other values. The individual, according to Erikson, starts to seek answers for questions like: Who am I? By knowing oneself, the individual becomes prepared to enter the next stage of intimacy versus isolation, Erikson affirmed that:

[i]t is only after a reasonable sense of identity has been established that real intimacy with the other sex (or, for that matter, with any other person or even with oneself) is possible...the condition of a true twoness is that one must first become oneself. (1959, p.95)

In this stage, Erikson affirmed that the individual seeks intimate relationships especially outside family (Erikson, 1963). Friendship and love are outcomes of this stage. In this context, Erikson looked at love as "the greatest of human virtues, and, in fact, the dominant virtue of the universe" (1964: 127). If the individual fails in this stage, he will be suffering a sense of isolation.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Industry versus Inferiority

The significance of the first pages is to inform the reader about the situation in which Emma lives. Although Emma is introduced as a 21-year-old daughter of a wealthy old man, she has been a mistress of Hartfield since she was twelve. Emma's mother died long time before/we and her sister got married, so she was raised by her governess Miss Taylor who has recently got married. The novel starts with a flashback of Emma's early education, which has been reflected through the rest of the book. The education of Emma plays a major role in shaping her character and in depicting her relations with other characters. Although this description seems to tell readers about the marriage of Miss Taylor, it actually tells more than that. This description establishes what type of person Emma becomes as a result of Miss Taylor's teaching.

Miss Taylor is basically hired as a governess for Emma and her sister Isabella after the death of their mother, but she acts more as a soft-hearted old sister than a strict governess, especially for Emma. This is evident through the sisterly terms such as "friend and companion" (Austen, p.18), "dear friend" (Austen: 335), and "my love" (Austen: 354). The soft intimacy between them has its cursed effect on Emma. Due to the extended informal love, Miss Taylor's educative task has decreased to unhealthy friendship, consequently, "the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached" (Austen: 17). Looking at Miss Taylor as an equal comrade rather than her superior teacher, Emma has no constraints arguing with her and sometimes fearlessly rebuking her. Being equal to her governess in superiority, Emma now feels superior to most people in her village.

Another ruinous effect due to the sisterly intimacy between them is that Miss Taylor has never been able to recognize and direct Emma. Instead, Miss Taylor "had such affection for [Emma] as could never find fault" (Austen: 18). Miss Taylor is always the one who defends Emma's faults and mistakes. For example, When Emma draws Harriet, her drawing is far away from how Harriet really looks, Miss Taylor does not have the courage to admit it, and she says that "Miss Woodhouse has given her friend the only beauty she wanted... The expression of the eye is most correct, but Miss Smith has not those eyebrows and eyelashes. It is the fault

of her face that she has them not" (Austen: 51). Miss Taylor goes against nature claiming that it is Harriet's face which is imperfect, not Emma's drawing.

This kind of mentality might be good for a friend, but not for a governess whose duty is to help her student grow by softly identifying faults and correct them. Making things go the other way round, Miss Taylor does not only defend Emma's mistakes, but also assures them and turns them right "where Emma errs once, she is in the right a hundred times" (Austen: 45). Miss Taylor teaches Emma to downplay her mistakes, the fact that makes Emma feels immune to fault. Miss Taylor does not have the potentials supposed to be found in a governess; as a result, the role of teacher-student is reversed. Mr. Knightley addresses Miss Taylor:

You might not give Emma such a complete education as your powers would seem to promise; but you were receiving a very good education from her, on the very material matrimonial point of submitting your own will, and doing as you were bid. (Austen: 45)

Mr. Knightly also tells Miss Taylor, "You never could persuade her to read half so much as you wished. You know you could not" (Austen: 44). Likewise, Emma neglects her piano lessons and never develops her abilities, which are lately reflected in the novel when Emma feels inferior to Jane Fairfax playing: "She did unfeignedly and unequivocally regret the inferiority of her own playing and singing. She did most heartily grieve over the idleness of her childhood" (Austen: 201).

Though Emma is to blame for her idleness, it is Miss Taylor's fault in the first place. As a governess, she should have urged Emma to develop her playing skills. The unhealthy relation between them denies Miss Taylor the ability to bend Emma's idleness to her will. Emma feels free to do "just what she liked, highly esteeming Miss Taylor's judgment, but directed chiefly by her own" (Austen: 17).

Miss Taylor has never taught Emma discipline or how to develop her inner abilities. Mr. Knightley believes that Emma "would never submit to anything requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding" (Austen: 43). Emma does not comprehend her limits or her immature skills. It is only in the presence of Jane Fairfax that Emma realizes how immature her abilities are. In Erikson's (1950) theory, the individual must understand that he is not supposed to be the best in everything to attain competence. To develop a sense of industry, the individual needs to realize his potentials and his shortcomings, enhancing potentials and working on shortcomings. The role of tutor is not to over-praise students because they will develop a sense of arrogance rather than industry. It is important to praise students but not too much. Tutors must provide adequate feedback, praise what is right and constructively criticize what is wrong. According to Erikson, the duty of parents and tutors is to help kids develop a real sense of competence by not over-praising them. Tutors should praise the efforts rather than results. In Emma's case, Miss Taylor is not the typical tutor as Erikson suggests. She helps Emma develop a sense of arrogance against those socially inferior to her like Harriet Smith, and a sense of inferiority when facing those with better skills like Jane Fairfax. Emma fails to pass the stage of industry versus inferiority because instead of developing a sense of industry, her immature skills make her develop a sense of inferiority later.

#### 4.2 Identity versus Role Confusion

After Miss Taylor's marriage, Emma is left alone to suffer painful loneliness that nobody would recognize but herself. In the time when, according to Erikson's stage of psychosocial

development, Emma is supposed to be spending time with peers and freeing herself from serious responsibilities, she finds herself in a position no one would much like to be. Emma's role in this time of her life is really confused and her identity is not shaped as healthy formation. Miss Taylor's marriage places Emma in a hard position

[W]ith all her advantages, natural and domestic, she was now in great danger of suffering from intellectual solitude. She dearly loved her father, but he was no companion for her. He could not meet her in conversation, rational or playful. (Austen: 18)

Thus, the prevalent sorrow of this scene informs us that Austen is drawing our attention not only to Emma's oppression, but also to her servitude and her silenced misery in an irrational, grim house. In the first three pages, Austen gives a rundown of a lonely, bereft young lady, her tears close to her eyes, her family and friends "afforded her no equals." Miss Taylor's marriage creates "melancholy change," for Emma, she is now alone with her father. She wonders "How was she to bear the change?" She sighs "in mournful thought," meditating sadly "what she had lost," and continues to "sigh over it and wish for impossible things, till her father awoke and made it necessary to be cheerful" (Austen: 19). The significance of the first pages is to reveal Emma's feelings towards Miss Taylor's marriage and her relation to her father. The father-daughter relationship is established the other way round; the daughter is taking care of the father who is supposed to be her guide and protector.

Anderson (2000) states that Emma "functions as [Mr. Woodhouse's] parent" (2) and because she loves him, she assigns herself as his partner and hostess. She overlooks his eccentricity and she does not realize how his eccentric attitudes dominate her. She never argues with him, nor does she do anything to trouble his well-being, of fear of "destroying him ...and losing her status" (Paris, 2017: 81). For instance, whenever they go to a party, Emma has to find a companion for her father like a mother who seeks a baby-sitter for her child. Their relation is switched. Mr. Woodhouse cannot think rationally, he feels sorry for Mrs. Taylor's marriage which changed his all environment and now he completely relies on Emma. Mr. Woodhouse feels afraid that Emma might get married and leave him, so he is a big critic of marriage and hates people to leave the town. Because marriages bring changes, Mr. Woodhouse views them as "silly things, and break up one's family circle grievously" (Austen: 23) and he is stubbornly refuses any marriage. "He lamented that young people would be in such a hurry to marry and to marry strangers too" (Austen: 157). "Poor Miss Taylor...What a pity it is that Mr. Weston even thought of her" (Austen, p.19)! He is aware that Emma might be able to live without him, but he cannot live without her. This might be one of the reasons that unlike other bildungsroman novels in which the protagonist leaves his hometown, Emma is claimed to be a domestic bildungsroman.

However, the critical Mr. Knightley arrives to ease them, but his well-mannered yet overbearing speech indicates that he is not partner she so badly needs for her maturity. While Erikson (1950) emphasizes that young people need peers to mature but we find that Emma has no peers. Emma's father and Mr. Knightly are the most available companions whom Emma does not really fit. Her father is a "much older man in ways than in years" (Austen, p.18), he is most like a baby to be looked after and Mr. Knightly is at least fifteen years older which makes him more mature than Emma and he always criticizes her. Emma's lack of self-identity could be traced through her relation with her father, Harriet Smith, Jane Fairfax, and finally Mr. Knightly. However, Emma's relation to these characters reveals her true identity and illustrates the confusion she lives in due to her lack of self-knowledge.

#### 4.2.1 Emma and Her Father

Emma's relation to her father plays a significant role in shaping her character, or to be more concise, in not shaping her character. Emma's naivety and misconception are the result of attending her father rather than peers. Mr. Woodhouse is an effective contribution to her immaturity; being all the time beside her father, she has been deprived experiencing not only the wider world but even the very limited society around her. Described as "a valetudinarian all his life, without activity of mind or body," (Austen: 18), Mr. Woodhouse is a shut-in whose very narrow activities like eating gruel and playing backgammon limit his daughter's life. Because he is unwilling and also hates to go out, Emma finds herself forced to stay at home as well. Thus, Emma's world is restricted to her father, two friends, and very few acquaintances. According to Erikson (1968), the focal and most essential developmental tasks for adolescents are to solve the identity versus role confusion crisis, develop their own distinctive sense of identity, and discover the social environment where they can belong to and create meaningful relationships with other people (Chen, Lay, Wu, & Yao, 2007), which is not the case for Emma. Emma has not left her home even to Box Hill, a small town which is only seven miles away from her home, she has never seen the sea or travelled across the town and has not experienced learning from others or been through real experiences. Emma's devotion to her father has made her a prisoner to a narrow circle and very limited social relations which consequently hinders her maturity. It has been proved by many studies that peer relation is a fundamental factor which positively attributes to the adolescents' identity development. Rassart and colleagues (Rassart, Luyckx, Apers, Goossens, & Moons, 2012) assert that good and supportive relations among peers not only develop a sense of identity but also prevent stagnation. Emma's father is by no means a peer for her; he is not a positive contributor to her development, rather, he is an active player who emphasizes her stagnation. Mr. Woodhouse's ill health is a main concern not only for Emma but also for everyone, it strengthens his power and makes people, including Emma, accept his authoritarian conduct. He excels in controlling Emma through a "combination of dependency and praise" (Paris: 81), which makes Emma a victim of subjugation. Emma is not aware how her father shackles her to him although she appears to act as free from any constraints. In Erikson's (1968) concept of identity formation, parents have to give their sons a space where they can explore and make their own relations, and get in touch with others so as to enhance their understanding and live different experiences. Individuals need to detach themselves from the inner relations to the outer relations. Erikson emphasizes that the outer relations significantly shape the individual's identity. Unfortunately, Emma is firmly attached to her father and has no or very limited life experience.

#### 4.2.2 Emma and Harriet Smith

For the unlucky Emma, the situation outdoor is not better than indoor; Emma's closed society is a very narrow environment for her to mature. Monaghan (1980) states that "[T]he way in which life is organized in Highbury not only makes things dull for Emma, it also deprives her of opportunities to achieve personal growth" (118). For Emma to escape the dull and grim atmosphere at home, she tries to find compensation outside. Paris (2017) affirms that Emma surrounds herself with people who are socially and intellectually inferior to her, the fact that not only feeds her arrogance but could also "be seen as, in part at least, an expression of her need for reassurance" (77). However, Emma finds what she seeks in Harriet Smith, a pretty young woman of unknown parentage. Emma's relationship with Harriet Smith is not more promising than that with her father. Being a friend of Harriet, Emma makes it clear that she

has no tendency to grow up or to improve herself "Harriet would be loved as one to whom she could be useful. For Mrs. Weston there was nothing to be done; for Harriet everything" (Austen: 34). Emma is attracted to Harriet because of the latter physical appearance, Harriet is "very pretty girl, and her beauty happened to be of a sort which Emma particularly admired" (Austen: 31). This type of attraction reveals Emma's shallowness and superficiality. Lacking the intellectual qualities, Harriet is the perfect peer for Emma to capitalize her role as a mentor. Due to her social sphere, Emma easily dominates Harriet and takes on her shoulders the mission of fitting Harriet in the social world. It is misunderstood that Emma does that out of helping a naive individual who has recently arrived in a new town; the fact is that Emma "was not struck by anything remarkably clever in Miss Smith's conversation..." (Austen: 31). Instead, Emma acts as a mentor to demonstrate her supremacy. Emma wants to prove that she alone who can turn Harriet into "quite perfect" (Austen: 32). Emma is not aware that Harriet's naivety and her low level of intellectuality are precisely the reason why Emma should seek a better person whom she can learn from. Emma is playing the teacher when she is indeed a student as Hughes puts it "Emma, who must become pupil, insists on acting as teacher" throughout the majority of the novel (1961: 70).

Emma's role confusion grows worse when she adopts the mother's role by giving herself the credit of acting the matchmaker. Matchmaking and arranged marriages were dominant in the Victorian age, but it was the parents' role to do so. However, by arranging marriages, Emma gives herself the right to manipulate and control the lives of others, especially those whom she sees inferior to her social class. If Austen means to reinstall the social hierarchy, then she picks the wrong person to conduct the mission, and if she criticizes the tradition of arranged marriage, then she goes too far. Emma's desire to find a proper husband for Harriet places her in the mother position. Emma's obvious desire to control Harriet satisfies her ego for power, and it permits her to free herself from the limited occasions for control that being with her father offers. However, acting the mother-like for Harriet does not inevitably makes her a 'good' parent; to Emma, she does not differentiate between parenting and controlling. Thus, acting the mother could simply be inferred as a corruption of her presumed power. In this regard, Minma (2001) confirms that "Emma's match-making project is motivated by circumstances and inclinations that have nothing to do with Harriet" (51). It is driven, Minma asserts, by "the absence of intellectual stimulus after Miss Taylor's marriage, a desire to display her own cleverness, a love of managing and arranging, and so on" (51). Emma's parenting for Harriet reflects Mr. Woodhouse's style. Consequently, Emma cannot be helpful for Harriet and their relation which cannot be called friendship, is not really healthy (Hatcher, 2003).

Due to her high social class, Emma is equipped with unlimited authority, a type of authority usually associated with the male. The people of Highbury accept her mistreatment as they accept her father's. Interestingly, Korba (1997) comments on the masculine aspects that imbue Emma's character stating that "in her dealings with Harriet, Emma's behaviour seems most 'male'" (p.145). Korba claims that Emma "wins" Harriet when she persuades her to reject Martin's proposal. Winning Harriet against Martin is viewed as a competition between two males where the poor Harriet is the prize. Emma places herself in a position which far away from a female role. This role confusion is the result of her relation with her father who provides very limited formal education and teaches her little about relations with others. Emma has not gained a psychosocial growth due to the way her father raised her. He has not succeeded in preparing his daughter for an environment larger than home. His treatment of his daughter is the reason why she "remains a child" (Monaghan, 1980: 118) and

makes her loyal and dependent. In today's view, Mr. Woodhouse's treatment of Emma could be seen as child abuse. In her relation with Harriet and others, Emma is repeating the same fault of her father, she is following the same pattern, and her father's teachings are well learnt. Unfortunately, she learns well how not to grow up. Emma's lack of peers has a negative effect on her Bildung, she is unable to merge into well-established relations, particularly, mutual adult relations. Emma's self-absorption and her unawareness of the views and the needs of others isolate her, and deny her the social and the psychological orientation necessary to turn her into a contributing member of society. Although Emma seems self-confidence with a strong and influential behavior upon others, she is not necessarily a mature independent.

#### 4.2.3 Emma and Jane Fairfax

Emma fails to identify herself through her relationship with Jane Fairfax. Although Emma realizes that Jane Fairfax is imbued with many amiable traits, she is not willing to admit these qualities, Emma indeed rejects Jane before she meets her due to Miss Bates's continual praises on Jane's behalf. "[Emma] has taken a dislike to Jane Fairfax who should have been her natural friend and companion" (Shannon, 1956: 638). When Jane arrives in Highbury, Emma immediately rejects her. Jane Fairfax is the most appropriate peer for Emma to identify herself. Morgan emphasizes that Jane Fairfax is "[t]he friend Emma should have chosen" because Jane is "the only character close to her in age, accomplishments, and consciousness, in many ways Emma's superior" (1980: 34). Perry (1986) affirms this saying:

This never-quite managed friendship of Emma and Jane Fairfax, the two superior young ladies whose association we wait for, whose conversation promises the most delightful equality of tastes and interests is the novel's great unfinished business. (189)

Jane Fairfax is the type of character who would, in contrast to Harriet, reveal Emma's shortcomings and be of much challenge to her rather than Harriet's blind obedience. Bree states that "[Emma] prefers to take as a friend Harriet Smith, whom she can patronize and manipulate, rather than Jane Fairfax, her intellectual equal" (2009: 135). Jane's experience in the real life and her conduct overweighs Emma's limited world in Highbury. Morgan (1980) states that:

Jane comes from the external world, the big world of real events, to the idyllic isolation of Highbury. Because she brings the disturbing facts of life into a hitherto tranquil realm easily governed by Emma's imagination, Jane is a threat to Emma, although not as the rival Emma envisions. (31)

Jane Fairfax is a threat that forces Emma to act rationally, and is far away from submitting to Emma's immature actions and imaginations, these are the main reason why Emma disregards her. By dismissing Jane, Emma is actually losing a great opportunity to grow up and mature. Mr. Knightley urges Emma to get closer to Jane because he knows that Emma would benefit from her either on personal or social levels, but Emma gets more stubborn particularly when she realizes that Mr. Knightley admires Jane. Mr. Knightley explains why Emma rejects Jane when he says it is "because [Emma] saw in [Jane] the really accomplished young woman, which she wanted to be thought herself" (Austen: 148). Emma's lack of maturity has been combined with jealousy which consequently makes her behave passively with Jane.

Instead of being a friend of Jane, Emma strives to embarrass and be aggressive to her, and it is Emma's shaken personality and ill-structured imagination that leads her to think of Jane as a potential substitution of herself in the Highbury society. Jane is out of reach of Emma's control and there is no chance for her to manipulate the rational Jane. Emma is only

left by the choice of criticizing Jane's lower social status. Minma (2001) asserts this stating that:

"Rank and position are a sort of obsession with Emma, and because of this preoccupation, as well as for the haughty and supercilious attitude she frequently shows, she has been often called a snob" (54).

Emma does not stand up hearing about Jane because Jane reminds her of what she is not. According to Perry (1986) "Emma resents Jane's superior discipline and accomplishment because it spoils her self-idealization" (p.192). When Jane is present Emma feels inferior, especially when they both play the piano and Jane displays her high talent "Emma was obliged to play; and the thanks and praise which necessarily followed appeared to her an affectation of candour, and air of greatness, meaning only to show off in higher style [Jane's] own very superior performance" (Austen: 150). Emma grows jealous because it seems that Jane is capable of limiting Emma's belief in her own talents because Emma realizes that Jane is indeed a better pianist. "Jane is superior to Emma in most respects except the stroke of good fortune that made Emma the heroine of the book. In matters of taste and ability, of head and of heart, she is Emma's superior" (Booth, 1961: 249). Emma's feelings of inferiority is the result expected from the unjustified over praise in the previous stage of industry versus inferiority, this feeling is the natural result. Erikson (1950) emphasizes that the bad consequences of the previous stage will be carried to the next stage, and this is what Emma suffers now. Because Emma never develops a sense of industry, she is now reaping the undesired outcomes of inferiority. Emma's rejection to befriend Jane comes out of the fact that her father and Miss Taylor never criticize her talent. Emma's imagination makes her believe that her abilities and talents are incomparable. Emma has never viewed Jane a potential friend, rather she sees her as a rival. Despite the minor role Jane plays in the novel, it is fair enough to present Emma's lack of maturity.

#### **4.2.4 Emma and Mr. Knightley**

It is clear that Mr. Woodhouse effect on Emma is much more influential than one might think. He does not only restrict her maturity, but naively defends her faults. The same as her father, Emma is engrossed in her own feelings that she is insensitive and indifferent to the feelings of others. This could be seen in the first pages when Mr. Knightley advises Emma to stop manipulating and interfering in other's business, Mr. Woodhouse answers that "Emma never thinks of herself, if she can do good to others" (Austen: 23). Emma does not really realize her "real evils" (Austen: 17) and her egotistical pleasure in manipulating others, which makes her unaware and ignorant of their feelings.

Mr. Knightley warns Emma that Mr. Elton is not the proper match for Harriet either socially or economically, but Emma turns a deaf ear to his warning and she persuades Harriet to reject Martin's proposal and to think of Mr. Elton as a better suitor for her, she is totally ignorant that Mr. Elton's genteel treatment for Harriet is just a path he takes to reach her own heart. Emma's inability to realize that Mr. Elton is actually attracted to her leads to suffering for her, Harriet, and Mr. Elton. When Mr. Elton realizes that Emma plans to unite him to Harriet, he sacrifices both of them. Emma rejects Mr. Knightley's advice and refuses to be seen as "blind and ignorant, and in want of counsel" (Austen: 104). In another occasion, Mr. Knightley draws Emma's attention that there is a secret relation between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, he also warns her not to go far with her imagination in her relation to Frank, but again Emma ignores the warning saying "I will answer for the gentleman's indifference. She spoke with a confidence which staggered, with a satisfaction which silenced Mr. Knightley"

(Austen: 300). Erikson (1963) asserts that the identity formation imposes that youths depend on their peers for guidance in their exploration of values and beliefs. In Emma's case, it is obvious that she is far away from being applicable to Erikson's claim.

Emma's irresponsible and irrational manipulation of the lives of others is seriously considered by Mr. Knightley, who always tries to provide Emma with the adult guidance that she does not attain in her family. He always tries to open her eyes to the wrongs she does to the people around her, he even explains in details the attitudes of these people and shows her how mistaken she is, but she is too overwhelmed by her fantasies to take the advice. Despite the fact that Mr. Knightley is not more than a family friend and has no direct authority over Emma, he is the source of the most reasonable thinking and insightful judgment, which Emma much respects but never adheres to when they clash with hers. Mr. Knightley is almost the only one who sees Emma with a naked eye; he never flatters her or act hypocritically, but rather directly approaches her faults before her merits, he is "one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse and the only one who ever told her of them" (Austen: 21). According to Emma, he is "the worst judge in the world,..., of the difficulties of dependence. [And he does] not know what it is to have tempers to manager" (Austen: 131).

The clash between Mr. Knightley and Emma hits the peak when Emma insults Miss Bates. Mr. Knightley does not only advise Emma to behave herself, but harshly rebukes her. The Box Hill incident is not a tongue slip that occurs accidentally. If we recall Emma's attitudes toward Miss Bates, we simply expect Emma to hurt Miss Bates because earlier in the novel, Emma displays her antipathy toward Miss Bates and mocks her behind her back. Emma does not really like Miss Bates for many reasons; Miss Bates often praises Jane Fairfax in the presence of Emma, Miss Bates is too silly for her, and she is now poor and no longer a high class member. Emma hates these qualities, especially in Miss Bates. Her insult to Miss Bates is a cumulative contempt she had always felt and now is the chance to release it. Mr. Knightley grows so angry with Emma and so sympathetic with Miss Bates. He scolds Emma saying

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. (Austen: 319)

However, this is the only time that Emma feels guilty and she tries to apologize for Miss Bates, but Miss Bates is seriously hurt that she hardly accepts her apology. In this incident, Emma seems to be realizing her faults, but actually she does not. She only realizes how far she goes and how rude she is. Apologizing for such an insult does not mean she grows up. Emma insults Miss Bates in public, if she is serious about her apology, she should have done it in public as well. Besides, it is Mr. Knightley's harsh rebuke that makes her feel guilty. Goodheart (2008) doubts that Emma would stick to the corrections imposed by Mr. Knightley stating that:

Her failure to know herself is on display in her foolish and seemingly incorrigible matchmaking. She does turn out to be amenable to correction by Knightley, who embodies social reason and understanding, but she does not inspire confidence that the correction will stick. (592)

A closer look to Emma's peer relations reveals that she cannot identify with other people. She feels superior to those inferior to her like Miss Bates and Harriet Smith, she is not willing to befriend her equals like Jane Fairfax, and she does not listen to those who are mature enough to advise her like Mr. Knightley. Emma's identity is never realized.

### 4.3 Intimacy versus Isolation

Emma's inability to identify herself, to know who she really is, and her failure to communicate with others in *Highbury*, dramatically affects her intimate relations. Erikson (1963) argues that the success of a certain stage of psychosocial development is tightly connected to the success in the previous stage. This argument is approved in Emma's feeling of inferiority compared to Jane Fairfax due to Emma's failure in the stage of industry versus inferiority. It is clear that Emma has to suffer the consequences of that failure in later stages.

In terms of intimacy versus isolation, it is unlikely for Emma to develop sense of intimacy due to her failure in the stage of identity versus role confusion. It has always been argued that Emma's marriage to Mr. Knightley at the end of the novel is a proof that signifies her maturity and her *Bildung*. That would have been partially true if marriage is meant to be a physical connection between a man and a woman. It is true that Emma got married, but getting married has never been a sign of maturity, it might be a sign of adulthood. What matters most is the sense of true sincere intimacy that leads to a healthy sustainable marriage. However, a deeper investigation of Emma's intimate relation to Mr. Knightley will clearly reveal the true nature of the "perfect happiness" (Austen: 406) which ends the story.

Bennett (1980) remarks that Emma realizes she is in love with Mr. Knightley when she "learns of Harriet attachment to him and fears that it may be reciprocal" (154). Austen describes this moment as "It darted through her with the speed of an arrow that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself" (Austen: 345). This description falsely leads the reader to conclude that Emma has always been in love with Mr. Knightley but she does not realize it, and the credit goes for Harriet to draw her attention. The presumed natural result for this seeming realization is that she would stop making imaginative matching for others and form a real one for herself with Mr. Knightley. Indeed, the terms Austen uses to express Emma's feelings to Mr. Knightley are tepid and she runs over them giving no hint that Mr. Knightley is really "dear" to Emma, or she has "affection" for him (Austen: 348). Few pages later, Austen reveals that "[Emma's] happiness depends on being first with Mr. Knightley, first in interest and affection" (Austen: 351). After Emma's presumed realization, Austen reveals Emma's true feelings and assures that if Emma "Could she be secure of ... his never marrying at all, she believed she should be perfectly satisfied" (Austen: 351-352). Emma is not interested in having a love relation with Mr. Knightley; she is just interested in him not having any love relation at all. Of course this is not a natural intimate feeling for someone who is supposed to be in love with someone else. In this respect, Wilson (1994) noted that "Emma is not interested in men except in the paternal relation" (75). Emma does not know her feelings even at the very late stages of the book. For Emma, Mr. Knightly must not marry, but if he must, then let it be her.

For Emma, Mr. Knightley must not marry anyone but her, is another manipulation, but this time on a higher level. Emma still schemes the lives of others and shapes them the way her imagination tells her. Emma's feelings towards Mr. Knightley are no different than towards any other character in the novel. There is a big difference between (she must marry Mr. Knightley, and he must marry her). Emma's desire to be first in Mr. Knightley's life is not driven by an intimate feeling, but by an egocentric arrogance based on social discrimination. In reference to Harriet's hope of being attached to Mr. Knightley, Emma clearly states

Was it far, very far, from impossible.—Was it a new circumstance for a man of first-rate abilities to be captivated by very inferior powers? Was it new for one, perhaps too busy to seek, to be the prize of a girl who would seek him?—Was it new for any thing in this world to be unequal, inconsistent,

incongruous—for chance and circumstance (as second causes) to direct the human fate? (Austen: 350)

Emma's wild imagination is helpless to realize a combination between Mr. Knightley and Harriet; she believes it is socially wrong. Ironically, it seems that Emma's attempts to develop Harriet are uncontrollable, while she cannot develop her own self; Harriet now seeks to marry the hero himself.

In reference of being first with interest and affection with Mr. Knightley, this attitude is not based on intimate feelings; rather, it is based on jealousy aroused by Harriet. According to Thaden (1990) "Emma is isolated not because she is superior but because she must feel superior; she cannot participate in a relationship where she is not first" (50). Emma feels worry now because if Mr. Knightley Marries Harriet, she would lose her position as the mistress of Highbury, Emma's social position could be in danger by the new mistress of Donwell (Yoshino, 2004). Emma now feels threatened by a dangerous situation, which will leave her totally isolated. Besides, let's not forget that Miss Taylor's marriage left Emma in a hard loneliness and solitude. Mr. Knightley's marriage will be the toughest lesson of loss.

However, after Emma realizes that Mr. Knightley should not marry but her, she decides that she "would not marry, even if she were asked by Mr. Knightley" (Austen: 416). For marriage, as seen by Emma and her father, means change, and Emma early in the novel reveals

I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Were I to fall in love, indeed, it would be a different thing! but I never have been in love; it is not my way, or my nature; and I do not think I ever shall. And, without love, I am sure I should be a fool to change such a situation as mine. Fortune I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want: I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house as I am of Hartfield; and never, never could I expect to be so truly beloved and important; so always first and always right in any man's eyes as I am in my father's. (Austen: 83)

The presumed reasons as Emma states may have some validity, but there is a more real reason. Emma's refusal is indeed a refusal for adult duties and commitments, she refuses to enter the adult world and be responsible. It is obvious that Emma scales love and marriage materially; this explains why she does not want Harriet to marry Mr. Martin, she believes that Mr. Martin is too much poor for Harriet as Harriet for Mr. Knightley. It is also clear that Emma projects her lack of intimacy on others; she does not really appreciate marriage, which is based on true love and intimacy. But what could be the reasons that make Mr. Knightley insist on loving her despite all the deficiencies she has? The novel does not indicate that he does not realize her true personality. His love for Emma is not driven by the power of love. There has not been any indication that love overweighs reason. So, their marriage is basically based on mutual respect and friendship (Goodheart, 2008).

Emma's attitude toward marriage is also based upon her narcissism; Emma feels that marriage is rather a means to restrict her superiority than to help her grow up. Again, the shadows of her relation with her father are still present at this stage of her development. The negative influence of her relation with her father exceeds the stage of identity versus role confusion to affect her intimate feelings. Emma is not interested in marriage because her father is not a fan of change. Emma believes that to fall in love means that there should be someone more influential than her father to tempt her fall in love; she admits that falling in love will conflict her attachment to her father. Emma frankly states that "Marriage, in fact,

would not do for her. It would be incompatible with what she owed to her father, and with what she felt for him. Nothing should separate her from her father" (Austen: 352).

However, Austen would not end the story of her protagonist in vain, Emma must marry. The novel basically interprets the plot of marriage. Emma has been through a long domestic journey, and she has been arranging fault marriages for others. Now she has to taste what she has been cooking. But since Emma is the manipulator, she knows the rules of playing. She would secure her marriage as she is a participant now. Her rules to guarantee the "perfect happiness" are paradoxically the rules which limit her Bildung and her development. Indeed, her rules take her back to the old dull life with her father. Emma feels guilty to be engaged; she assures Mr. Knightly that it would be only engagement as long as her father still alive. This could be interpreted as an engagement to her father more than to Mr. Knightly; she would not free herself through marriage unless her father dies. Emma's relation to her father would not leave her grow or mature; she has to stick to her father even if she gets married. She also makes sure that Mr. Knightly has to come and live in Highbury because she cannot leave her father. The irony is that Mr. Knightly, who is supposed to be Emma's creator, is now her creation. Instead of taking Emma out of her limited world, she drags him into it. Emma's story ends where it begins. She has never develops a sense of intimacy, she is isolated. Emma has no opportunity to mature. According to Jeffers (2005)

Emma Woodhouse's sad realization that she has done Miss Bates a moral injury, or her happy realization, "dart[ing] through her, with the speed of an arrow, that Mr. Knightly must marry no one but herself!" These moments are delicately prepared, but the psychology of development from childhood to girlhood to young womanhood, which since Goethe we have associated with the Bildungsroman, is something Austen attempts only in *Fanny Price* of *Mansfield Park*, and even there she is offering a mere pencil sketch of early development. Her real interest is in the nubile young woman. (109)

A close interpretation of Emma's psychosocial development in the light of Erikson's theory reveals that Emma's change is not realized, and her marriage to Mr. Knightly is not an indication to her maturity, but a "regression to childish dependency." (Paris, 2017: 65)

## 5. Conclusion

Tracing Emma's journey from the beginning of the novel until its end in the light of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, reveals no trace of any social or psychological developments. Emma fails the stage of industry versus inferiority by not learning or enhancing her skills. She suffers the consequences later when she feels inferior to Jane's real skills. Being over-praised by her governess and her father, Emma does not realize her weaknesses or strengths and she has to face the real life unequipped. In the stage of identity versus role confusion, Emma is not capable of identifying herself with those around her; her relation to her father is reserved, her relation to Harriet is not healthy since she acts the mother figure which is not played well. Her relation to Jane is completely the other way it should be, and finally her relation to Mr. Knightly is a proof that she never wants to mature. Emma's identity is confused and her self-knowledge is not gained. Failing these stages of psychosocial development is an indicator to her failure in the stage of intimacy versus isolation. Although Emma is married at the very end of the novel, her marriage does not necessarily mark her maturation. Emma's marriage is not a real matching based on pure mutual love feelings. Her marriage to Mr. Knightly is basically based on her willing to keep Mr. Knightly close to her family and not losing him to anyone else. If she guarantees that he will not marry anyone else,

she would not have married him. If Emma's marriage is to be seen as an element that marks her Bildung, then her Bildung is not a real one.

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