

TWO PARAMETERS--MARRIAGE PLOT AND LANGUAGE OF CONTROL IN “EMMA” JUSTIFIES JANE AUSTEN AS FEMINIST WRITER

Anju Bala

Associate Professor
Department of English
Govt. College for Women Parade,
Jammu, J&K

Jane Austen is one of the most well known authors of English literature. *Emma* (1815) is a story about the everyday life of Emma Woodhouse and her circle of family, friends, and acquaintances where nothing ever really seems to happen. Novel was written takes place in a time when many things were happening in the world, such as the French Revolution and the industrial revolution. None of the important happenings in the world appear in the novel, *Emma*. On the surface it seems to be just a story about everyday life in the village of Highbury. But, if one takes a look beneath the surface at the history of writing and writers, in this case Jane Austen, it is clearly visible that Austen is trying to do much more than write a cute story about Emma and her friends. In *Emma*, Jane Austen has taken up, many issues important to women, making her a feminist of her time.

Jane Austen was not a by no means a radical feminist by today's standards, but she was indeed a feminist. Women have been feminists throughout history. Feminism as a defined term seems to be a relatively new concept but in fact has been around as long as women. They have worked within their confines to make their voices and opinions known. Austen has done this through her writing.

In Jane Austen's time Women writers had a difficult literary life. Their writing was often repressed and not recognized. Many women writers found that they had to take on a penname It was belief that women should not write till they turn thirty, in other words, “fiction by women must be fiction by young women – modest, delicate, wispy, delightful – and as soon as a woman has anything significant to say she...is past her career as a novelist and a woman” (Johnson xv). Austen was often praised for conforming to this ideal by writing in a feminine style and staying away from masculine themes.

Jane Austen was seen as a conformist, because in *Emma* Austen used her writing to make some fairly gutsy remarks about women and their lives. Her feelings towards marriage stand out the most. In Emma's time, women were always taken care of through marriage or some other arrangement, such as being made a governess. Women were not independent beings, as general rule .In the novel, Emma is a single woman living with her father on his estate called Hartfield. Her childhood governess, Miss Taylor, has recently left Hartfield to marry Mr. Weston. It would have been quite acceptable for Emma to live with her father under the expectation that she would eventually marry. So Austen makes Mr. Woodhouse a

rather helpless invalid whom Emma has to take care of. Since her father isn't taking care of her, Emma is essentially independent.

Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) is an example of strong, feminist novel. The novel focuses closely on a young woman making her way in the world and standing up for her personal rights. Emma's wealth and her indulgent father allow her a sense of independence few nineteenth-century women had. The word "feminism" was not widely used until the 1880s, the issue of feminism has been a focus in literary criticism of Austen for the last few decades (Looser 100). Whether or not *Emma* is a feminist novel, at a surface level, Emma appears to be fully in control of her life as she manages her father's household, rules over Harriet, and argues with Mr. Knightley. The heroine in the novel do follow along a feminist path in several ways, for example, Emma wishes to live her life solely on her own terms. For Emma, this means never to marry and instead to focus on family, friends, and her own happiness. Despite the desire for freedom, Emma fall under the influence of male character.

In the feminist readings of *Emma* however, it is important to consider the role of male domination in the novel to get a more complete idea, the character of Emma. Mr. Knightley has a positive or negative influence in Emma's life. The relationship between Mr. Knightley and Emma shows that Mr. Knightley dominating over Emma and stifling her lively spirit. Moffat writes, "One doesn't have to be a feminist to resent *Emma's* ending. ... Knightley's suitability as a lover is an open question throughout *Emma*, and his sudden shift from mentor to lover is itself a comic turn" (53). Theresa Kenney, view Mr. Knightley in a more positive light. Kenney states that Mr. Knightley helps Emma mature, he changes into a better man, and the resulting marriage will benefit both *Emma*, whether or not Emma needs to grow and change is irrelevant. More importantly, Mr. Knightley takes advantage of the influence he has in Emma's life in order to mold her into a more desirable wife for himself.

Mr. Knightley acts controlling figure, it is important to take the idea further to find exactly where and how he exert his control. This will allows for a clearer picture of the romantic relationships. If rhetorical analysis of dialogue between Emma and Mr. Knightley is conducted in order to pinpoint exact moments of domination. Along with highlighting specific moments of control, I'll connect these moments of domination to find patterns of control in the male characters' language. In Mr. Knightley's language, for instances when he speaks for Emma, expressing his own thoughts as hers, when he uses silence to abruptly end conversations, and when he dismisses what she says.

The reactions to the dominating language are just as important to analyze the ways Emma responds to the control through language.

The conversations in the novel, one finds dialogue figures so prominent in *Emma*. Jane Austen's novels are known for their witty dialogue and word play, and *Emma* is no exception as the relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley develops through conversation. Austen's reputation for engaging dialogue, scholar like June Sturrock, Janine Barchas, and Phyllis Ferguson Bottomer, analyze the speech of characters such as Miss Bates, Mr. Woodhouse, Mrs. Elton, and Emma. Sturrock posits, "*Emma*, more than any other of Austen's novels, emphasizes the significance of speech, not only through its brilliant dialogue, but also through an intense consciousness of speech habits and their implications" (54). Considering the importance of language in the novel, one finds the way Mr. Knightley speaks to Emma, her responses, and how their exchanges lead to their marriage. In *Emma* the focus on speech of Mr. Woodhouse and Miss Bates because their speech habits are so unusual. The speech in *Emma* from the perspective of a speech language pathologist and

applies modern ideas to each individual's unique patterns of speech, and silence in conversations among members of Highbury society. The importance of dialogue in *Emma* is reflected in the attention paid to speech patterns of the novel.

Emma follow a nineteenth-century pattern of marriage as a major theme in fiction. Versions of the marriage plot appear in all of Austen's novels, Kathy Alexis Psomiades simply writes, "Marriage is the material of nineteenth-century British fiction" (53). *Emma* contains themes such as growth, independence, and a woman's place in the world, each novel transitions into a story of courtship and ends with a marriage. The intense focus on marriage in nineteenth-century fiction aligns with the importance placed on it during the time period. Marriage was a huge part of nineteenth-century women's lives. Married women had few rights in terms of property ownership, money, and even their own children, a husband was legally obligated to provide for his wife (Perkin 19). For many women, especially those without wealth, marriage was a way to ensure financial stability for life.

Both single and married working-class women often earned money during the nineteenth century, performing such tasks as manual labor in factories and on farms and domestic work in homes (Steinbach 9). However, working for a living was viewed as a last resort for middle- and upper-class women (Poovey 45). In Austen's times women to support themselves, many turned to marriage as a necessity. However, the focus on marriage for many nineteenth-century women had to do with more than financial security.

Societal pressure and romantic love also pushed nineteenth-century women toward marriage. For example, even most wealthy and aristocratic women spent most of their lives as wives and mothers (Steinbach 80). For upper-class and aristocratic families, marriage and children were the only way to continue the line and pass on titles and property. Susie Steinbach writes, "Women who were unable to produce healthy live children were considered disappointments to their families" (81). Even women from less wealthy families felt pressure to marry in order to fulfill roles as wives and mothers (Cooper 14). During the nineteenth century, there was a gradual shift toward romantic love as a legitimate reason for marriage. Similar social and religious backgrounds, shared values, and financial security were still important factors in a match; however, love began to factor into the decision (Yalom 176-177).

The traditional marriage plot in *Emma* does not begin until chapter 11, and the novel finally ends with a marriage between Emma and Mr. Knightley in chapter 19. The focus on romantic relationships and marriage in *Emma* on conducting of rhetorical analysis in order to gain more complete picture of the relationships Emma Woodhouse does not actually need to marry. Beautiful, witty, and wealthy, Emma leads a charmed life surrounded by a father and friends who adore her. She rules over her widower father and easily manages her home of Hartfield. Although wealthy women in the nineteenth century often married even though they had no need for financial support, Emma has no desire for marriage. She tells Harriet:

I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry ... 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. (76)

Emma knocks down any reason for marrying, she repeated says "I do not want"

emphasizes just how wonderful a life Emma has everything. Emma explains to Harriet, she has fortune enough to support herself for the rest of her life; thus she need not seek financial gain from marriage. Furthermore, this wealth allows her the luxury of spending her days reading, visiting friends, and walking in the gardens, the perfect employment for an upper-class nineteenth-century woman. As far as love goes, Emma realizes that her relationship with her father is rare, and the entire second half of Emma's statement reflects upon their relationship. First of all Emma explains that in her relationship with her father, she has independence and she is a true mistress of Hartfield. Secondly, she explains that she has love and respect with for father; she is always beloved and important. Emma is in the know that a wonderful life she lives and believes that marriage is not going to give anything more to improve her situation.

It is Emma's close relationship with her father that reveals another reason she does not plan to marry. Mr. Woodhouse detests change and grows nervous at the thought of marriage. He peppers his statements with references to "Poor Isabella" and "Poor Miss Taylor." The two earn the titles simply through the act of marrying, which took them away from Hartfield. Emma could not bear to add to her father's sorrows and become "Poor Emma" by marrying and leaving him. Mr. Woodhouse never speaks of marriage with anything but negative connotations. He says of marriages, "They are silly things, and break up one's family circle grievously" (10). Mr. Woodhouse is Emma's most constant companion, and the way he speaks about marriage must color her views. Mr. Woodhouse uses this passive-aggressive language to exert his control over Emma as he wants to keep her as his companion. Because Emma has no reason she must marry and hears plenty of reasons not to marry from her father, something must push her toward marriage to Mr. Knightley.

Mr. Knightley and Emma have several disagreements and their relationship is defined by verbal debates and bantering, throughout the novel Mr. Knightley and Emma disagree over Harriet's rejection of Robert Martin, Emma's opinion of Jane Fairfax, and Mr. Knightley's dismissal of Frank Churchill. Each argument leaves Emma with seeds of doubt about her own opinion, and by the end of the novel, she has firmly moved over to Mr. Knightley's thinking. Emma's changing opinions throughout the novel demonstrate the intensity of Mr. Knightley's influence in Emma's life. The mutual love between Emma and Mr. Knightley cannot be ignored; however, with the strong role conversation plays in their relationship, the control Mr. Knightley exerts over Emma with his language factors into *Emma* ending with a marriage. Mr. Knightley as a guiding figure in Emma's life, influences Emma by speaking for her and leading her to his side in their disagreements, and the pattern of persuasion he establishes leads to their marriage.

Mr. Knightley's control through language emerges early in the novel as both of them discuss Emma beloved governess's recent marriage. Emma, feels sadness at the loss of a woman who has taken on the role of her mother. Mr. Knightley says of Emma, "But she knows how much the marriage is to Miss Taylor's advantage; she knows how very acceptable it must be at Miss Taylor's time of life to be settled in a house of her own" (8-9). Rather than allowing Emma to express her own feelings, which may or may not be that the marriage really is beneficial to Miss Taylor, Mr. Knightley inserts his own views of the situation, and by using the word "she," presents them as Emma's feelings. Emma is in the room as he speaks, he does not address the remark to her by using the word "you." Mr. Knightley instead, trivializes her presence by speaking about her in the third person even

while she is present. His repetition of the word “knows” does not allow Emma to make her own judgment of the situation. Emma’s opinions are solidly formed without room for wavering. Mr. Knightley also uses this sentence to set up his own personal goal, to marry Emma. Mr. Knightley knows that Emma has no desire to ever marry, so he phrases a positive sentence about marriage as her own view, rather than his own. The very first interaction Mr. Knightley’s confidence that he knows what is best for Emma sets the tone for the development of their relationship.

When Mr. Knightley speaks for Emma here and in later conversations, the interactions follow a pattern Deborah Tannen describes as “a conversation that has mysteriously turned into a lecture” (*You* 125). Tannen links this pattern to domination in a conversation because the conversation moves from an exchange to just one perspective. By speaking for Emma, Mr. Knightley eliminates opportunities for her to express her thoughts. Emma also does not stay silent for long here or in other instances when Mr. Knightley speaks for her, in the moment she loses the chance to engage in an exchange of ideas. After Mr. Knightley’s remarks, the conversation immediately shifts to Emma’s role in the matchmaking. Because of her role in bringing the couple together, Emma obviously approves of the match between Miss Taylor and Mr. Weston; however, Emma does not have an opportunity to express joy or sadness or any other emotion she feels. Instead, Mr. Knightley turns the moment into a brief lecture on Emma’s feelings and reactions.

It is fact that Mr. Knightley’s controlling behavior pushes Emma toward marriage, the match comes about partly out of mutual love. He has loved her for most of his life, and she grows to realize her love for him through the course of the novel. The plot of *Emma* is not as simple as two characters revealing their mutual love and agreeing to marry. Through their conversations and arguments, Mr. Knightley employs techniques to establish himself as the most important figure in Emma’s life. Mr. Knightley’s strong influence in Emma’s life becomes especially obvious by the novel’s end, as Emma backs down from many of her original stances in their previous arguments.

It is Emma’s charmed upbringing and devoted father, Emma’s snobbishness, extends to her views on marriage. Her snobbishness has historical grounding. In a book on nineteenth-century marriages, Joan Perkin writes, “A marriage between partners of very different social rank disrupted social life, and unless the family was exceedingly rich, it cared greatly what other people thought of their alliances” (61). Emma especially sees the importance of similar social backgrounds. She reacts with indignation and embarrassment when Mr. Elton proposes to her because he comes from a slightly lower social class. Emma strongly emphasizes on her family’s history in Highbury, and as a minister and newcomer to the area, Mr. Elton cannot compare with the Woodhouse family in Emma’s eyes. Mr. Elton is rejected by Emma for several reasons but her family’s rank holds special importance to her.

Similar backgrounds in marriage are so important to Emma, that even before she meets Frank Churchill she thinks, “If she *were* to marry, he was the very person to suit her in age, character, and condition” (106). Emma has firmly establishes her criteria for a successful marriage. She does not mention love, although on other occasions she states that she would never marry without love. Though Mr. Knightley has similar social background and close ties to her family, Emma does not consider him as a suitor until the end of the novel because he has thoroughly established himself as a mentor, which does not easily allow for romance. As a mentor, Mr. Knightley is treated with respect and seen as guide

rather than passionate lover, so he has to find another way to move his relationship with Emma into a marriage.

Emma tells Harriet that she will never be a silly old maid like Miss Bates because of her wealth. Emma says, “A single woman of good fortune is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else” (77). These lines shows Emma’s obsession with social class, but it also shows that Emma realizes the power she will have as a wealthy single woman. With money and status, she need not rely on the charity of distant relatives or feel pitied by her friends.

Woman could gains social status through her husband, by marrying. In nineteenth-century women gave up many other rights. Husbands had legal control over almost every aspect of their wives’ lives (Perkin 2-3). For example, everything a woman owned became the legal property of her husband, as married women could not own property until 1870 (Steinbach 80). Through act of marrying, Emma gives Mr. Knightley stronger authority over her than he had already because of family ties. Mr. Knightley has known Emma her entire life. Emma has an obvious affection and respect for him. As a witness to Mr. Woodhouse and Miss Taylor’s indulgences of Emma, Mr. Knightley takes on a different role in her life. Austen writes, “Mr. Knightley, in fact, was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them” (8). These lines projects Emma as a woman who has always been loved and adored by those around her and also shows Mr. Knightley’s role as a mentor in Emma’s life. Her confidence throughout the novel reflects her upbringing as Emma never hesitates to speak her mind or put forth her own opinions. Deborah Cameron writes that historically femininity is linked with silence, especially in public settings (5). Yet under the influence of an indulgent father, Emma thoroughly defies societal conventions and speaks her mind, even in public. In all her arguments with Mr. Knightley, Emma does not follow the traditional female role of bowing down to the man’s authority. During social events like the Box Hill outing and the ball at the Crown, Emma often finds herself at the center of attention because of her engaging conversation. Emma seems to have control during conversations; however, Mr. Knightley subtly guides the conversations to his own advantage.

The arguments about Harriet’s rejection of Robert Martin, Emma’s opinion of Jane Fairfax, and Mr. Knightley’s disapproval of Frank Churchill, Mr. Knightley uses techniques such as speaking for Emma, using silence to end the conversation abruptly, and dismissing Emma’s opinions as worthless. The arguments highlight the different ways Emma and Mr. Knightley judge those around them. Despite Emma’s strict adherence to social classes, her love for Harriet colors her views, so that she truly believes Harriet is too good for Robert Martin and is a perfect companion for herself. Similarly, Emma’s boredom with Jane and her delight in Frank’s playfulness and humor shape her judgment. Emma’s emotional responses influence her judgment, Mr. Knightley makes his judgments based strictly on facts.

In the beginning of novel, Mr. Knightley uses a disagreement with Emma as an attempt to control her actions and her speech. When Mr. Knightley begins to tell Emma the news he has heard about Harriet and Robert Martin, she laughs in his face because she already knows and has encouraged Harriet to reject Robert’s proposal. Emma laughs and jokes as Mr. Knightley remains serious because she holds the power of the situation Emma has knowledge of what has actually occurred and Mr. Knightley remains ignorant. However, the scene soon turns. After laying out his argument for the match, Mr. Knightley says, “Emma, your infatuation about that girl blinds you” (58). In this sentence, Mr. Knightley

knocks down the closest friendship Emma has. By calling the friendship an “infatuation,” he demeans the bond between Emma and Harriet, while the word “blind” implies that Emma’s judgment is so lacking that she should instead turn to Mr. Knightley to interpret situations for her.

Mr. Knightley and Emma exchange quick retorts and for every argument he makes, she has a response of her own. Emma is unable to control her speech, Mr. Knightley seizes control through his own actions and silence. In the middle of the argument, Mr. Knightley says to Emma, “Good morning to you” and Austen describes him “rising and walking off abruptly” (58). When Mr. Knightley’s words cannot persuade Emma, then he uses his silence as an act of domination. Tannen writes that although silence is typically associated with weakness, men often use silence as a way to show power (*Gender* 176). In fact, Mr. Knightley takes control of the situation as he ends the argument without any kind of resolution. Emma remains behind and has no final say.

Although Mr. Knightley’s insults and condescension set off Emma’s temper during the argument, rather than remaining angry, Mr. Knightley’s comments cause Emma to doubt her judgment. At the end of the scene, Austen writes, “Emma remained in a state of vexation too; but there was more indistinctness in the cause of hers than in his” (58). The vexation is more than distress over an argument with a friend. The indistinctness represents the seeds of doubt that maybe her action was wrong. The doubt only emerges under Mr. Knightley’s persistence in asserting his own rightness. Whether Robert and Harriet are a good match is irrelevant. Critic Mary Waldron writes, “The argument is partly based on the ory and partly on their ongoing personal conflict” (225). This statement represents a power struggle as Mr. Knightley attempts to exert his control over Emma’s thoughts and actions. He fails in controlling her in the moment; however, the state of vexation she falls into shows that Mr. Knightley actually has succeeded in causing Emma to doubt herself.

Soon after the disagreement, Mr. Knightley and Emma make up. In defending his position, Mr. Knightley says, “I have still the advantage of you by sixteen years’ experience, and by not being a pretty young woman and a spoiled child” (89). Although the statement clearly points out the teasing nature of their relationship, Mr. Knightley truly does seem to believe that because of his age and gender, he has better judgment than Emma. His advantage in years and calling Emma a “child,” Mr. Knightley reverts to his usual argument that he knows what is best for Emma. He again comment on her gender, insinuating that as a man, he obviously has better judgment. An argument about age and gender should not work on Emma, a woman who stands as a voice of reason for her hypochondriac father. Mr. Knightley has such a strong hold over Emma because of his long-standing role as a mentor in her life that the condescending comment does not offend Emma at all and the two shake hands and make up. Eugene. Emma willingly accepts Mr. Knightley as a voice of reason in her life. But, the peace does not last long, and another disagreement erupts when Mr. Knightley and Emma discuss Jane Fairfax.

Mr. Knightley voices strong support of a friendship between Emma and Jane in order to influence Emma’s choice in friendships. Similarly the discussion of Miss Taylor’s marriage, Mr. Knightley takes the liberty of speaking for Emma when he speaks about Jane he speaks directly to her rather than about her in the third-person. However, Mr. Kinghtley still phrases his own interpretation of the situation as more correct than whatever Emma feels. as he says, “But you will soon overcome all that part of her reserve which ought to be overcome, all that has its foundation in diffidence” (155). Rather than expressing a hope o r

a speculation that Emma will become friends with Jane, his statement shows that once again, he feels he knows the best course for Emma's life. The choice of words like "you will," the sentence rings with Mr. Knightley's confidence in his own views over Emma's views. He could have stated that she "might" or "may" develop a friendship with Jane, but the word "will" shows a deeper level of control. Mr. Knightley completely ignores the open qualities that Emma finds desirable in a friend by assuming that Emma will simply overcome Jane's reserve. Mr. Knightley has the complete confidence that he knows what is best for Emma.

Emma's conversation with Mr. Knightley, asserts her authority by contradicting his hopes and expressing her boredom with Jane. She says of the evening, "I was pleased with my own perseverance in asking questions, and amused to think how little information I obtained" (155). In these words Emma sums up her annoyance with Jane. Emma, who is lively and witty, wants a companion who matches her, not someone as quiet and subdued as Jane. but, this explanation does not satisfy Mr. Knightley, and he simply replies, "I am disappointed" (155)., Mr. Knightley once again uses silence to gain control of the conversation as his terse reply differs from his usual fluent speech. The statement of fatherly disapproval affects Emma so deeply that she moves back from her prior statement and compliments Jane. She says, "She is a sort of elegant creature that one cannot keep one's eyes from" (155). Only three words from Mr. Knightley, Emma softens her previous statements about Jane and finds something in her to compliment.

Remarks by Knightley in the scene contain no ill will as he truly believes Jane would make a good friend for Emma; however, Mr. Knightley's language still has an element of control. Tannen writes, "The effect of dominance is not always the result of an intention to dominate" (*You* 18). Even if Mr. Knightley acts only with the intention to guide Emma into a better friendship, he still uses his persuasive techniques to gain control over Emma's actions, and his persuasion is successful. Emma's small compliment does not yet indicate any large change in Emma's opinion of Jane, it does cause Emma to reconsider her previous judgment. Emma eventually pursues a friendship with Jane, partly because of Mr. Knightley's high opinion of her.

In a conversation, when Emma and Mr. Knightley discuss Frank Churchill, Mr. Knightley takes the dominant role as he ignores her attempts to draw the conversation to an amicable conclusion. Mr. Knightley takes full control of the conversation as he is the one to guide it and determine the ending and in the conversation, Emma first says, " We shall never agree about him" (133). Then, "I will say no more about him. ... We are both prejudiced" (134). These two statements reflect an understanding that the argument will never go anywhere as both have such strong opinions. However, Mr. Knightley ignores her conversational cues and continues with lengthy arguments against Frank. By ignoring Emma's attempts to end the conversation, Mr. Knightley ensures that he has the final say about Frank Churchill because the conversation does not end until he brings it to a close.

Through their argument over Frank also demonstrates how strong an influence Mr. Knightley has over Emma. She feels drawn to Frank long before she ever meets him, and they form a friendship once he finally arrives in Highbury. However, a quick comment from Mr. Knightley casts doubt in Emma's mind. Mr. Knightley writes Frank off as a "trifling, silly fellow (187)." A few days later, Emma muses over that comment and argues with Mr. Knightley in her mind. She thinks, "Wickedness is always wickedness, but folly is not always folly. ... Mr. Knightley, he is *not* a trifling, silly young man" (192). Emma's defensive

musings makes it clear how strong a presence Mr. Knightley's opinions are in her own mind. Austen hints at Mrs. Weston's disapproval of Frank's behavior, it does not touch Emma the way Mr. Knightley's words touch her. His description of Frank stays with Emma and she uses Mr. Knightley's own words in her mind. On other occasions, Mr. Knightley has attached Emma's name to his own words, but on this occasion, Mr. Knightley's words are so solidly lodged in Emma's mind that her own good opinion of Frank begins to disintegrate.

The ongoing argument about Frank Churchill touches on the personal relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley more closely than the previous arguments about Harriet and Jane. Emma develops a flirtatious friendship with Frank, which brings out Mr. Knightley's jealous side., Mr. Knightley does little to hide his loathing for Frank. After Emma and Frank plan a ball together, Mr. Knightley says to Emma, "Pleasure in seeing dancing! – not I, indeed, – I never look at it – I do not know who does" (231). This statement reflects the jealousy Mr. Knightley feels at Emma's growing friendship with Frank. It also shows distaste for an activity that, much like matchmaking, Emma enjoys. Despite Mr. Knightley's statement that he would rather "be at home, looking over William Larkins's week's account," he says he cannot refuse the invitation. The invitation was accepted by Mr. Knightley because staying at home would leave Emma with Frank for the evening.

Another strategy Mr. Knightley uses to control Emma through her speech is dismissing her thoughts and ideas as nothing of importance., Emma frequently defies this societal custom. Mr. Knightley cannot keep Emma silent, and so he attempts to take control by minimizing what she has to say. During the fight over Harriet's dismissal of Robert Martin, Mr. Knightley bursts out, "Nonsense, arrant nonsense, as ever was talked" (57). By calling her argument "nonsense," he dismisses it as nothing of worth or value. His anger, although a result of the heat of the argument, reflects his outrage at his inability to make Emma see her wrongness. In this way, the discussions about Miss Taylor's marriage and Jane Fairfax's visit, Mr. Knightley dismisses whatever Emma has to say as he voices his opinions as her own and ignores her side of the argument.

The arguments between Emma and Mr. Knightley culminate after an outing at Box Hill when Mr. Knightley scolds Emma because of her speech. Bored and encouraged by Frank, Emma insults Miss Bates during a word game. Emma and other characters find Miss Bates wearisome and dull, but until this point, Emma has always treated her with respect and kindness. After witnessing Emma's behavior, Mr. Knightley pulls her aside. He says, "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?" (340). Emma is scolded by Mr. Knightley like a father-figure, and his repetition of the phrase "how could you" shows disbelief at her behavior. He spoke with a sense of authority over Emma as he said he cannot let her behavior go without notice.

Although Mr. Knightley's anger surfaces because of Emma's insult to Miss Bates, his statement reflects unhappiness at Emma's behavior during the entire day. Emma spends the day flirting with Frank and offering witty remarks during the word games and conversations. Susan Rogers argues that even though Emma realizes she does not love Frank, she continues her flirtation because of the attention she gets from Highbury society. She finds herself the center of attention during the outing to Box Hill as she laughs and banters with the group assembled, and her behavior makes Mr. Knightley uncomfortable. Cameron writes, "Speaking out in public is persistently represented as something that both unsexes and de-classes women" (15). Mr. Knightley loves an open temper and enjoys his

verbal debates with Emma, her behavior during the Box Hill outing, including her public speech, taints her in his eyes. Mr Knightley's response is as of a mentor rather than of a suitor as he seeks to regulate Emma's behavior.

In response to Mr. Knightley's scolding, Austen writes of Emma, "Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved, at any circumstance in her life" (341). The sentence clearly fully sums up the influence Mr. Knightley has achieved over her in the range of negative emotions Austen lists. After previous arguments with Mr. Knightley, Emma leaves feeling "vexed" or "confused." Now that he has explicitly stated his unhappiness with her behavior, Emma's unhappy emotions intensify as she feels "agitated," "mortified," and "grieved." With the word "never," Emma describes the incident as the event in her life that touches her most deeply. The intensity of Emma's shame over her remark shows the power of Mr. Knightley's words.

Because of her good upbringing and social awareness, Emma must realize that her comment toward Miss Bates was cruel, and it does not fit her usual behavior. But, the negative feelings do not emerge until after Mr. Knightley's scolding. Following Emma's remark, the guests move quickly past it and return to the game. Austen describes the party for several more pages, and Emma gives no indication of embarrassment or regret. She even laughs with Frank Churchill and jokes about finding him a wife. However, once Mr. Knightley pulls Emma aside to discuss her remark, Emma feels so ashamed she becomes almost physically ill. Austen writes, "She had not been able to speak; and, on entering the carriage, sunk back for a moment overcome" (341). Emma's realization that she has truly disappointed Mr. Knightley seems to weigh as heavily on her as the insult to Miss Bates. After feeling Mr. Knightley's disappointment, Emma vows to make changes in her life.

The Box Hill incident marks a turning point in Emma's life and in the novel. The very night she arrives home, Emma spends the evening playing backgammon with her father simply because she knows it will make him happy. Austen writes, "There, indeed, lay real pleasure, for there she was giving up the sweetest hours of the twenty-four to his comfort" (342). Emma's earlier actions reflect a deep love for her father and concern for his well-being, she also often seems to defy societal norms for nineteenth-century women as she strongly voices her own opinions, takes charge of the household, and has no desire to marry. This statement reflects a more traditional woman, acting selflessly for the comfort of a father or husband. Emma continues down her new path the day after the Box Hill outing as she pays a visit to the Bates family, vowing to begin "a regular, equal, kindly intercourse" (342). Emma's new behavior evokes Virginia Woolf's Angel in the House, a woman intensely unselfish, sympathetic, and fully devoted to the needs of others (141). Mr. Knightley's scolding pushes Emma toward this more traditional pattern of behavior.

As Mr. Knightley and Emma realize their mutual love, Mr. Knightley faces the reality that he has acted too much like a mentor in her life. He says, "I have blamed you, and lectured you, and you have borne it as no other woman in England would have borne it" (389). When he realized of his own faults shows a shift in his character. He says that he loved Emma since she was 13, and Austen hints at Mr. Knightley feelings from the beginning of the novel. He has frequently acted as a teacher rather than a suitor. When Mr. Knightley fears that Emma loves Frank, he realizes that he may have lost her because of his arrogance. Kenney writes, "He is humbled by his realization of his dependence on Emma for all his happiness and by his recognition of his earlier arrogance toward her" (118). Mr. Knightley had fear that he may lose Emma, he gains an awareness of his past wrongness

toward her.

However, even though Mr. Knightley realizes he has not behaved fairly toward Emma, Emma takes a different view of their history. She thinks, “She had often been negligent or perverse, slighting his advice, or even willfully opposing him, insensible of half his merits, and quarrelling with him” (376). The relationship between both of them develops through their verbal debates, Emma reflects on her behavior in these conversations in a negative light. Her word choices of “opposing” and “quarrelling” show Emma conforming to a traditional female role as she suggests that she should have acted more obediently toward Mr. Knightley by agreeing with his opinions and following his suggestions. Her sentence also reflects on the role of speech in their relationship as Emma thinks that she should have listened more rather than arguing with him. Emma’s self-reflection on the relationship shows her transformation into a more traditional wifely figure.

The new side of Emma is shown during Mr. Knightley’s marriage proposal. Mr. Knightley proposes but Austen does not allow her readers to hear Emma’s actual response. Austen writes, “She spoke then, on being so entreated. What did she say? Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does”(390). Although *Emma* is known for its witty conversations, Austen chooses to eliminate Emma’s dialogue in this key moment. Instead, the narrator gives the response for Emma. Along with masking Emma’s response, the idea that Emma replies to the proposal by saying just what she ought to further shows the change in her. In the first part of the novel, Emma rarely says just what she should. Instead, she speaks out at will, but this reply to Mr. Knightley’s marriage proposal shows a new side to Emma.

With Emma’s changing behavior, her old arguments with Mr. Knightley disintegrate, again representing the influence he has over her. Emma casually dismisses everything she was previously so sure about. Furthermore, by calling herself a fool, Emma paints her past self as a frivolous person lacking in judgment, which aligns with Mr. Knightley’s dismissal of many of Emma’s statements. Emma also changes in the way she views Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax. In all three instances, Emma moves toward Mr. Knightley’s way of thinking.

If these disagreements are noted and examined, Mr. Knightley appears to be the rational one. For example, Harriet and Robert truly are a good match and Emma grows to enjoy Jane’s company. Waldron writes of the disagreement over Robert Martin’s proposal to Harriet, “We cannot but feel in double harness with him [Mr. Knightley], for we too feel wiser than Emma and are, moreover, in on the secret of her delusions about Mr. Elton” (223). All these arguments discussed already go deeper than the surface issues. The arguments represent opportunities for Mr. Knightley to exert his control over Emma with his language. He never fully controls her during the actual arguments, but Emma eventually moves to his way of thinking in each instance. Goodheart writes that a marriage with Mr. Knightley cannot thrive unless Emma speaks her mind and loudly asserts her own opinions. Earlier in the novel, Emma outgrows her willful nature, which may not be the best outcome for Emma. Whatever the desired outcome, Emma realizes her love for Mr. Knightley during her transformation period. In the novel Mr. Knightley has a positive influence over Emma so that she changes into a better, more mature woman under his guidance. Emma herself says she acted foolishly by encouraging Harriet to reject Robert Martin’s proposal. After realizing her love for Mr. Knightley, Emma appreciates that he had “watched over her from a girl, with an endeavor to improve her, and an anxiety for her doing right” (376). This

statement once again establishes Mr. Knightley as a mentor in Emma's life rather than a suitor. The word "improve" reflects upon his behavior during their arguments. To "improve" something, there must be an element of control. In each of their arguments, Mr. Knightley grows frustrated in his inability to persuade Emma to his way of thinking. Even if Emma needed to grow and change, the issue remains that Mr. Knightley uses the influence he has over Emma to his own advantage. He freely admits that he has loved Emma since she was 13, and so he uses his role as a mentor in her life to shape her into his idea of a desirable wife. Emma has have a strong desire to live life on her own terms, she wishes to be treated fairly and as individual, and her character fall under the influence of an older man. The novel follow similar structure with a focus on the character maturation and end with a marriage.

Emma and Mr. Knightley are of the same social class, Emma speaks her mind and argues with Mr. Knightley on all sorts of matters. According to social customs, Emma should not speak so freely because of her gender. However, Emma does not follow social conventions of letting a man guide the conversation, and because of their equality in social class, they have a freer exchange of ideas. For instance, when Mr. Knightley argues that Harriet should have accepted Robert Martin, Emma obviously disagrees and voices her opinions in response to Mr. Knightley's statements. Similarly, during a conversation about Frank Churchill, Emma eagerly proclaims her delight with him despite Mr. Knightley's disapproval.

Social class issues are important to consider when analyzing relationship because social class, along with gender, creates automatic power differences. Emma and Mr. Knightley come into the relationship on an equal level as far as social class. Despite this, Mr. Knightley manages to establish influence over Emma and modifies her behavior through his language. Taking social class, gender, and other factors into account creates an awareness of domination within their relationships, and using rhetorical analysis of conversations highlights exactly where and how the domination occurs. In *Emma* highlighting the control Mr. Knightley exert through his language is important because the novel hold so much appeal to readers and stand as example of strong, female character. Novel's narration and close focus on *Emma*, the text encourage readers to strongly identify with the main character. The close narration also allows for feminist readings of the text. Emma do stand as strong, female character at different moments in the novel.

Emma often stands up for herself and her place in the world. In the beginning of the novel, as Emma explains why she never wants to marry, she speaks about the independent life she will lead, which is extremely unusual for the time period. Despite of moments of independence, the heroine is control by male characters in the novel cannot be ignored. Understanding how and when the male suitor in *Emma* use language to gain control and influence over the female heroine allows for more complete readings of the novel. The feminist readings and moments in the novel can still be appreciated and admired. However, a better understanding of the relationships at the center of the novel allows readers to look beyond a romanticized view of the marriages.

Jane Austen's *Emma* may be considered feminist, as the independent and erudite Emma somewhat defies social expectations of a woman living in the nineteenth century. Aspects of feminism, the advocacy of women's rights and aspiration to equality with men, are made evident as Austen endeavours to dissolve the archetype that inhibits a woman's claim to an equal footing in society with the opposite sex. The protagonist Emma

Woodhouse is a strong character possessing a fortunate lifestyle with the luxury of independence. Emma is however a woman of both faults and virtues, such that in juxtaposition with particularly one-dimensional women, of whom Austen sets up to be pitied and belittled, she comes across as a rather feminist figure. The decision to either accept or refuse a marriage proposal is an empowerment of which Emma is fully aware, and so the concept of a woman's rights in regards to matrimony are also put to question throughout the novel. This coupled with Emma's tenacious determination to be the superior of all her acquaintance, including men, evince the want of equality between sexes which make Emma a classic example of feminist literature.

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