



كلية : الاداب

القسم او الفرع : اللغة الانكليزية

المرحلة: الثانية

أستاذ المادة : أم ياسر مطلب عبد الله

اسم المادة باللغة العربية : ايما

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية : *Emma*

اسم المحاضرة التاسعة باللغة العربية: **اهم افكار رواية جين اوست (ايما)**

اسم المحاضرة التاسعة باللغة الإنكليزية : characteristics and themes of Jane

Austen's *Emma*

## **SETTING**

Highbury, a prosperous village, almost a small town, sixteen miles away from London provides the physical setting. Nevertheless, Jane Austen is interested in the human setting more than the physical setting. She, therefore, highlights the social world of Highbury, which is hierarchical. Property determines rank in Highbury society; therefore, the estates of the country gentry provide the social setting. The Churchills of Enscombe in Yorkshire are at the top of this social hierarchy. Among the country gentry of Highbury, the Woodhouses of Hartfield are the most important, followed by the Knightleys of Donwell Abbey and the Westons of Randalls. The merchants, also called the newly rich, are represented by the Coles in Highbury. Next on the social scale are persons of different professions, like Mr. Elton, the clergyman, Mr. Perry, the apothecary, Mrs. Goddard, the owner and school mistress of the boarding school, and Miss Taylor, the governess.

Though Highbury is the center of activity, in reality the homes of the landowners are where the action takes place. Only a few incidents occur in the outdoors, and only a few other places, such as London and Bath, are mentioned in the course of the novel.

## **THEMES**

The major theme of the novel is the folly of arrogance and self-deception, as portrayed in Emma. She foolishly thinks that she is better than most people and is capable of managing the lives of others, such as Harriet Smith and Clergyman Elton. She also deludes herself, believing that Frank Churchill is in love with her. It is this self-deception that causes her to behave in a ridiculous manner with Frank during the Box Hill picnic. Fortunately, through the guidance of Knightley, Emma leaves her self-delusion behind.

Marriage is an important theme that runs throughout the novel. Emma begins with the marriage of Miss Taylor to Mr. Weston, which Emma has helped to arrange. Then Emma makes efforts to marry Harriet Smith and Elton; but he chooses to marry Augusta. The novel ends with three more unions, showing different social, economic, and psychological bases of marriage. Jane Fairfax, who has no financial means since she is an orphan, seeks to marry someone wealthy and chooses Frank Churchill, in spite of

his selfish and arrogant ways. Harriet Smith, the illegitimate daughter of a tradesman, has a large dowry to offer her husband, but is happy to marry Robert Martin, a tenant farmer and believes she will elevate her social rank as a result. Emma's marriage to Knightley is the most suitable, for both belong to the same social class, the landed gentry. Unlike Jane or Harriet, Emma does not seek economic security or social elevation through Knightley. Instead, her marriage is based on emotional needs, mutual respect, and love. Jane Austen indicates that Emma's marriage to Knightley will bring happiness to both of them.

Marriage was very important to a woman in the English society of the eighteenth century. Since she had no chance of a real career, she was dependent upon a husband for support. If an appropriate one was not found, the young lady could be forced into a lifetime of demeaning work, such as being a governess, the job that Jane Fairfax refused to accept. That an unmarried woman was an object of pity is made evident from the life style of Miss Bates. Because females were so dependent upon marriage, they often stayed in uncomfortable relationships. The marriage of Emma's elder sister Isabella to John Knightley, the lawyer, shows that the husband and the wife do not love, but only tolerate, each other.

Another minor theme is the stiltedness of the English society in the eighteenth century. In the countryside, the English society had not been influenced by industrialization, and the landed gentry were still dominant. The society was highly stylized and hierarchical, as reflected in Highbury. The Churchills are shown as the great landowners and, therefore, socially at the top. The Woodhouses, the Knightleys, and the Westons are also important members of the landed gentry. The Coles, a merchant family, seeks entry into this formalized society, hoping to elevate their status on the basis of wealth.

There is a very strict set of rules amongst the upper class in this eighteenth century society, with an emphasis upon proper etiquette and social graces. People are to be addressed formally; when Mrs. Elton addresses Miss Jane as Jane or Mr. Knightley as Knightley or her husband as Mr. E or caro sposo, she reveals her inelegance in manners, something which this society frowns upon. The visits to each other's houses are never casual, but always formal and only by invitation. Even though the landed families participate in acts of charity to the poor, there is a general condescension to the lower classes. Miss Bates receives pieces of cakes and meat from the Woodhouses and apples from Mr. Knightley, and Emma visits the colony of the poor in order to fulfill the charitable expectations placed on the upper

class. The people of the middle class, such as clergyman Elton, Doctor Perry, and the school mistress Mrs. Goddard, are tolerated and sometimes permitted to visit the houses of the landowners, but they are never really made to feel a part of this society.

Austen criticizes this stilted upper-class society for its emphasis on manners over human considerations. She clearly shows in the novel that snobbery of the rich needs to be controlled by regard for others and self-knowledge. This is especially shown through her protagonist, Emma. Fortunately, Knightley teaches Emma to value others, and, in the course of the novel, she rises above her foolish self-delusion to become a more moral and less petty human being.