

The Concept of Marriage in Jane Austen's Emma and Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre: A Comparative Study

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Abstract:

This article is organized into two main sections. The first section offers a comparative analysis of the protagonists Emma and Jane as two symbols from the Victorian era. The second explores the central themes of both novels. To support the discussion, several feminist quotations are included, emphasizing the importance of women advocating for themselves. In Emma, I explained the meaning of desire in marriage and the necessity of love. I answered the question that many social researchers ask. Why do women refuse the marriage offer from men? The reasons highlighted include unromantic proposals, a lack of genuine love or emotional connection, and apprehension about men's commitment. Regarding Jane Eyre, I discussed how Jane's social status is unequal when Mr Rochester asks her to marry him. Concerning the effect of religion on Jane's marriage, I showed that Jane has successfully balanced her soul and heart. The prohibition on divorce during that period impeded the process of remarriage to another woman. Despite the madness of Bertha Mason, Mr. Rochester could not divorce her. In this part, I mentioned the law change through the parliament. Additionally, I focused on the fact that Jane's inheritance following her uncle's death enabled her to deal with Mr. Rochester as an independent lady. In conclusion, I addressed the advantages of women's economic autonomy.

Keywords: unromantic proposal, commitment, social status, prohibition, impeded, autonomy.

1- Introduction

Marriage in *Emma* and *Jane Eyre* was used as a platform for feminist movements to fight against the oppression of patriarchal society. The objective of writing these two novels was to change women's social, religious, and economic status in the nineteenth century. Jane Austen (1775– 1817) and Charlotte Brontë (1816– 1855) were candles that lit the road to many feminist movements. They occupied great significance in the literary history of the Victorian era and women's literature worldwide. They were considered at that period as the first novelists who created the novel genre in the nineteenth century. Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë were among the first English women writers who deconstructed the old idea that women could not write novels, poems, or any literary work. Jane Austen declared that “Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs too, so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their

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hands. I will not allow books to prove anything” Austen, 2009, p.171). On the other hand, Gordon (1995) reported in his book *Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life* that Brontë was shocked by a bizarre reply from Robert Southey when she sent him her poems for evaluation and correction. He said that literature was not her business, and she could not be a writer; she had other duties and was not asked to write; even if she wanted to in her free time, she would be less enthusiastic about fame.

In their writings, Austen and Brontë struggled for women’s identity and equality with men. They did not accept the gender roles given by men. Furthermore, they lived in a patriarchal society. Women were only hidden daughters and sisters or blind, obedient wives. In the Victorian Era, women could only gain recognition through marriage. They were no more than a housewife. This means having a title under a husband’s name, Mrs., Madame. Marriage is a repeated theme in the novels of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë. They believed that men dominated women. Even in marriage, they were considered objects. They had no right to choose their partners or refuse the engagement of any man their families preferred. In other words, it was a traditional marriage legalized by the church.

This paper explores the concept of marriage during the Victorian Era by conducting a comparative analysis of Jane Austen's *Emma* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. The first section examines the similarities and differences between the two protagonists, Emma and Jane. On the other hand, the second part contains the three themes of *Emma*: (1)–Marriage without desire, (2)– Marriage without love, and (3)– The woman’s rejection of marriage proposals. The last part is about the three themes of *Jane Eyre*: 1– The role of social status in marriage, 2–Religion, and marriage. 3– Economic autonomy and marriage.

2. A comparison between Emma and Jane

Jane Austen introduced Emma Woodhouse as a “handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition” (Austen, 2004, p.2). Emma enjoys a privileged life with her affectionate father, surrounded by security and social status. Her story is marked by her involvement in matchmaking, using her intelligence and resources to orchestrate marriages for those around her, all while remaining comfortably situated within her social sphere.

In contrast, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* is depicted as a ten-year-old orphan, poor and alone, living under the harsh care of her aunt, Sarah Reed. Jane’s childhood is marred by neglect and cruelty from her relatives, shaping her into a resilient and principled young woman. She later attends Lowood School for Orphans, where she

receives a solid education and eventually becomes a governess. Mr. Rochester, her employer, describes her as “an invaluable companion to me and a kind and careful teacher to Adèle” (Brontë, 1847, p.127).

While Emma’s life is defined by comfort and her role as a matchmaker for others, her romantic journey is conventional; she ultimately marries within her social class. Jane Eyre’s path to love is far more tumultuous. Although Mr. Rochester proposes to her, Jane initially refuses due to her strong moral values and sense of independence. It is only after Rochester loses his estate and sight that Jane agrees to marry him, choosing love on her terms rather than out of necessity or social expectation.

Emma and Jane represent two very different heroines: Emma, affluent and meddlesome, finds fulfilment within the constraints of her social world, whereas Jane, shaped by adversity, asserts her independence and moral integrity, ultimately paving her way to happiness.

3. Marriage in *Emma* (1815)

Austen provoked many critical questions concerning marriage by implying her ideas about relationships between men and women. According to Faye (2004), Austen sent a letter to one of her relatives Fanny Knight, she advised her, “Anything is to be preferred and endured rather than marrying without affection...Nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound to one without love and preferring another” (p. 219). Austen had never married in her entire life. In 1802, when she was 27 years old, she accepted an offer of marriage from a family friend. He was five years younger than her. And then she annulled her acceptance the next day. She might have viewed marriage as a fast step toward the grave. The purpose of discussing her refusal to be a housewife is to understand clearly the marriage in her novel, *Emma*.

Austen sent many messages to feminist activists through her heroine Emma. Emma is a young woman who believes women are known for their relationships with men. Without this, they are anonymous. She struggles against Victorian society. In addition, she pledges to stay single for fear of losing her freedom. However, at the novel’s end, she decides to marry Mr. Knightley. Ironically, she finds herself following the rules of society that she was against before. During the whole novel, she plays the role of a marriage broker. Further, she wonders about the relationship between couples and how marriage could succeed without desire and love. She also tries to say to a man: Do not be astonished if a woman refuses to accept your offer of marriage. These three points (DESIRE, LOVE, and REFUSAL) are analyzed through quotes from the novel.

3.1. Marriage without desire

Marriage is a link between two human beings: a man and a woman. They are attracted to each other by a sexual desire, in other words, sexual arousal that builds love and passion. Desire is a key to pleasing oneself and the partner. According to Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), “... [Desire] is produced in the margin which exists between the demand for the satisfaction of need and the demand for love” (Miller, 2017, p.418). In the case of Emma, she has no desire to marry. She mentioned her reasons in this passage.

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, 2004, p.155)

The first reason is that Emma is not as motivated as other women to engage in marriage. Maybe she has a lack of sexual desire, or she has different inclinations. Austen wanted to send this message to show that some women do not feel any sexual desire toward men. It does not mean they have no love or passion for others except the man. These kinds of women may be LESBIANS. Their inclination was considered unusual in the society of that era. To better understand the topic of lesbianism, it is necessary to have an overall consciousness of the definitions used in literature. Lesbianism and Homosexuality are two terms used interchangeably. They have the same meaning. Lesbianism is a “romantic or sexual attraction between women” (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, 2021). According to Emulf et al. (1989), lesbianism is not concerned only the sexual behaviour but consists of romantic affection for a person of the same sex, even without genital contact.

The second reason is that Emma has never experienced love with a man because she firmly believes it is not her habit or nature to have relationships with the other sex. This means she is an AROMANTIC girl with “... little or no romantic feeling toward others: experiencing little or no romantic desire or attraction” (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, 2022).

3.2. Marriage without love

Love in marriage is as essential as air itself; without it, lovers cannot truly breathe. True love goes beyond mere fondness; it is a profound connection uniting two people under one roof. For a marriage to thrive, both partners must share genuine affection. No marriage can succeed if the woman does not feel love for her partner. Austen famously depicted the bleakness of marriages entered without mutual consent, highlighting the tragedy that can result from such unions.

The first error, and the worst, lay at her door. It was foolish, it was wrong to take so active a part in bringing any two people together. It was adventuring too far, assuming too much, making light of what ought to be serious trick of what ought to be simple. She was quite concerned and ashamed and resolved to do such things no more. (Austen, 2004, p.180)

Marriage differs from one girl to another; some are passive, and others are active. The passive girl is when "she is married, given in marriage by her parents." (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 478). This is what is called an arranged marriage between families. The girl's role in this traditional marriage is to accept without complaining or refusing. This is the worst decision taken by parents. They bury their daughters alive for money and prestige. Sometimes family members or relatives intervene and push her to marry Mr. X. It is the exact role of Emma when she links between couples. She admitted that it is a significant error to mediate the marriage of two people without prior acquaintance. The active girl is when she chooses her partner freely and consciously. Before marriage, there is a sensitive period called engagement. It is enough for the couples to understand each other before proceeding toward the wedding or cutting the relationship and looking for another partner.

Furthermore, the relationship between husband and wife is based on love. This love must be reciprocal. Fatal mistakes destroy marriage when a man looks at a woman as an object, such as a puppet for fun and a dump for his sexual desire. In addition, Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986) depicted the image of a woman in the eyes of men: "She has to be a simple animated object in man's kingdom; she can never be envisaged as subject; her point of view can never be taken into account." (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 248). This view kills the affection of a woman toward a man. As all poems describe, a woman is a torrent of emotions and feelings. The man should benefit from them or die alone. Virginia Woolf (1882– 1941) portrayed the prettiness of a woman and how she could beautify her entourage. "[...] I often consider myself as a figure in a foggy painting [...]" An emotion or a mood, a mere wisp of colour, is shaded off and made to spread until it

becomes one with all that surrounds it.” (A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals, 1897–1909).

3.3. The woman’s rejection of marriage proposals

Engagement and marriage were central themes in Victorian literature. Rejecting a marriage proposal from a man was a strange and unacceptable act. During that period, many feminist writers, such as George Eliot, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and Josephine Butler, created heroines to fight against male dominance. In this novel, the heroine, Emma, tries to illustrate the man's reaction when a woman rejects his proposal. The following passage depicts the man's situation. “Oh, to be sure,” cried Emma, “it is always incomprehensible to a man that a woman should ever refuse an offer of marriage. A man always imagines a woman to be ready for anybody who asks her.” (Austen, 2004, p.135). In a man’s mind, a woman should never reject his proposal for marriage because she is programmed to accept all men's offers. The question that Social-Psychological scholars answer is: Why does a woman refuse a man’s engagement? There are many reasons for denying the request. Among them: 1– Unromantic proposal. 2– Lack of love and emotion toward that man. 3– Fear of man’s commitment.

The first reason is poor wording. Sometimes a man loses his sense of direction and forgets or does not use the right words, particularly words of flirtation and romance. According to Parkin (2012), women feel passionate and romantic when a man kneels and presents her with a ring to propose marriage. Moreover, women need to see actions and hear inspiring words. However, some negative behaviours can push them away. To receive a YES, a man is expected to take positive steps. First, ensure she has feelings for you. Contact her parents to seek their approval. Tell her in a romantic setting, "I LOVE YOU." You will get a big 'NO' if you skip these steps. That word 'NO', a short answer with two letters, could hurt you. In short, women want a partner who approaches romance with creativity and flair.

The second reason for saying ‘NO’ is that the girl has no love for this man. She may love someone else or have no one in her heart. The man requesting her hand must be patient. Although a woman’s heart is not immediately open to anyone who asks, as Emma said, there are psychological methods to win her heart. Elliot (2008) confirms that people tend to seek motivation by pursuing enjoyable stimuli and avoiding unpleasant ones. To receive a ‘YES,’ the man must read his lover’s heart and mind. The only way to do that is by finding the right keys.

The final reason is that a woman fears her partner's commitment. While she remains single, she is free to manage her life independently. She lives under her father's

care, who supports her despite her mistakes. When considering engagement to a strange man, she contemplates three potential outcomes. The first is when the husband completely controls and manipulates her by fostering relationships with other women. The second is the loss of her freedom. The third is reaching the final stage of divorce. Duffy and Rusbult (1986) observe that women tend to be more committed to their relationships than men, and therefore, they do not accept offers lightly.

4. Marriage in *Jane Eyre* (1847)

Jane Eyre is a romantic story of a beautiful girl who is an orphan. She suffers a lot, moving from house to house, from one country to another. To begin with, she grew up with her uncle's wife in her uncle's home. They send her to a boarding school to get an education far from her. After finishing her studies, she became a teacher. Jane teaches a girl in a chateau owned by Mr. Rochester. Jane falls in love with the mansion's owner, and he shares the same affection. The real story starts from this station of her life, the time of love and marriage.

Jane is the heroine of Charlotte Brontë. Brontë invented this personality to defend women's rights. Thanks to this novel, she became famous around the globe. On the other hand, Jane is considered a symbol for many feminist movements in the Western world. Thousands of studies have been conducted to discuss many aspects and themes of the story, particularly the marriage theme.

4.1. The role of social status in marriage

The Victorian Era was based on stratification. Families were living in a rigid order. The minority of wealthy people had their status. The relationship between them and the poor class was like the relationship between master and servant. Jane's class status was among the poor. Her father was a poor pastor, and her mother was from the middle class. They married despite their social background. It was considered unacceptable at that time. After the death of her parents, Jane suffers a lot. She challenges herself and overcomes all obstacles; she becomes a teacher. It rarely happened during the Victorian Era. She could form relationships with wealthy families thanks to her education and job. Her first contact is with Mr. Rochester in his chateau while teaching the French girl Adèle. She falls in love with her master. He, too, shares the same feeling with her. The difference in their social status broke their passion. The following quote in the novel *Jane Eyre* needs to be analyzed.

Do you think because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! I have as much soul as you, and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made

it as hard for you to leave me as it is now for me to leave you. (Brontë, 1847, pp.258, 259)

In this passage, Brontë, through Jane, aims to convey a clear message to aristocratic families that the poor are just like any other humans; they have cheerful souls and hearts. They love unconditionally and desire to be loved in return. Loving without conditions means forming a relationship beyond social standing. Love is a profound connection between two souls and hearts. Therefore, the consent of the two families is not necessary in the marriage of two lovers. Rich and poor are equal when it comes to marriage. There is no interest other than love. In other words, it reflects a kind of art of loving that Erich Fromm (1900–1980) described in this passage, “Immature love says: I love you because I need you. Mature love says: I need you because I love you.” (Fromm, 1956, p. 46).

Additionally, Jane reminds Rochester that only God grants wealth and beauty. In this part of the quote, she highlights her positive qualities and her equality with him in love. If he could not leave her, it would be cruel for her to leave him once she became superior. Brontë's message was directed at both men and women. True LOVE, as Beauvoir (1949) explained, is: “The day when it will be possible for the woman to love in her strength and not in her weakness [...], love will become for her as for man the source of life and not a mortal danger.” (p.758). Beauvoir's feminist critique is unequivocal: women must not sacrifice their identity in love or engage in relationships that need their subjugation. Love should empower both partners, particularly women, who have traditionally been deprived of this opportunity, to achieve their full potential as autonomous, self-determining beings.

4.2. Religion and marriage

Brontë portrayed Jane as a good woman who respects her religion and loves God. During the novel, Jane struggles to satisfy her soul, which guards morality, and her body, which needs pleasure. Brontë, through Jane Eyre, wanted to convince her readers at that time that she was a religious woman. She wrote this passage in one of her letters, showing her attachment to her religion. “I know the treasures of the Bible I love and adore them I can see the Well of Life in all its clearness and brightness... I have written like a fool. [...] Come and see me soon, don't think me mad.” (Smith, 1995, p.144). Her surprise to her readers was the novel, *Jane Eyre*. She put all her visions and beliefs into her. Her objective is to defend women's rights by using religion. The novel contains biblical references, such as God, forgiveness, angels, and Satan. In the story, there is a scene in the church where the marriage of Jane and Mr. Rochester is objected to. The passage contains some messages to the religious institution and the parliament. These messages need to be explored and analyzed.

The marriage cannot go on: I declare the existence of an impediment.” The clergyman looked up at the speaker and stood mute; the clerk did the same; Mr. Rochester moved slightly as if an earthquake had rolled under his feet: taking a firmer footing and not turning his head or eyes, he said, “Proceed.” [...] Presently, Mr. Wood said— “I cannot proceed without some investigation into what has been asserted and evidence of its truth or falsehood.” “The ceremony is quite broken off,” subjoined the voice behind us. (Brontë, 1847, p. 295)

According to Perkin (1988), Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act of 1753 mandated that, in England, a marriage was only legally valid if it was performed by a priest and celebrated in a church. Mr. Rochester sought to comply with this law to legitimize his relationship with Jane by marrying her in a church. However, the ceremony took an unexpected turn for Jane when she learned that Rochester was already married to Bertha Mason, a fact that prevented the cleric from declaring them husband and wife.

In early nineteenth-century England, marriage was regarded as a lifelong union that could only be dissolved by death. Divorce was extremely rare and permitted solely on the grounds of a wife's adultery, reflecting the patriarchal nature of the law at that time. The infidelity of husbands was largely overlooked; while it was sometimes acknowledged in parliamentary debates, it was often dismissed as mere profligacy. As Shanley (1993) notes,

"The Law of Marriage and Divorce (1855) observed that to describe a husband's adultery as a little profligate, while making a wife's adultery the grounds for divorce " (p.40). This double standard became a subject of ongoing debate both in parliament and in public discourse. Feminist activists of the period challenged these inequities and advocated for reforms to marriage and divorce laws. Their efforts contributed to the gradual loosening of the church’s control over marriage, paving the way for legal and social changes.

In the case of Mr Rochester, his wife was mad, which means he could not live with her naturally like all couples. The law and the church did not allow him to be released from this dark life. It may be that this is the first message from Brontë to raise the issue of divorce. In Christianity, divorce was limited to one condition, and polygamy was prohibited. What can Rochester do? He falls in love with Jane. She refuses to live with him outside of a legal marriage. Despite her love for him, she leaves him. She sacrifices her passion and her sexual desire. This tragic scene reveals how rigid the conditions of marriage were. Moreover, Brontë wanted to depict the woman's strong character through

Jane's personality. The message transferred to the readers is that women are not less wise and religious than men.

Further, many feminist writers agree with Brontë on the issue of the wrong view of how far a woman is more religious than a man. In her book *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan (1921–2006) discussed the matter among them. “Some religions, including our traditional European religions, have assigned women an inferior role in the religious hierarchy...” (Friedan, 1979, p. 129). Indeed, in the Victorian Era, the struggle was long and hard to correct the situation of women in society. Friedan’s analysis extended beyond religion to critique the broader “feminine mystique”, the ideology that defined women by their selflessness, devotion to family, and fulfilment through housework and motherhood alone. However, she identified religion as a key institution that perpetuated the belief in women’s inferiority, using theological arguments to justify civic inequality and male dominance. In other words, Friedan confirmed that religion served as both an inspiration for and an explanation for the patriarchal social norms and practices that shaped women's sense of identity and encouraged them to keep their heads down.

4.3. Economic Autonomy and Marriage

Brontë wrote *Jane Eyre* a few years after the Industrial Revolution. It was a period when the middle and poor classes were running for work and trade. Among them, many women had begun to create their revenue without the help of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. Step by step, they freed themselves from the male guardianship. In the novel, Jane does the same. She works as a teacher, living independently without any help or charity. When she meets Mr Rochester, she tells him: “I can live alone if self-respect and circumstances require me to do so. I need not sell my soul to buy bliss.” (Brontë, 1847, p.245). That is her first message to Mr. Rochester. After that, Brontë sent another supporting message to women. She played the role of a feminist advocate in the following passage.

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer[...] It is thoughtless to condemn them or laugh at them if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (Brontë, 1847, p.114)

Brontë wanted to show that women have the same feelings as men. They have ambitions to manage their economic life. This encourages them to impose their identity

as responsible women, as Beauvoir (1949) says: “Feeling her importance will help her assume her femininity...” (p.328). A woman's femininity does not mean weakness or dependence on others other than herself. Femininity is a power to the masculinity of a man. Man and woman were created equal to complete each other and not to enslave the weaker side. Women should be autonomous before and after marriage to equilibrate life between the two genders. “A woman must have money and a room of her own” (Woolf, 2007, p.2). So, a woman's identity is based on these two pillars: money and a home. According to Hegel, “A person must translate his freedom into an external sphere to exist as an Idea” (p.41). That is the purpose of standing as an IDEA: to be sovereign of herself. The same as what Jane said: “I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you.” (Brontë, 1847, p. 310). This elevation and self-esteem made her a total freelancing and a powerful woman.

Jane inherits a considerable fortune from her uncle and is now free to live and marry the man she loves as she wishes. In addition, she feels confident in her volition when she says she is preparing to quit him. At that period, no maid dared tell her master: “I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress” (Brontë, 1847, p.529).

In her influential book, *Women and Economics* (1898), Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935) thoughtfully explores the benefits of women's independence. She contrasts the lives of dependent and independent women, arguing that only economically self-sufficient women can truly create healthy and beautiful homes. Furthermore, Gilman contends that an independent woman, through her broader social contributions, “will do better service as a mother than it has been possible to her before” (Gilman, 1898, p. 294).

The traditional view of men regarding women is that they are created to work in the home and serve men. They do not have the right to complain. The household budget is none of their concern. In the minds of some men, a woman's social duty is to manage the house, have sex with their husbands, and raise their children. All women reject these notions; some men are even concerned about this issue. It is important to send this message to those men. Can you imagine, DEAR MAN, if you lived alone at home? You would need to eat out, satisfy your sexual needs, wash your clothes, and clean your house. How much does that cost you? You might put all your salary into her hands and only keep your transportation costs for work. Despite doing this, you cannot satisfy her or give her what she deserves.

Marriage is a strong link and contract between two human beings. A successful marriage is when the couples think of themselves as partners and not masters. No one is higher than another. They have equal responsibility toward their home. Karen Green mentioned the idea of Wollstonecraft about Women's autonomy and equality with

husbands in managing their household affairs. “Marriage should be based on the friendship between equals. Genuine regard for the genuine qualities of one's spouse should found a union between autonomous individuals united in their sense of duty towards their children” (Green, 1995, p. 96).

5. Conclusion

Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë were pioneers in establishing the roots of the women's rights movement through their popular novels, *Emma* and *Jane Eyre*. These works, translated into multiple languages, have reached audiences worldwide and continue to provoke discussions about women's roles in society. In this paper, I have investigated Emma's marriage through three main themes: marriage without desire, marriage without love, and the woman's refusal of marriage. Additionally, I studied Jane's marriage from the perspectives of social standing, religion, and economic autonomy, utilizing feminist quotes to support my claims. Through examining these issues, it becomes obvious that the institution of marriage still needs greater debate and research, especially about the problems that restrict women's advancement and freedom.

Ultimately, this analysis reveals that variations in social status between spouses do not necessarily hinder successful marriages; rather, love remains the important foundation. Across societies, there are innumerable examples of marriages that transcend class lines. Furthermore, religion itself does not oppose women's rights; misinterpretations by individuals have led to the misuse of religious teachings to justify tyranny. God created Adam and Eve for a noble mission on Earth. There is no distinction between them except in piousness and good deeds.

Finally, financial independence appears as an important pillar for women within marriage. An economically independent woman is empowered to be a strong spouse both throughout marriage and in the event of divorce. This autonomy not only enriches the individual but also helps to create a more balanced and equitable collaboration.

In conclusion, the themes explored in *Emma* and *Jane Eyre* highlight the ongoing necessity to reassess and reform the institution of marriage to enhance women's rights, equality, and autonomy within the umbrella of family.

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