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**Pseudo-sisters in *Emma*: The Relationship Between
Emma and Mrs. Weston, Harriet Smith and Jane
Fairfax**

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Abstract

In the context of the late eighteenth-century tradition of female friendship, one of Jane Austen's *Emma*'s central topics are female bonds. In the novel there is a replacement of the main character's absent mother and biological sister by three women in Emma's social circle: Mrs. Weston, Harriet Smith and Jane Fairfax. While the topic of siblings in Austen has been analysed by many critics, there are not many secondary sources addressing the topic of pseudo-siblings in *Emma*. What attracts most critics is the notion of "incest", and the book's connection with other works of the author.

The aim of this project is to explain in what way Emma replaces her maternal and sisterly figures, and how she creates strong bonds with Mrs. Weston, Harriet Smith and Jane Fairfax. With this in mind this project is going to analyse the close relationship between the protagonist and the three mentioned women. The first section will analyse the relationship between Emma and Mrs. Weston; it will explore why Emma's friend and governess can be considered her pseudo-mother and big sister. The second section will refer to the figures of Miss. Smith and Miss. Fairfax, as Emma adopts them as her pseudo-sisters.

Keywords: *Emma*, Emma Woodhouse, Jane Austen, Replacement, Pseudo-Sisters, Female Friendship, Mrs. Weston, Harriet Smith, Jane Fairfax.

0. Introduction

0.1. Social Context

"I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like"

(Austen-Leigh, 2008: 119).

This is what Jane Austen reportedly said about *Emma*, written in 1815. With these words, the author alerts the reader about the protagonist's egoism and spoilt character, which have an influence on her relationships with the people in her social circle. The novel tells the story of Emma Woodhouse, the youngest daughter of Mr. Woodhouse, and her matchmaking abilities. Emma's mother died when she was little; and once her sister Isabella marries and moves out from her native town, Highbury, to London, Emma becomes the person in charge of managing the household. Emma wants to rule over those belonging to her social circle. This is the case of Harriet Smith and Emma's relationship as the latter undertakes the role of her big pseudo-sister and advises her in every step of her courtship. However, Miss Smith is not the only character who is controlled by Emma, Mr. Frank Churchill, Mrs. Weston or Jane Fairfax are other examples. At the end of the story the protagonist, despite having declared throughout that she would not ever marry, becomes engaged with Mr. Knightley, her brother-in-law. In contrast with other Austen novels, except for *Persuasion*, the protagonist belongs to the high class, which means that she does not need to marry in order to maintain her privileges and live within her means. Therefore, marriage is not her culminating purpose in life. Further, through Emma, Austen analyses themes such as class and women relationships during the late eighteenth century.

Emma lives alone with her father from her sister's marriage. She has a strong personality, which is reflected in her relationship with **Harriet Smith**, who is Emma's friend and pseudo-little sister and she is subjected to the protagonist's manipulation. Emma tries to get Harriet a reputable and wealthy husband. However, Harriet will eventually marry Mr. Martin, a tenant farmer who, at the beginning of the novel, asked Miss Smith's hand and was rejected owing to Emma's influence. On the other hand, Mrs Weston is Emma and Isabella's governess until she marries and moves to her husband's household. She lacks the necessary authority to guide Emma:

" (...) Emma is spoiled by being the cleverest of her family. At ten years old, she had the misfortune of being able to answer questions which puzzled her sister at seventeen. She was always quick and assured: Isabella slow and diffident. And ever since she was twelve, Emma has been mistress of the house and of you all. In her mother she lost the only person able to cope with her."

(Austen, 2012: 35)

In this analysis I consider Mrs Weston to be the protagonist's pseudo-older sister and pseudo-mother rather than her governess. The notion of pseudo-sibling and pseudo-mother, which will be used throughout this dissertation, refers to someone who is not biologically related to a person, but has a relationship akin to it. It comes from the psychological branch and it was first used by David P. Barch in his work *Sociobiology and Behavior* (1982). The concept of pseudo-siblings is very important to my TFG. In her article "What strange creatures brothers are!: An Exploration of Sibling and Pseudo-Sibling Relationships in Jane Austen's Novels" (2012) the critic Sarah Danielle Thorton talks about the concept of pseudo-sibling bonds which "seem to have been created when young people either did not have a sibling or when they did not have a close sibling relationship" (Thorton, 2012: 3). She applies this concept to Austen's works and explains that in *Emma*, Harriet can be considered to be the protagonist's pseudo-sister as Isabella moves away to London. My

research takes on this idea, and expands it to consider how the main female characters in Emma's life fulfill either this role or variations of the same.

Emma's childish traits, especially her jealousy, are what leads her to the abuse of **Jane Fairfax**, in whom the main character sees a rival. Miss Fairfax is considered to be the main character's antagonist because she belongs to the same class. Further, also because two men, to whom Emma feels attracted, gave Miss Fairfax more attention than necessary (Mr. Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley). Those are the women who are closer to her and I regard as her pseudo-sisters in my analysis. Therefore, we see that Mrs's Weston belongs to the middle class, Harriet to the middle-lower class and Jane to the high class. Emma, as it has been said, tries to influence and command them; but her motives are different in each case and based on class: "In Emma we may hear echoes of this drill in deportment. For example, Emma presumably provides Harriet's training in etiquette, and Miss Taylor successfully enters Emma's leisure-class society on the strength of her impeccable manners, which partly inspires Emma's experiment with Harriet." (Grossman, 1999: 161). On the other hand, Jane's relationship with Emma is different from the ones mentioned above, because Miss Fairfax is her same class and Emma regards her as a foe and not a friend. Despite Emma's wishes to maintain her independence as a wealthy woman, she ensures that her friends all find good marriages (except for Jane). While at the beginning she is subverting social expectations by not wanting to marry, Emma is the one who upholds the institution of marriage and the idea of women marrying to their advantage, that is, above their class.

Jane Austen (1775-1817) lived during the Regency era, a time when women very often depended on a masculine figure (a father or a brother). According to Anne D. Wallace: "the *de jure* autonomy of unmarried adult women usually disappeared into a *de facto* subjection to father,

or brother, or uncle, a disappearance that, together with the eventual exclusion of unmarried siblings from the industrial family, has made the unmarried sister's autonomy virtually invisible to us." (Wallace, 2018: 13). This statement exemplifies the author's situation, as she did not marry. When her father died, she moved into a cottage which belonged to her eldest brother, Edward Austen Knight, with her mother, sister and good friend, Martha Lloyd. Further, her sister Cassandra Austen was engaged to Thomas Fowle and after his death she received an income. Nevertheless, as she could not be independent and had to be under the responsibility of her closest male figure (brother), Cassandra still had to move with her mother, sister and friend. In her novel *Emma*, Austen explores the opposite situation, although she explored this topic at length in her other works.

As Austen's novels showcase, female relationships in the late eighteenth century were embedded in the cult of female friendship. Deborah Kaplan in her book *Jane Austen Among Women* (1992) talks about the necessity of female closeness in order to "support the domestic feminine identity" (Kaplan, 1992: 64). The idea of one's identity created through a community of women is interesting, because it suggests that a woman could not be separated from her nucleus. In the case of *Emma*, the protagonist has a biological sister, but as she lives in London and her mother died; so, Emma finds in Mrs. Weston her maternal figure. Moreover, Kaplan explains the notion of "women's culture", which could be related with the aforementioned "feminine identity":

Although women generated their culture in reaction to the prevailing patriarchy, like that dominant culture it acquired a life of its own. Women created their private culture on a day-to-day basis and were influenced by it. Banding together, they produced the women's culture and it, in a manner of speaking, produced their friendships.

(Kaplan, 1992: 65)

Female bonds were one of the aspects which connected women with the outside world. Due to the long distances between households in the English countryside, neighbours were far away from each other. It is true that they had carriages, but these means of transportation depended on the weather and the condition of the horses; so, the duration of the journey could be altered. Those female communities support and help each other in times of need; for example, in the case of Austen's novel, Mrs. Weston express to her friend her preoccupation about Mr. Frank Churchill's arrival. It starts with the recent marriage of Miss Taylor, with Mr. Weston, who was introduced to the governess by Emma herself; and all through the novel the protagonist tries to pair her pseudo-sister and friend Harriet Smith with a respectable man. Women who live together learn from one another, sorority creates "women's culture and women's history" (Curran, 2003: 233).

However, the most important pillar in Austen's life was her sister Cassandra. They were inseparable, and this closeness can be appreciated through the letters both sisters wrote when they were apart from each other. Cassandra was Jane's only female sibling and they had been together through their whole lives. When the author dies, her sister feels alone and abandoned:

"I have lost a treasure, such a Sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed, - she was the sun of my live, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow, I had not a thought concealed from her, & it is as if I had lost a part of myself."

(Letters, 513-14)

With this in mind, the aim of this TFG is to examine in what way Emma replaces her absent maternal and sisterly figures with three female characters: Mrs. Weston, Harriet Smith and Jane Fairfax. In order to do that, and through close-reading analysis, I will be examining the different relationships that Emma establishes with the women of her life. In this analysis, I will argue that Mrs. Weston could be considered to be the main character's pseudo-mother and big sister, as her

biological sister is absent in Emma's life; and Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Fairfax are her pseudo-little sisters, and I will explore the implications and ramifications of such ties in their complexity.

0.2. State of the Art

Austen is well-known for her six major novels (*Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*) of which a common object of scholarly attention has been siblinghood relationships. *Emma* has been analysed by many critics for its irony and language (Sturrock, 2013), the protagonist's economic situation, Emma's personality, and for the relationships between family members, particularly their incestuous nature (Hudson, 1992). There are articles and books about sisters in Jane Austen's novels, but there are not many secondary sources which contemplate the topic of pseudo-sisters in *Emma*. Therefore, my research is indebted to these secondary sources, departing from them and filling an identified gap in the extant scholarship. One example is **Glenda A. Hudson** in her book *Sibling Love & Incest in Jane Austen's Fiction* (1992). Apart from analysing *Emma*, Hudson talks about all Austen's novels (*Pride And Prejudice*, *Sense And Sensibility*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*). In all Austen's books there is a bond between siblings: Elizabeth and Jane Bennett, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood or Fanny and William Price. She often compares *Emma* with *Mansfield Park* as siblings appear in both of them. Another critic who writes about relationships in Austen's novel is **Katherine Curtis** in "Sisterhood Articulates A New Definition Of Moral Female Identity: Jane Austen's Adaptation Of The Eighteenth-century Tradition" (2010), which focuses on sisterhood and its stereotypes through writers such as Frances Burney (*Camilla*), or Maria Edgeworth (*Belinda*), who are mentioned in *Northanger Abbey*. The critic also analyses,

particularly, the sisterly relationship in *Mansfield Park* and *Pride and Prejudice*. In the last chapter, Curtis through *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility* writes about "sisterly affection as moral education in Austen." (Curtis, 2010: 85). However, she hardly mentions *Emma* or the concept of pseudo-sisters. Among other aspects, in her book *Jane Austen's Families* (2013) **June Sturrock** focuses on "Family Dynamics" and "Fathers and Daughters". In the first part, related to *Emma*, Sturrock analyses the protagonist's behavior and sees her as a spoilt child (Sturrock, 2013: 38). In fact, she compares Mr. Darcy's behavior to Emma's; both of them have to/must have a better conduct if they do not want to lose their beloved ones (Sturrock, 2013: 39-40). Further, she is assimilating Emma with Maria Bertram, a *Mansfield Park* character due to their similar personality, attractiveness, intelligence and economic situation (Sturrock, 2013: 38-39). Moreover, the critic writes about the relationships between mothers and daughters. In *Emma* and *Persuasion* for example the mothers of the protagonists died when they were little and this fact affects Emma and Anne Elliot's development (Sturrock, 2013: 48-55). Finally, siblings' relationships in Austen's novels are also studied in **Laura Dabundo's** article "The City of Sisterly Love: Jane Austen's Community and Sorority" (2009), where she analyses the six novels. In the case of *Emma*, she mentions a sisterly bond between Harriet Smith and Emma.

On the other hand, the relationship between siblings has been studied by some critics; **Jan Fergus** in her article "'Rivalry, Treachery between sisters!' Tensions between Brothers and Sisters in Austen's Novels" (2009) analyses fraternal bonds in Austen's novels and their genuine relationship (rivalry, jealousy, treachery, tensions...). Moreover, **Christine St. Peter's** article "Jane Austen's Creation of the Sister" (1987) states the importance of female bonds in the late eighteenth-century literature and life. St. Peter focuses on Emma's relationship with Mrs. Weston and Harriet Smith; but without seeing in them any kind of queer reading (St. Peter, 1987: 475), a statement

with which I agree. In fact, the critic considers Jane Fairfax to be Emma's "sister-friend" (St. Peter, 1987: 487). Finally, **Barbara K. Seeber's** article "Loneliness and the Affective Imperative Marriage" (2020), argues that "marriage is not the solution but part of the problem that results in loneliness." (Seeber, 2020: 234). She talks about marriage as the main responsible of Emma's isolation, an example could be Miss. Taylor, the protagonist's governess, when she marries Mr. Weston and leaves Hartfield. Moreover, Seeber in this article recognizes Mrs. Weston as Emma's pseudo-mother, as her biological mother died. Also, the critic also analyses the role of Harriet Smith; but not from the point of view of a pseudo-sister, Seeber considers Harriet to be a friend who makes Emma feel less lonely.

1. The bond between Emma and Mrs. Weston

1.1. Mrs. Weston as Emma's pseudo-mother

"Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr. Woodhouse's family, less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma." (Austen, 2012: 3). This is how Austen introduces the future Mrs Weston, the protagonist's governess. It can be argued that Mrs Weston undertook the role of Emma's mother as she died when the protagonist was little. Indeed, Mrs Weston was in charge of her education and upbringing much like a mother of her class would have been in that period. June Sturrock has stated that: "Since her mother's death Miss Taylor has given her the companionship and emotional support that she needs, so that Emma is not conscious of any lack of maternal care" (Sturrock, 2013: 53).

Throughout the novel, Emma and Mrs. Weston, like mother and daughter, are each other's confidant: "the relationship between Emma and Mrs. Weston has evolved over time into equality;

Emma's reflections cited above chart an arc of development. As Deresiewicz points out, Mrs. Weston is described as "'governess,' 'mother,' 'friend,' 'sister,'... in an ever-denser affective palimpsest" (87)." (Seeber, 2020: 236). For example, when Mrs. Weston is nervous about the arrival of Frank Churchill, Mr. Weston's son, Emma tries to calm her down and thinks of her: "'My dear, dear, anxious friend,' - said she, in mental soliloquy, (...), 'always overcareful for every body's comfort but your own; I see you now in all your little fidgets, going again and again into his room, to be sure that all is right'." (Austen, 2012: 185). Emma knows Mrs. Weston so well to the point where she can imagine what the other woman is doing. Mrs. Weston is also worried about Emma when she finds out the secret marriage between Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill; as she knows that her friend and Mr. Weston's son are very close. In fact, Mrs. Weston is the one who gives Emma the news: "'Can you come to Randalls at any time this morning? - Do, if it be possible. Mrs. Weston wants to see you. She must see you' " (Austen, 2012; 386). Both women want to protect each other. Further, they have shared suspicions and thoughts about love-related themes, usually referring to Mr. Knightley's love life and his possible future wives (Jane Fairfax and Harriet Smith). For example, in Volume Two, Mrs. Weston has an hypothesis about Jane Fairfax and Mr. Knightley's closeness: "My dear Emma, I am longing to talk to you. I have been making discoveries and forming plans, just like yourself, and I must tell them while the idea is fresh." (Austen, 2012: 218). This conversation between them is going to expose Emma's real feelings towards Mr. Knightley and her jealousy of Miss Smith and Miss Fairfax as they receive attention from him.

However, the protagonist's governess must leave her when she moves with her husband to the family house in the state of Randalls, near Hartfield; but, Emma and Mrs. Weston are in constant contact despite what Mr. Woodhouse, the protagonist's father, says: "My dear, how am I

to get so far? Randalls us such a distance. I could not walk half so far." (Austen, 2012: 6). This quotation highlights another aspect of Mr. Weston's role, as Mr. Woodhouse also feels abandoned by the governess. This can be construed as further evidence of Mrs. Weston having fulfilled the role of caretaker and emotional guide in Emma's childhood, both to Emma and to the widower, Mr. Woodhouse. In this instance, he is worried about her having to face the "difficulties" of administering her own household: " 'A house of her own! - but where is the advantage of a house of her own? This is three times large. - (...) ' " (Austen, 2012: 6). In fact, Mr. Woodhouse is very concerned about Mrs. Weston and involves her in their arrangements: " 'We must ask Mr. and Mrs. Weston to dine with us, while Isabella is here' " (Austen, 2012: 78).

In contrast to the relationship between Emma and Mrs. Weston, Isabella Woodhouse is not as close to her sister. At the beginning of the novel Isabella is married to Mr. John Knightley and settles in London. Hudson has analysed the different character traits of the Woodhouse sisters. According to her, while Emma is "quick and assured", while Isabella is "slow and diffident", which provokes a drop-off communication when the protagonist's sister marries and moves out to London:

Unlike the heroines of the first four novels, Emma has no strong ties to a blood sister or sister-in-law. Emma is fond of her sister Isabella; however, insuperable intellectual barriers weaken their relationship. Emma is "quick and assured", while Isabella is "slow and diffident"; moreover, Isabella is far away and too busy coddling her husband and three children to maintain a powerful bond with her sister.

(Hudson, 1992: 90)

Emma and Isabella have a significant age gap and they are very different in terms of temperament. When they reunite on certain occasions, they do not seem to have missed each other. Furthermore, Isabella knows that her sister has a closer relationship with Mrs. Weston than with her. Their governess is an important member of her family, even though she is not; and she can imagine her father and sister's sorrow at her leaving them:

" 'Oh! yes, sir,' cried she with ready sympathy, ' how you must miss her! And dear Emma too!
- what a dreadful loss to you both! - I have been so grieved for you. - I could not imagine how
you could do without her. - It is a sad change indeed. - But I hope she is pretty well, sir.' "

(Austen, 2012: 92)

Further, the geographical proximity from Mrs Weston and Emma allows them to stay in constant contact in their social life (balls) and in their private ones (correspondence): " 'How often we shall be going to see them and they coming to see us! - We shall be always meeting! *We* must begin, we must go and pay our wedding-visit very soon.' " (Austen, 2012: 6). For example, in chapter eleven (First Volume) when the main character's sister visits Hartfield, the first intervention is done by Mr. Woodhouse who starts talking about the "sad change" at Hartfield (Austen, 2012: 92). This change refers to Miss Taylor marrying and becoming Mrs. Weston. It seems that both biological sisters do not share many conversation themes and Emma does not confide her thoughts and secrets to Isabella, while she does so with Mrs Weston. The protagonist trusts her governess more than her older sister. In fact, the protagonist has adopted Mr. Weston as her motherly figure and female reference.

Furthermore, Sturrock (2013) compares Emma and Anne Elliot, the main character of *Persuasion*; as both of them have lost their mothers, but Austen depicts this loss as having affected them differently. In *Persuasion* the older sister undertakes the place of their mother. Moreover, it explains a more detailed process of mourning and its effects on the main character. However, in *Emma*, the protagonist has Mrs. Weston, who does not have enough authority as her governess. Emma finds herself alone with her father once again. Being the only woman in the house, apart from their domestic workers, she has to assume her obligations and put into practice everything that her governess has taught her. Sturrock compares the figure of Elizabeth Elliot, Anne's sister,

with Emma, as "the loss of the mother (and in Emma's case the early marriage of her elder sister) leads them into over-confidence by giving them power, prestige and a measure of freedom too early" (Sturrock, 2013: 52). This comparison shows two different kinds of relationship between the main characters and their sisters; in *Persuasion*, it is Anne's sister who undertakes the role of her mother when she dies. This does not happen in Emma, and it is her governess who has to take on the role left vacant by Emma's mother and sister, filling both and neither at the same time.

As it has been stated, in Jane Austen's novels, during the late eighteenth century, relationships between women are an important theme. Kaplan talks about the idea of comfort in the context of these female bonds:

"Whether they were seeking romance or comfort, women were drawing on the ideology of domesticity to define the emotional content of their female friendships. (...) Women looked forward on being comfortable with their friends because they were so often as distance from one another-(...)-and because they could not feel completely at ease when they encountered one another in the social round as representatives of their families."

(Kaplan, 1992: 68)

This need of having a friend to rely on is showcased in Emma and Mrs. Weston's bond. Both of them want to have "comfort" in each other's presence and as they do not live in the same house, they leverage any opportunity they have together. And anytime the two women meet in a public place, they know that they are not alone. Emma conceives Mrs. Weston to be her comfort place, and in this emotional bond she is effectively filling in the void left by her mother and sister. Moreover this "comfort" is also present in their private lives; when one of them is troubled by something, she knows that her friend is going to be there for her. This relationship is also valuable to Mrs. Weston as Seeber states:

"Critics have described their friendship as one-sided. Perry, for example, argues that their "connection was never based on equality" (...) While Mr. Knightley considers Emma to have educated Mrs. Weston "on the very material matrimonial point of submitting your own will,

and doing as you were bid" (38), he is not always right. Emma may feel herself to be "always interesting" (126) to Mrs. Weston, but the latter also feels herself to be interesting to Emma" (Seeber, 2020: 236)

According to this, Emma could be considered the person responsible for the privileges which Mrs. Weston has achieved. Since the beginning of the novel, the protagonist has been bragging about her matchmaker abilities:

" 'I promise you to make none for myself, papa; but I must, indeed, for other people. It is the greatest amusement in the world! - Every body said that Mr. Weston would never marry again. (...) All manner of solemn nonsense was talked on the subject, but I believed none of it. (...) I planned the match from that hour; and when such success has blessed me in this instance, dear papa, you cannot think that I shall leave off match-making.' "

(Austen, 2012: 10)

This shows Emma's fixation for pairing off couples, but also the confidence she has on herself. The protagonist's objective is to match Harriet with a rich husband, so that she can climb up socially, and she is sure that she will find the appropriate suitor for her friend.

1.2. Mrs. Weston as Emma's teacher

During the late eighteenth century, young women of a high social status like Emma Woodhouse had a governess who was responsible for their education; aside from their mother, who would direct this education:

"Increasingly throughout the century, special governesses were employed to finish a young lady's home education, or indeed to undertake it from early childhood should the mistress of the house be unwilling or unable to do so. (...) Whether a girl's education was directed by a family member or a hired instructor, its content could range from minimal academic skills, domestic management, and fashionable accomplishments to the extensive classical training regarded as true learning by that age; (...)."

(Duke, 1980: 5-6)

In the case of *Emma*, Mrs. Weston at the beginning of the novel is considered to be the main character's educator as well as her pseudo-mother: "It is through the figure of the mother and her attitude to her familial obligations that the protagonists acquire the sense of their traditional domestic obligations" (Sturrock, 2013: 47). Even though their relationship is based on confidence and esteem, critics like Sturrock (2013) have stated that Emma is a spoilt child due to the lack of an authorial figure. With this in mind, Mrs Weston, in her role as governess, is the one who teaches Emma all the necessary things to know about manners and social behaviour. This would have been the mother's job; the protagonist's governess should teach French conversation or what is called "key accomplishments": playing the piano, drawing or dancing. However, as it has been previously said, Mrs. Weston's lack of authority with Emma is one of the reasons why the main character sometimes acts in an unconscious way without thinking what the consequences may be. Emma considers her governess as a friend/mother:

"Between *them* it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had hardly allowed her to impose any restraint; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor's judgment, but directed chiefly by her own."

(Austen, 2012: 3)

Contrastingly, Mr. Knightley is the only character who points out Emma's faults to her. At the beginning of the novel, he is talking with Mrs. Weston about the protagonist's education and character, and how the presence of Harriet Smith affects her life. Mr. Knightley says to her that: "She will never submit to any thing requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding (...) - You never could persuade her to read half so much as you wished. - You know you could not" (Austen, 2012: 35). This quote is showcasing Emma's indifference and selfishness, which will lead to the manipulation and hostility of who will be considered to be her

pseudo-sisters: Harriet Smith and Jane Fairfax, as we shall promptly see. The protagonist acts the way she does due to the lack of authority from Mrs. Weston and Mr. Woodhouse. Emma is an educated woman, I suggest she feels superior to others and uses her social status to undervalue other female characters as she belongs to a wealthy class and has privileges. Marriage is not her final objective. By contrast, Mrs. Weston or Harriet Smith's only way to achieve privileges is through marriage; that is why Emma states that Mr. Martin, a local farmer, does not belong to Harriet's social class. For example, in Volume Three Emma makes fun of Miss. Bates, an unmarried woman of a lower social class, whose niece is Jane Fairfax, about her verboseness in front of other people. The only person who reprimands Emma is Mr. Knightley: " '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, 2012: 368). He is disappointed with the protagonist for her behaviour, because she has abused someone of an inferior social status. Emma tries to downplay the importance of what she has said to Miss Bates, but Mr. Knightley interrupts her and, as her friend, he tries to make her see that she has to emphasise with the other people:

" '(...) This is not pleasant to you, Emma - and it is very far from pleasant to me; but I must, I will, - I will tell you truths while I can, satisfied with proving myself your friend by very faithful counsel, and trusting that you will some time or other do me greater justice than you can do now' "

(Austen, 2012: 369)

This section has explored the close bond between Emma Woodhouse and Mrs. Weston, who was her governess, analysing the repercussion that the latter's lack of authority has on the protagonist. The protagonist has lost three important women in her life: her mother, Mrs. Weston and her sister. Therefore, she has to widen her social circle in order to substitute those figures:

"Emma feels the pain of social disconnection, and in response pursues Harriet" (Seeber, 2020: 237). Harriet Smith and Jane Fairfax will be the chosen ones.

2. Tensions between Emma's relationship with Harriet and Jane

2.1. Harriet Smith as Emma's pseudo-little sister

When at the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Weston marries and moves out of the Woodhouse's home, the protagonist finds herself living alone with her father. In this context, Emma meets Harriet Smith, an orphan girl who is under Mrs. Goddard's tuition and goes to her boarding school. She is described as "the natural daughter of somebody. Somebody had placed her, several years back, at Mrs Goddard's school, and somebody had lately raised her from the condition of scholar to that of parlour-boarder" (Austen, 2012: 20). From their first meeting onwards, Harriet undertakes the role of Emma's pseudo-little sister, but this relationship is based on inequality as Emma is the authoritarian and powerful figure. Fulfilling her self-appointed role as mentor, the protagonist teaches her everything that she has learned from Mrs. Weston, embodying the sisterly and motherly role vacant in her life. Emma is going to present Harriet into what she considers to be "good society", implicitly referring to the Martin family, which are farmers who rent land from Mr. Knightley. Emma, as a wealthy woman, prefers "adopting" Harriet as she belongs to an inferior class and she is not a threat for the protagonist, unlike Jane Fairfax. However, Mary-Elisabeth Fowkes Tobin has analysed the aspect of class in the novel and states that Emma by adopting Harriet is threatening "her society's structure" as she "perverts proper social order" (1988):

"Many of Emma's actions threaten her society's structure; for instance, by adopting Harriet Smith as her friend and ignoring Jane Fairfax and by trying to marry Harriet off to Mr. Elton and then to Frank Churchill, she perverts proper social order, undermining her society's elaborate ranking of social standing. But most destructive to this delicately balanced hierarchical society is her especially insensitive handling of her middle-class neighbors: her snobbish high handed treatment of characters like Robert Martin and his family who, as reliable and productive farmers, are solid members of the yeomanry, traditionally one of the most respected of social ranks; (...). "

(Tobin, 1988: 422)

Further, the main character says that she will "form her opinions", meaning that Harriet cannot think for herself; and "teach her manners", as if she is an unrefined girl:

"*She* would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, her power"

(Austen, 2012: 21)

The word "power" has a strong connotation, and it anticipates what will be a toxic relationship between Emma Woodhouse and Harriet Smith: their relationship could be argued to be based on the protagonist's **superiority** and **manipulation** over Harriet. As Mr. Knightley says to Mrs. Weston: "I do not know what your opinion may be, Mr. Weston," says Mr. Knightley, 'of this great intimacy between Emma and Harriet Smith, but I think it a bad thing' " (Austen, 2012: 34). Mr. Knightley thinks this because he has known Emma for a long time and "She will never submit to any thing requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding." (Austen, 2012: 35). Knightley knows that Emma, as a spoilt child, is not constant in her commitments; so, he thinks that Harriet's case will not be an exception. He considers the relationship between women damaging for both of them: "Where Miss Taylor failed to stimulate, I may safely affirm that Harriet Smith will do nothing" (Austen, 2012: 35). As it has been stated before, Mr. Knightley is the only person who points out Emma's errors to her; so, throughout the novel he is going to observe closely the two women's relationship.

On the one hand, the protagonist wants Harriet to find a wealthy husband so she can climb socially and belong to the same circle as her. Kaplan has discussed the difficulties that women in Harriet's social situation had to face. Harriet, a middle class orphan with no connections and no familiar support, needed to find a husband during the late eighteenth century:

"Women of more modest means had a hard time finding spouses even among younger sons. Patrilineal customs left younger sons, many of whom could not find professional niches that paid very well, with fewer inherited resources and therefore with a greater need for affluent brides or with less inclination to marry."

(Kaplan, 1992: 22)

However, she also mentions that, according to historical demographers, singlehood in the eighteenth century increased nine percent more than in the past century (Kaplan, 1992: 22). In fact, Jane Austen herself rejected a marriage proposal and stayed single throughout her life. Moreover, Emma is always bragging to be a brilliant matchmaker; she is constantly reminding everyone in her social circle that she was the person responsible for Mr. and Mrs. Weston's marriage:

" 'And you have forgotten one matter of joy to me,' said Emma, 'and a very considerable one - that I made the match myself. I made the match you know, four years ago; and to have it take place, and be proved in the right, when so many people said Mr. Weston would never marry again, may comfort me for any thing.' "

(Austen, 2012: 9)

In chapter seven of Volume One, Harriet tells Emma that Mr. Martin, a farmer who is in love with her, has proposed, and she asks for the protagonist's advice: " 'Well,' said Harriet; - 'well - and - and what shall I do?' (...) 'Yes. But what shall I say? Dear Miss Woodhouse, do advise me.' " (Austen, 2012: 49). The protagonist's first response is for Harriet to refuse him on account of his social class. As Seeber postulates in her article:

"Emma's disapproval of Robert Martin as a suitable partner for Harriet is usually interpreted as class snobbery—he is "a farmer, (and...nothing more)" (65). Emma promotes Harriet marrying Mr. Elton, I argue, chiefly because it would secure a continuation of connection between the two women, lessened in intensity (as is the case with Mrs. Weston) but not a complete rupture."

Mr. Martin is a farmer of the title of *gentleman* (Goodheart, 2008) who has a substantial income, but cannot make Miss Smith scale in the social class. Emma believes that, despite the fact that her friend belongs to the middle-class, she should not be content with Mr. Martin. That is why Emma tries to pair off Harriet and Mr. Elton, a match that will end with Miss Smith confessing his love to the protagonist.

Emma wants to be close to Harriet even more after Mrs. Weston's move. She wants Harriet to ascend socially, and with Mr. Martin as her husband, it will not be possible; although Mr. Martin has a substantial income, he lacks social status which is more important for Emma. Essentially, Emma is playing with Harriet's feelings: first she is giving her opinion about the union, but then she tells to her that "You must be the best judge of your own happiness" (Austen, 2012: 51). Consequently, at first Harriet will follow Emma's advice and reject Mr. Martin.

In parallel, Mr. Knightley comes into the scene once again because he was the one who gave Mr. Martin the approval of the proposal. In fact, when he finds out that Emma has been behind Harriet's decision, he becomes angry: "You saw her answer! you wrote her answer too. Emma, this is your doing. You persuade her to refuse him." (Austen, 2012: 58). This episode demonstrates that the protagonist's relationship with her pseudo-sister is not honest, and eventually they will take different paths. Moreover, there is some irony in the passage, as, at the end, Harriet Smith will disregard Emma's matchmaking advice, and follow her heart by marrying Mr. Martin. Before that, however, Emma is going to convince Harriet that Mr. Elton, a young vicar, loves her and he is a better suitor than Mr. Martin. This ploy does not end as she would have liked because Mr. Elton does not love Miss Smith, but Emma. As a result of this occurrence, the protagonist and

her "pseudo-sister" will have their first fight. As Harriet does not want to argue, the fight which they have could not even be considered to be a disagreement, which demonstrates the sisterly relationship between them. By contrast, Emma and her biological sister do not fight when they reencounter. This could demonstrate the distant bond that they have. It is worth mentioning the change of Mr. Knightley's attitude towards Emma, due to their romantic relationship. He now conceives Harriet and Emma's bond as something positive and recognises the main character's lessons: "I am convinced of her being an artless, amiable girl, with very good notions, very seriously good principles, and placing her happiness in the affections and utility of domestic life. - Much of this, I have no doubt, she may thank you for." (Austen, 2012: 466).

On the other hand, another factor which demonstrates Harriet's role as the main character's pseudo-sister is **jealousy** in relation with Mr. Knightley. Jealousy is a very common problem between sisters: "(...) the eighteenth-century culture that Austen grew up in was very alive to the rivalries and hostilities and injustices that exist between siblings, whatever the official ideology of protection and support, (...)." (Fergus, 2009: 72). Consequently, I contend that the fights between Emma and Harriet could be an evidence of their pseudo-sisterly relationship. In chapter two of Volume three, there is a ball at the inn *The Crown*, and Mr. Knightley, after seeing Harriet Smith sitting alone courteously asks her to dance, and she accepts. Initially, Emma is happy to see them dancing, as her pseudo-sister has experienced some heartbreaks up to that point (rejecting Mr. Martin and being rejected by Mr. Elton) and she empathises with her. However, there is a change of attitude when Emma wants to dance with him as they "are not really so much brother and sister as to make it at all improper" (Austen, 2012: 325); in the past, Mr. Knightley asked Emma to dance, but she refused making clear that they were like siblings. Emma has seen her male friend dancing with Harriet and changes her mind, an example of childish behaviour. Further, in chapter

four Harriet confesses to her friend that she keeps some objects related with Mr. Elton; at this moment Emma "was quite eager to see this superior treasure" (Austen, 2012: 333). Maybe she is excited to find out that Harriet was still in love with Mr. Elton and did not think about Mr. Knightley until chapter eleven. When Emma finds out that Harriet is in love with Mr. Knightley, she keeps silent. Sturrock has discussed the protagonist's reaction:

"Sometimes, inevitably, Emma's silence arises from self-protection rather than politeness or consideration for others: when she realizes that Harriet loves Mr Knightley, she keeps defensively silent about her own feelings, but what she says to Harriet is no more than the truth: "'Harriet, I will only venture to declare, that Mr Knightley is the last man in the world, who would intentionally give any woman the idea of his feeling for her more than he really does'" (352). As André Brink points out, "in a situation where open revolt or defiance is ruled out, one of the only possible alternatives to compliance is silence, and on occasion Emma does resort to it" (304). Compliance might involve hypocrisy; revolt might be destructive; silence preserves both the moral and the social order."

(Sturrock, 2013: 95)

It is a paradox that Emma does not say anything, being opinionated as she is, the protagonist's attitude towards Harriet's feelings shows Emma's own feelings for Mr. Knightley. At this point, the roles have been switched and Emma feels inferior to her friend, and Harriet has made a decision on her own about her love life; she has become more confident and self-sufficient, she does not need, or want, Emma's advice anymore. In fact, she is completely sure that Mr. Knightley is in love with her: " 'Have you any idea of Mr. Knightley's returning your affection?' 'Yes,' replied Harriet modestly, but not fearfully - 'I must say that I have.' " (Austen, 2012: 401). However, some pages after, Emma's feels more confident and she will criticise Harriet's arrogance and naivety, as she believes that Mr. Knightley loves her back:

"How Harriet could ever have had the presumption to raise her thoughts to Mr. Knightley! How she could dare to fancy herself the chosen of such a man till actually assured of it! - But Harriet was less humble, had fewer scruples than formerly. - Her inferiority, whether of mind or situation, seemed little felt"

(Austen, 2012: 407)

Emma and Harriet's relationship does not end pleasantly as the pseudo-sister finally marries Mr. Martin, after discovering Emma's feelings towards Mr. Knightley. In fact, the protagonist sends her friend to Isabella in London, where Mr. Martin is going to propose to Harriet again, and, this time, she will accept. Step by step she is going to keep her away from Hartfield because Emma assures that Mr. Knightley does not love her friend and she wants to avoid Harriet the suffering of having to see him. However, it could also be suggested that Emma starts to have feelings for Mr. Knightley and wants to have a clear path:

"She would have been too happy but for poor Harriet, but every blessing of her own seemed to involve and advance the sufferings of her friend, who must now be even excluded from Hartfield. The delightful family party which Emma was securing for herself, poor Harriet must, in mere charitable caution, be kept at a distance from. She would be a loser in every way."

(Austen, 2012: 442)

This section has analysed Emma's relationship with Harriet. The protagonist has adopted Miss Smith as her pseudo-sister and her purpose is to find her friend a wealthy husband so that she can ascend socially. However, Emma feels superior to Harriet, because, while the protagonist belongs to the high class, her pseudo-sister is middle-class and is not as educated as her. Throughout the novel, Emma has used manipulation to achieve her objectives, but, at the end she fails and Harriet marries Mr. Martin. Moreover, jealousy is present when Miss Smith falls in love with Mr. Knightley, because Emma also has feelings for him.

2.2. Jane Fairfax as Emma's pseudo-sister

In chapter two of Volume Two, Austen introduces Jane Fairfax, who "was an orphan, the only child of Mrs Bates's youngest daughter" (Austen, 2012: 159). Jane is the daughter of Lieutenant Fairfax and Jane Bates, and after the death of her parents she is raised by Colonel Campbell, her father's commanding officer. Once again we are introduced to an orphan, who, like Emma and Harriet, has lost her mother. When the Campbells could not provide for her any longer, they decided that she must become a governess until she married. That is why she stays with her grandmother and aunt, Mrs. and Miss Bates. I argue that Jane Fairfax can be considered Emma's pseudo-sister because, as Levin stated: "The most common way sisters defined themselves was (and still is) in opposition to each other." (Levin, 1992: 17). Their sisterly relationship is based on this "opposition", as we shall see Emma is jealous of Jane because she attracts the attention of two men, Mr. Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley, who have a close bond with the protagonist; and also because Miss Fairfax belongs to the same social class and has had a higher education.

Emma confesses that she does not like Jane, but does not know why. It is Mr. Knightley who offers an interpretation: "(...) because she saw in her the really accomplished young woman, which she wanted to be thought herself" (Austen, 2012: 162). Mr. Knightley has known Emma since she was a child and he understands her better than any other character. In fact, in this scene, he seems to be reading Emma's mind when he offers his explanation of the protagonist's dislike to Miss Fairfax. She is jealous of Jane's social status and education, which are equal to hers.

Their relationship is based on **rivalry** and **jealousy**, like the one the protagonist developed with Harriet Smith as their friendship progressed. According to Seeber:

" Those who blame Emma for cultivating Harriet as a friend also blame her for neglecting Jane Fairfax and put it down to jealousy. Because Emma wants "supremacy" in her relationships

(and gets it in her connection with Miss Taylor and Harriet), Emma “shuns Jane Fairfax, who is her equal in so many ways” (Stovel 62)."

(Seeber, 2020:

238)

These similarities are the basis for her jealousy and are fundamented on two points: Jane's class, which makes her her equal, and her role in the spotlight. On the one hand, Emma is jealous of Jane Fairfax as she is as well educated as herself: " 'Don't class us together, Harriet. My playing is no more like her's, than a lamp is like sunshine' (...) 'The truth is, Harriet, that my playing is just good enough to be praised, but Jane Fairfax's is much beyond it' " (Austen, 2012: 226-227). Jane has been educated in London with the Campbells and Emma knows that Miss Fairfax does not belong to a modest class like Harriet: "Emma's goal in this friendship is really to entertain herself, and Harriet is pretty clearly out of her league in education and accomplishments." (Dabundo, 2009: 4). The protagonist cannot perform as Jane's mentor sister and manipulate her, as she has done with Harriet. According to Dabundo, "Emma disdains Mr. Knightley's encouragement of a friendship with Jane Fairfax, whom he sees as better matched to her in education, breeding, and class (166-73), but she who desires to be superior is threatened by such equality" (Dabundo, 2009: 5). She perceives her as a rival, who not only puts in jeopardy Emma's social status with her musical abilities and kinder attitude, but her relationship with Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley; as Jane impedes the match between Harriet and Frank. Another critic who talks about this is Ruth Perry who states that: "Jane and Harriet, each in their own way, are aware from the start that, despite the self-referential nature of Emma's perception of their competition, they are all in fact competing for men - for husbands - for Mr. Elton, for Frank Churchill, and for Mr. Knightley." (Perry, 1986: 193).

On the other hand, Emma is annoyed by Jane because she attracts the attention of Mr. Knightley and Frank Churchill:

" 'But Mr. Knightley does not want to marry. I am sure he has not the least idea of it. (...) ' /
'My dear Emma, as long as he thinks so, it is so; but if he really loves Jane Fairfax - ' /
'Nonsense! He does not care about Jane Fairfax. In the way of love, I am sure he does not. He
would do any good to her; or her family; but - ' "

(Austen, 2012: 220-221)

The protagonist herself stated that Jane's arrival was not long waited as was Frank Churchill's: "Certain it was that she was to come; and that Highbury instead of welcoming that perfect novelty which had been so long promised it - Mr Frank Churchill - must put up for the present with Jane Fairfax, who could bring only freshness of a two years absence." (Austen, 2012: 162). Emma thinks that Miss Fairfax does not deserve the attention that she receives from people in Highbury; after not being there for two years. Frank Churchill, in the protagonist's opinion, is the one who should be talked about. However, possibly, Emma feels that way with Miss Fairfax because she herself wants to be in the spotlight, especially of Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley. Emma has a close connection with them, and, maybe, she considers them as equals in terms of class and education; she may even be romantically interested in them. She is jealous of the previous contact between Mr. **Frank Churchill** and Jane Fairfax: " 'Did you see her often at Weymouth? Were you often in the same society?' (...) 'I merely asked, whether you had known much of Miss Fairfax and her party at Weymouth.' " (Austen, 2012: 195-196).

Furthermore, Emma, with Frank's support, is going to mistreat and embarrass Jane as a way of expressing her envy. At the end of the novel, after Mr. Churchill's engagement to Miss Fairfax, he writes a letter to Mrs. Weston, where he explains why he has helped Emma with her plans of intimidating Jane: "And here I can admit, that my manners to Miss W., in being unpleasant to Miss F., were highly blamable. *She* disapproved them, which ought to have been enough. - My

plea of concealing the truth she did not think sufficient." (Austen, 2012: 432). For example, when Miss Fairfax receives a pianoforte from an anonymous person, who will be revealed to be Frank Churchill, Jane's secret *fiancé*. Emma has the theory that it is a present from Mr. Dixon, the son-in-law of Colonel Campbell, a friend of Jane's late father who provided for her education; and, later, Mr. Churchill, in order to please Emma, taunted Jane:

" 'Whoever Col. Campbell might employ,' said Frank Churchill, with a smile at Emma, 'the person has not chosen ill. I heard a good deal of Col. Campbell's taste at Weymouth; and the softness of the upper notes I am sure is exactly what he and *all that party* would particularly prize. I dare say, Miss Fairfax, that he either gave his friend very minute directions, or wrote to Broadwood himself. Do not you think so?' "

(Austen, 2012: 236)

Clearly, he is talking about Mr. Dixon assuming he has received advice from his father-in-law. After Frank's intervention, Emma tells him: " 'It is not fair', (...), 'mine was a random guess. Do not distress her.' " (Austen 2012, 236). Ironically, the protagonist is defending Miss Fairfax, when she has previously expressed her dislike; but it can only be to appear less despicable to his eyes. At the end of the novel, Emma discovers, through Mrs. Weston, the secret engagement between Frank and Jane, and she feels responsible for the way she has treated her pseudo-sister and accepts her own guilt and jealousy. According to Dabundo, "Emma is not ready for true sisterhood, in which there are sharing and empathy and even criticism, at times" (Dabundo, 2009: 5). The protagonist, first, acts like a child who wants all the attention; she is guided by her jealousy towards Jane, her pseudo-sister who is her equal, and wounds her. However, after discovering the secret engagement, she presents a more adult conduct, accepting her guilt and regretting the way she has behave:

"This discovery laid many smaller matters open. No doubt it had been from jealousy. - In Jane's eyes she had been a rival; and well might any thing she could offer of assistance or regard be repulsed. (...) She understood it all; and as her as her mind could disengage itself

from the injustice and selfishness of angry feelings, she acknowledged that Jane Fairfax would have neither elevation nor happiness beyond her desert."

(Austen, 2012: 397)

Moreover, another factor that instigates Emma's jealousy towards her pseudo-sister is the attention that she receives from Mr. Knightley. As mentioned in the first part of the section, Emma considers Mr. Knightley as her brother until he dances with Harriet. So, after the dance, the protagonist shows signs of envy and uneasiness for his behaviour, which is an indication of Emma's feelings towards him. For example, in chapter nine of Volume two, Mr. Knightley sends Jane and Miss Bates, more apples from his trees when he acknowledges that Miss Fairfax enjoys them greatly:

" ' (...) He sends us a sack every year; (...). But I was really quite shocked the other day - for Mr. Knightley called one morning, and Jane was eating these apples, and we talked about them and said how much she enjoyed them, and he asked whether we were not got to the end of our stock. "I am sure you must be," said he, "and I will send you another supply" ' "

(Austen, 2012: 233)

In the novel there is no evidence of Emma's reaction to this episode; but in chapter ten, when she is at Miss Bates's house, Mr. Knightley arrives and asks for Miss Fairfax's health. Then, Miss Bates thanks him again for the apples; in that moment, "Emma found it really time to be at home; the visit had already lasted long." (Austen, 2012: 240). The main character seems angry for the appearance of Mr. Knightley and his close relationship with Miss Bates and Miss Fairfax.

To conclude, Jane Fairfax is also considered to be Emma's pseudo-sister. Their sisterly bond is founded on this rivalry between them. The protagonist sees Jane as her opponent in terms of education and men (Mr. Knightley and Mr. Frank Churchill). However, at the end of the novel, Emma regrets her behavior towards Miss Fairfax and she accepts her culpability.

3. Conclusions and Further Research

The aim of this TFG was to assess in what ways the protagonist of *Emma* replaced her maternal and sisterly figures, filling the void left by the protagonist's late mother and her sister with a series of pseudo-sisters. Further, it also sought to examine the close relationship between the main character and these three women: Mrs. Weston, Harriet Smith and Jane Fairfax in their complexity, paying particular attention to the significant role of class. The first section of the TFG analyses the bond between the protagonist and Mrs. Weston, her governess, arguing that Mrs. Weston can be considered to be the protagonist's pseudo-mother and older sister. Mrs. Weston is Emma's governess, but when Emma's mother dies and her sister, Isabella, moves out to London, she undertakes the role of mother, but also of the protagonist's educator and Mr. Woodhouse's manager. However, her lack of authority with Emma is reflected in the protagonist's spoiled behaviour. Moreover, Mrs. Weston and Mr. Weston is the first couple paired off by Emma, and after seeing her success she is going to focus on finding a wealthy husband for her pseudo-little sister Harriet. The second section examines Emma's relationship with two girls her age, Miss Harriet Smith and Miss Jane Fairfax. I consider both of them to be the protagonist's pseudo-sisters; but, while the first one is middle-class, Jane belongs to the high class just like Emma. In fact, she considers Miss Fairfax her rival because she is as educated as herself and attracts Mr. Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley's attention. Both Harriet and Jane's relationship with Emma are going to be based on jealousy and manipulation. As it has been explained, during the eighteenth century, female communities permitted women to create a culture in which they learned from each other and had in each other a confidant, a person with whom they can trust. In the case of *Emma*, the close relationships between women are illustrated by the protagonist and three women who are considered to be her pseudo-sisters.

After analysing the relationship between Emma and the three women who act as her pseudo-sisters, the following conclusions have been reached. On the one hand, **Mrs. Weston** and Emma's relationship is based on a balance and in this sense she fails as her mother figure. Both women confide in each other whenever they are preoccupied about something, which, usually, is related to family or romance. However, their bond, like all mother and daughter or sisterly ones, has its vicissitudes. Precisely because of the horizontal nature of their relationship, the protagonist can be considered to be a spoilt child (Sturrock, 2013) due to the lack of authority that Mrs. Weston demonstrated to have when she was her governess and educator before her marriage.

On the other hand, **Miss Harriet Smith** and **Miss Jane Fairfax** take the place of the main character's pseudo-sisters. The relationship between Emma and Harriet is a vertical one, based on manipulation and a feeling of superiority from the protagonist. This feeling of superiority is due to her class. Emma thinks that she is Harriet's older sister and tries to find her a wealthy and worthy husband, but she does not take into account her friend's own feelings and opinions. At the end of the novel, Miss Smith will marry Mr. Martin, her first suitor, who was not enough for Harriet according to Emma. By doing this, Harriet ignores her pseudo-older sister's advice and regains agency.

Furthermore, Emma's relationship with Jane is also based on the protagonist's jealousy: firstly, because Miss Fairfax is high class and is as educated as herself; and, secondly, due to the fact that she receives special attention from Mr. Knightley and Mr. Frank Churchill, both men have a close bond with Emma. At the end of the novel, she finds out about Mr. Churchill and Miss Fairfax's engagement and laments her own attitude towards Jane.

While doing research for my TFG, I have found other themes which could have been included in my project, but, due to the length constraint, I have been unable to analyse in more depth. Firstly, there is what it could be considered as an **incestuous relationship** between Mr. Knightley and Emma Woodhouse. The protagonist conceives him as her brother until the moment when she sees Mr. Knightley's interest in Harriet. I would be interested in analysing Emma and Mr. Knightley's relationship as pseudo-siblings and then as husband and wife. It could be interesting to study how this incestuous relationship could be seen for the eighteenth century society. Moreover, I would like to compare it with *Mansfield Park*, as the main character, Fanny Price, marries her cousin. Another point of interest is the case of the influence of the author's **biography** in her novels, specifically the close relationship between herself and her older sister **Cassandra**. Their bond has been a chosen topic for many critics (Hudson, 1992) in order to demonstrate the sisterly relationships in Austen's novels. Jane and Cassandra Austen were the only sisters in their family and were together until Jane Austen's death. The author throughout her life did not marry, Cassandra was engaged, but became a widow. So, they lived together all their lives; firstly in their family house in Steventon, and then in Bath and Chawton, where the author died. Their relationship was that close that when Jane Austen died, her sister said that:

"I have lost a treasure, such a Sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed, - she was the sun of my live, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow, I had not a thought concealed from her, & it is as if I had lost a part of myself."

(Letters, 513-514)

In this sense, I would like to compare Emma's relationship with her pseudo-sisters and her pseudo-mother with the one that Jane Austen had with her female community (her mother Cassandra Leigh, her sister Cassandra and her friend Martha Lloyd). It is known that Austen had not a very kind relationship with her mother, unlike Emma with Mrs. Weston; and that her bond with

Cassandra Austen and Martha Lloyd was strong. Austen conceived her friend as a sister; and her sister, as it has already been said, was a part of herself.

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