

Madame Bovary's deconstruction of Perfect Womanhood of Elizabeth Bennet: a misadventure of life

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Abstract

Madame Bovary, a focal character of Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary, decomposes the perfect womanhood of Elizabeth Bennet in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. Not internalizing Elizabeth's practical perception, Madame Bovary moulded by romantic idealism demolishes her well-off life. Not having honesty, not building up trustworthiness and not feeling any responsibility for any relationship, she unlike Elizabeth drags her loving, reliable and single-minded husband into ruinous condition and her innocent child with bright future into destitute uncertainty. Her lack of Elizabeth's qualities- her own consideration on prevailing situation, ingenious ability and virtuous activity- leads her to extra-marital relationship. Her inability to realize the woman's honesty, real independence sense and sensibility confirms a metamorphosis of Elizabeth's perfect and archetypal woman self. Her slow observation and her desire to be sophisticated and aristocratic unlike Elizabeth lessen her position to the stage of doll in the hand of man's capitalist motives. This paper explores how Madame Bovary's deconstruction of Elizabeth's perfect womanhood which attains happiness in her life terminates not only her own catastrophe and her husband's financial bankruptcy and death but also commences a stony path for her future generation, her child.

Key words: Deconstruction, Perfect womanhood, *Madame Bovary*, *Pride and Prejudice*.

Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* embodies Elizabeth Bennet with the perfection of womanhood possessing unconventional characteristics of intelligence, impertinence, ingeniousness and dedication, because Barbara W. Swords in “Woman's Place in Jane Austen's England” states that “some late eighteenth century authors of advice to girls and young woman regarded woman's minds as limited in reason and not to be overtaxed with serious, intellectual education” (<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number10/swords.htm>). She holds her place as equally important as man to serve her family and others. She not dipped with her surrounding romantic icons-balls, flirtation, music and lavish dreams leads a moral, dignified and virtuous life. She practices ethics in the relationship with her parents, sisters and above all her beloved, Darcy. Her quick observation, practical thinking avoiding imaginary dream, honesty, and dignified woman sense make sure of her happiness and harmony in her life with her husband at last. Jane Austen juxtaposes the perfect lady and Elizabeth by proving the views of some writers in Enlightenment period that “men and women”, says Sword, “were equally endowed by Providence with reason and moral nature and capacity. Thus, girls and woman must be taught to exercise their reason- must be taught to think- and must be educated to make sound moral judgment” (<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number10/swords.htm>). On the other hand, devoid of the perfection of Elizabeth Bennet, Madame Bovary in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, though many critics praises her to break the conventional barrier of woman for the

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exercise of free will, takes the romantic story for her life guidance and dreams of impractical love and life. But her wish to exercise free will deconstructs the culture of a woman in her time, because her family with husband and child is absent in this wish. Miftahur Roifah and Evi Eliyanah in “Comparing the woman in *Madame Bovary* and *The Awakening*” expresses that “she has far trespassed the cultural boundary set for woman in the 19th century France, and devotion to husbands (Abrams, 2001:4). However, Emma does not perform her gender roles as the society expected” since “it is a must for 19th century French woman to devote their selves to marriage and motherhood”

(<http://jurnalonline.um.ac.id/data/artikel/artikel15DF5771F7EF1671432B04FCB182FC631.pdf>).

Though, according to feminism, she is sympathized as a victim of nineteenth century male-oriented society because of her inability to experience life fully and freely, she is discontent with the realities of her life but does not consider Charles's life with the romance of romantic knight. She is not intelligent enough to comprehend the impossibility of attaining her dream. She rails her present situation with dissatisfaction and drives herself to indulge in the imaginary lifestyle. Dacia Maraini in *Searching for Emma* states that Emma Bovary is “the one who is incapable of turning that life to good account....” (Maraini 25). Her sense of immorality and deception and her lack of practicing maternal instinct force her to commit suicide. Her lavish way of life ignoring honesty and virtue takes her innocent husband's life and, above all, opens a new chapter of difficulty to her child, Berthe, giving her a future of uncertainty. In introduction of *Madame Bovary*, Alan Russel exposes that “She is one of the individuals of fiction. Self-centred, self-dramatizing, envious, improvident, impulsive, aspiring above either her ‘station’ or her capabilities, ‘sensitive’ in the egoistic sense, and desperate with the raging of unsatisfied desire-of such character her name....” (Russel). By using comparative literature in this study, it is asserted that Madame Bovary clearly deconstructs the perfect womanhood of Elizabeth by ignoring her own self. She even denies the perfection of a woman as a mother, wife, family member and an individual woman self ignoring her physical and social limitation and hindrance, which Elizabeth confirms in her life. Elizabeth is able to give completion of her initiatives and intension holding her control over situation by establishing own consideration on prevailing situation, not complying on the imposed views. But, Madame Bovary destroying the norm, boundary and centre of a perfect woman establishes herself as dreamy and unthinkable woman, which completes her failure in life unlike Elizabeth Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, really a norm of perfect womanhood having intelligence, management-power, virginity, morality and dignity who brings happiness at last as perfect daughter, wife and lover.

Madame Bovary considered as protagonist of Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* is a daughter of Old Roualt. Her real name is Emma Bovary but after marriage, it becomes Madame Bovary. Her marriage with a widower and country doctor, Charles Bovary, as his second wife causes the disillusionment of her superficial romantic ideals, as her husband is not so much romantic like heroes in romantic stories. Without understanding her husband's devotion to her, she leads an amoral and adulterous affair with Leon and Rodolphe. To satisfy her romantic whims, she becomes extravagant to spend her husband's money. Her lavish way of life confirms her so much debt to a money lender, Lheureux. The overdue of her unpaid bill finalizes the judgment against her to confiscate her family property. Her seeking help from those who eat her real fruit causes her despair and frustration, because she is discarded by them cruelly. At last, out of depression and despair, she poisons herself. Out of depression for his dear wife's death and the financial

uncertainty, Charles also falls in the hand of death. Their only female child, Berthe, has to live with her grandmother, but after her death, she has to go to her paralysed aunt. At last, being poor, her aunt makes her earn her subsistence in a cotton-mill.

The story of *Pride and Prejudice* is rounded on Bennet's family at Longbourn, England, and its relation with Darcy living in Derbyshire and his friend, Mr. Bingley, in London. Elizabeth Bennet, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, is a central character of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Out of five sisters, she is second. Her relationship with her elder sister, Jane and her concern for her another sisters confirm her importance in her family. Jane's relation with Mr. Bingley is being possible for Elizabeth's intellectual decisions, though it is halted at first for the inferior social status of Jane's family. Elizabeth makes a mistake by believing on Wickham's gorgeous pretension but she soon recovers herself. Respecting her mother's concern for their marriage, she does not sacrifice her dignity, judgment and thinking for only marriage sake. That's why, she rejects Mr. Collins and chooses Darcy as her husband after many proofs of his reliability and respect for her, though at first she prejudices Darcy for the pride of her woman self. Her every actions and decisions save her family from social disgrace. At last, she proves herself as perfect woman and finalizes happiness and peace in her family environment.

I

Jane Austen in her timeless classic, *Pride and Prejudice*, presents Elizabeth as embodied with the perfection of a woman because "All this,[knowledge of music, singing , drawing, dancing]" (35) "she must possess", added Darcy, "and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading" (35). Kristina Nilsson in "The Accomplished Woman- No Changes Accomplished? A comparison of the Portrayal of woman in Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* and Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones*" exposes that " this is also part of the fact that Austen's artistic choices emphasis Elizabeth's intelligence and humour[...] rather than her physical appearance (Murphy 27) thus making the heroine a character with more depth" (FULLTEXT01.pdf-Adobe Reader). Ignoring all preconceptions of woman of how a woman should behave, the novel's protagonist, Elizabeth places herself as rational, responsible being. Arbnore Muji in "Gender issues reflected with nature in Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*" explores that "she acts polite and ladylike but she is still her own individual and does not want to be submissive as woman are supposed to be in her society" (FULLTEXT01(1).pdf-Adobe Reader). Denying the popular concept of male member's responsibility in family maintenance, Elizabeth holds her own place in her family by dealing all kinds of family problems and by concerning family future. She with her good qualities becomes a loving daughter of her father. Her watchfulness and caution for the family is evident in her awareness of the coming danger related to Lydia when she decides to go to Brighton with her friends. For this, she urges her father, Mr. Bennet, not to give his consent and consults on the remedy of Lydia's " unguarded and imprudent manner" (189). Only her own intelligent decision brings her family's wellbeing at last. She shocks at the news of Lydia's elopement with Wickham without marriage and tries to solve the problem by assigning this task on her reliable, intelligent and sensible uncle, Mr. Gardiner. After attaining proper reliability over Mr. Darcy, she discloses the matter of Lydia which paves the way of solving this problem. As a guardian of her family, she assures Lydia's financial security after her marriage even being a woman. Moreover, she has sisterly affection for

Jane and guardian-like concern for her relation with Mr. Bingley. Her respect for her elder sister, Jane, heightens the honour of a woman, “you are too good. Your sweetness and disinterestedness are really angelic; ... I feel as if I had never done you justice, or loved you as you deserve” (114). As a human being, she becomes angry and indignant of knowing the involvement of Darcy to destroy her dear sister’s happiness, “Mr. Darcy’s shameful boast of what misery he had been able to inflict, gave her a keener sense of her sister’s sufferings” (156) and is unable to concentrate on anything. She even rejects Darcy’s love proposal for the sake of her sister at first time. She feels Jane’s pleasure to dance with Bingley twice and concerns for her sister’s health and Jane’s worriedness and compassion for the detachment with Bingley. Moreover, she is joyous for the happy news of her family. Lydia’s marriage with Wickham, though “that they should marry, small as is chance of happiness” (245), and Jane’s renewed relation with Bingley make her so much happy and give relief. Elizabeth’s reaction to resist Lady Catherine’s overbearing concerning her family restores her own dignity. Though she feels insulted by Lady Catherine’s impertinent questions about her family, she makes herself manage the situation. She is well aware of her family’s shortcomings but she does not allow other to justify this matter, “you can now have nothing farther to say... You have insulted me, in every possible method. I must beg to return to the house” (288). Her dedication, concern and intelligent supervision about her family are alike to a perfect lady’s activities. Elizabeth, like a perfect lady, thinks not only of herself but also of others. So, she integrated with these qualities brings happiness to her family.

On the other hand, Madame Bovary deconstructing the perfect womanhood of Elizabeth in family life places herself as imaginative, impractical and unloving family member by showing her careless, irresponsible and selfish attitude. Madame Bovary, unlike Elizabeth, does not make herself an important and reliable daughter, wife and above all, mother in her family. Since she is “of little use” (36) to her father, her marriage with Charles Bovary gives him relief. She is busy at her own world of reading only novels, “she loved ... literature for its passionate excitement” (52) and considers all things in an idealistic way, and does not understand the realities of happenings. Eric Lawrence Gans in *Madame Bovary: The End of Romance* exposes that “in Flaubert’s universe, the world is not a very noble place, but [she] desires would be unrealistic in any possible world... the love Emma yearns for never existed anywhere but romantic fiction (Gans 1989). Her hovering of a poetic heaven is completely disillusioned in her married life because her husband’s activity “provoking no emotion, no laughter, no dream” (54) and “there was nothing very startling now about Charles’ passion for her. His ardours had lapsed into a routine, his embraces kept fixed hours” (56). For her husband’s dull, uninspiring attitude without concerning his love, dedication and truthfulness to her, she wonders “O God, O God, why did I get married?” (57). In want of reverence for husband, not internalizing honesty , morality of a wife and her dream of another person other than Charles who is “ handsome, intelligent, distinguished, attractive” (57) do not admit the perfection of a woman Elizabeth possesses which leads her to take destructive and immoral path. After enjoying her dreamy party of Marquisd’ Andervilliers at La Vaubyessard, she starts her life decorating with all kinds of luxurious icons- trinkets “an ivory work box with a silver gift thimble” (74) etc. Her ambition to be aristocratic concerns not her own position and her husband’s financial condition. She cares something for her husband not out of love “but for her own, in an outburst of egoism, a nervous irritation” (75). She possessing weak mentality and sense of value to dislike her female child lessens her woman self, because she even does not respect her own self. Even a mother cannot think like this. Alexey Young in “A

Patristic Reading of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*" exposes that "Emma is expecting a child but does not exhibit any of the common traits of an expectant mother" (http://www.jordanville.org/files/Articles/A_PATRISTIC_READING_OF_FLAUBER.pdf). By inventing her long expected "vicious ecstasy" (114) in the attachment with Leon, a clerk, she blinds herself to honesty, morality and responsibility for her family members. Without controlling herself, she welcomes her fascination to Leon and Rodolphe. This tendency consciously forces her to avoid her husband and her child. To her, her feelings and adoration for her child, though it buys her comfort and joy, is a kind of "her weakness" (119). Reversely, her inability to embrace maternal instincts is her own weakness. Kellie Plemmons in "What Lies Beneath: Motivation for Emma Bovary's Suicide" says that "a mother who cannot love her child is viewed as emotionally frigid and void of compassion" (online). As her seeming virtuous woman attitude to Leon irritates her most, she shoves her infant daughter away from her in a fit of annoyance and her innocent child becomes a matter of disgust- "what an ugly child she is!" (129). Leon's away to Paris rescues her first infidelity but it adds a token of discontent in her life. She deplores on "not having given Leon her love" (136). Her lamentation over his away from her -"he is gone- her only joy in life, her only hope of happiness!" (136)- snatches away her normal lifestyle and inspires her to do any kind of immoral activity like drinking brandy and her adulterous relation with Rodolphe. Her new ecstasy with this so-called love makes her husband and child sufferer who need her love and care, and it helps her to neglect her duty to the family. Her renewal of adultery with Rodolphe is brightened by "her aversion to her husband" (199) and is soon darkened by Rodolphe's sense of her "the eternal monotony of passion" (203). She is unaware of her own good to buy expensive gifts for her lover by debt to a money lender, Lheureux. She covers her internal corruption by her superficial appearance decorating with expensive and vanity items from Lheureux. She even does not tolerate elder Madame Bovary. Her devastating attitude is "she played the virtuous wife" (199) and she plans to run away with Rodolphe because "she felt bored, that her husband was odious and life is intolerable" (198). Amid her dreamy life, she feels Charles an awkward person, so his kiss gives her a kind of boredom, "let me alone!" and "you'll rumple me" (63). But, Rodolphe's decision not to elope with her and fabricated letter disillusion the fulfillment of her dream and make her frustrated and physically ill. After recovering from illness, her inability to feel her husband who is "worried about money" (222) and her debt to Lheureux give forces to concentrate on charity and religion. She undergoes herself in circle- romantic indulgence to physical illness to moral practice and then again to new romantic adultery. Thus, she loses her own identity, as Stephen Heath in *Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary* states that "real and unreal, such a present can only be the sensation of a moment and an abrupt cessation of identity: her identity is not this, she is just Madame Bovary, farmer's daughter and wife to Charles, but then again that is not her identity either, her imagination has taken her beyond it" (Heath 61). At the opera, she renews her romantic yearnings by embarrassing with Charles's unsophisticated behaviour and her desire to be cosmopolitan and aristocratic. Her insincere piety does not amend her rather she is ready to ablaze her old fledgling romance when she meets Leon again.

Ng Yee Ling in *Modern Fiction and the Creation of the New Woman: Madame Bovary, Jude the Obscure and Women in Love* states that "her thirst for romance makes her yield totally to Leon which makes him despise her; her desire for passion is so strong that the narrator reveals that Emma is 'unaware that she was about to prostitute herself' (Ling 2008). She is not wise to hold her own self. She easily falls into other's prey, as she is convinced by the greedy money lender's encouragement to obtain power of attorney over Charles's finance in order to settle her debt.

Charles agrees and sends her to Leon in Rouen to draw up the paper. But his trust to wife is paid by her adultery, as she spends her passionate three days “real honeymoon” (267) with Leon in Rouen. Even her father-in-law’s death does not deter her from the extra-marital relation. She climaxes her moral degradation by adopting lies and duplicity with Charles. She plans to meet Leon in Rouen pretending to take piano lesson but at home she starts her acting as a dutiful wife. By showing a forged receipt of piano lesson and a forged bill of smaller amount than she actually borrows from the money lender, she restores Charles’s trust to her. This kind of moral degradation with financial bankruptcy manifests the imperfectness of woman self, unlike Elizabeth, which undoes her ultimately.

II

Jane Austen continues her effort to present Elizabeth embodied with perfect womanhood in the understanding of life. Elizabeth as a perfect woman is bold enough to express her thoughts and views of life in a liberal way. Mihriban Tanrivermis in “Female Voice in Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*” exposes that Elizabeth’s wit and her unconventional and liberal talks signal the clues about the exposition of female identity. Kaplan observes that confident in conversations and sure of her opinions, Elizabeth does not hesitate to convey either her certainty or her views” (<https://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12606716/index.pdf>)

Elizabeth’s efforts to place woman dignity and individuality in the matter of love and marriage show her perfection as a woman. She is practical to apply her own idea on love which develops naturally. It is man’s part to find out woman’s sincere feelings in the matter of love. It is woman’s dignity not to show the exact feelings to a man in the first chance. Love relation is a matter of understanding. Elizabeth’s refusal of Mr. Collins’s marriage proposal raises the honour of woman world and makes her contrastive to traditional woman as determined and respected woman. She gives honour to the woman self by establishing her own choice over a man. Her polite refusal to Mr. Collins, “I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them” (90) proves that a female has her own view on choosing her husband who would be according to her position and thinking. Her thinking on marriage, not a financial security for a woman but a place of happiness and love, ascends the respected position of woman, “I am not one of those young ladies... who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal- You could not make me happy” (90). Tanrivermis in “Female Voice in Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*” also states that “Yasmine Gooneratne describes Elizabeth’s independence as: Elizabeth’s views on marriage, on society, and her own position in society reflect her independent spirit and her critical intelligence...” (<https://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12606716/index.pdf>). To defend Mr. Collins’s view on “the true delicacy of the female character” (91), her view- she is not an elegant female but “a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart” (91) heightens the dignity and rationality of a woman. Then her view exchange to her father on this matter proves the management power of a woman “whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affection and coquetry of an elegant female” (92) which shows her integrity. Charlotte’s engaging to Mr. Collins with a view to gaining “worldly advantage” (105) and “imaginable happiness” (105) gives a pang of pain for “a friend disgracing herself and sunk in her esteem” (105). As a representative of the female world, she becomes disappointed for the reason of woman’s integrity to sacrifice her to tolerable happiness in marriage life. She thinks that a woman “shall not, for the

sake of one individual, change the meaning of principle and integrity nor endeavour to persuade yourself or me, that selfishness is prudence, and insensibility of danger, security for happiness" (115). She deplores on the real marriage situation of Charlotte that Charlotte has nothing own but her place is occupied by Lady Catherine and her daughter, "I expected at least that the pigs were got into garden, and here is nothing but Lady Catherine and her daughter!"(132). Thus, she verifies the perfect lady by practicing practicality, honesty and morality in her thinking and activity.

In contrast, Madame Bovary deconstructs the perfect womanhood of Elizabeth in the understanding of life leading a dreamy life. Emma Bovary denying the perfection of woman self, which Elizabeth possesses, lives in the world of fantasy. She longs for a grand and romantic life avoiding all kinds of realities. Her world rounds with the romantic and idealistic notion of life-traveling, reading novels by the seaside music, opera etc. Her brain is always pre-occupied with the stories of love and lovers, but her husband, her child, her father or any other elder person are away from her thinking. Her family's groaning, crying and tension do not touch her. Her immoral brain blinds her sense to be true to her husband. She does not cope with the realities of her life. No place can fulfill her romantic desires-the convent, the farm and her married life. Her dream of a romantic midnight wedding crushes in a traditional ceremony with raucous celebration. This unfulfillment of her imagination opens a path of boredom and wandering thoughts. Her belief in the fanciful conception of love and happiness in marriage life obtained from her reading romantic novels halts her in the real marriage life which is very contrastive. The impractical and pedantic words- "bliss', 'passion', ecstasy'" (47) are absent. Her consideration of anything sentimental arousing emotion and "her heart's immediate fulfillment" (49) does not give her happiness in life though she is offered so many ingredients to be happy. She has no ingenuity to juxtapose romantic ideas and realities. Her trying to materialize her romantic and superficial vision without practicality throws out her from the realities of life and paves the way of her downfall. Elise M. Wiedner in "Emma Bovary and Hedda Gabler a Comparative Study" unearths that "there is a touch of truth to the senior Mme. Bovary's sour observation that Emma's 'vapour' would be dissipated by vigorous work, which would take the place of aimless dreaming" (Wiedner 56-64). She even treats religion with the same romantic passion though she loves religious icons. But the real spiritual motive of religion is alien to her character, because "she loved the church for its flowers, music for the words of the songs, literature for its passionate excitement" (52). She deals with everything in a superficial way. Her devotion to religion is comparable to her devotion to Rodolphe but it is her devastating thinking that she finds no such ecstasy in it as she finds in her adultery. Her enjoyment in the party of Charles's patient, Marquis d' Andervilliers, at La Vaubyessard confirms her dream. Her thoughtlessness and slow observation do not comprehend the real motive of the grand party as it is his preparation of coming parliamentary election, rather, she is overwhelmed with his luxurious court life, the ball and all tokens of her imagination. Her theoretical mind does not accept her real situation away from her fantasy kingdom. "Her yearning for" (69) the luxurious life and all romantic icons remains last. She always hopes for "something to happen" (75) envisioning her dream. But "for her there was nothing" which makes her discontent and physically ill which leads Charles to go away from Tostes to live at Yonville. Every time, she feels discontent with the present situation after sometimes and she wants to escape from it. When she is bored with living in the Convent, she feels that her marriage with Charles will give her a new phase of life. But again she becomes discontent with this life. Her

yearning for “the future must surely hold something better in store for her” (98) and for subsiding her unhappiness ends at the point that she approves of “what was perverted and immoral” (80). This affinity forms “a kind of bond” (112) with Leon and Rodolphe as an adultery and develops a strong rapport with them without remorse. She easily falls on Rodolphe’s call of sweet love devoid of virtue “come forward and receive the meed of your silent virtue” (160). She in the act of adultery thinks her of a heroine of romantic book and of entering “marvelous world where all was passion, ecstasy, delirium” (175). “No earthly remedy” (125) can cure her uncontrolled passion. Her desired freedom becomes token of Rodolphe’s “sensual pleasure” (183) and confirms her own subjugation, “he treated her as he please, and turned her into something pliant and corrupt” (203). Her romantic idealism turns her to a boredom to her lover, “Emma was like any other mistress; and the charm of novelty, gradually slopping away like a garment, laid bare the eternal monotony of passion” (203). She is foolish to think of the helplessness of woman on the basis of superficial freedom to “explore the passions and the continents, can surmount obstacles, reach out to the most distant joys” (101) which is not constructive and does not bring any good for anyone. Her sorrow as a woman is a kind of her own weakness. Melissa Grasso in “A Selection from Perpetual Masquerade: Marriage, Sexuality and Suicide in *Madame Bovary*” says that “Flaubert does not present Emma’s sexual awakening just as a selfish pleasure-seeking or a moral defiance, but as a symptom of a deeper sense of separation from her body, her desires, her womanly identity, and, therefore, it is needed for her to become a self” (<http://www.southernct.edu/organizations/hcr/2004/nonfiction/perpetual.htm>). She is not quick sensible and ingenious, like Elizabeth, to hold her own dignified self amid many natural demarcations. Her yearning for so-called freedom is devoid of the perfection of woman and directs her to immoral path which causes her catastrophe. She is ill-educated not to comprehend the tragic consequence of it which “never brings happiness” (156). She proves through her life that “anyone without religion will always go wrong in the end” (139).

III

Elizabeth as a perfect woman has astounding female personality to be ashamed of her own fault when she is able to realize. Overwhelmed by Wickham’s false smartness she makes a mistaken accusation to Darcy. Through Darcy’s letter she is able to anticipate Wickham’s cowardice and false pretension to be good. She realizes her own self-deluding nature and “grows absolutely ashamed of herself” (171). Very naturally, she confesses to Darcy of her willful and headstrong character which blinds her to the truth. Conversely, Emma’s sense of covering her own fault blinds herself to take a way of her purification which is another kind of deconstruction of perfect womanhood of Elizabeth. Baffled by Rodolphe’s behaviour and experiencing the futile consequence of her romantic idealism, she does not amend her self indulgence attitude; rather she starts her romance with Leon with full-fledged way. Charles’s “more innocuous criticism” (56) is diverted by her showing Charles’s own mistakes.

IV

Elizabeth justifies herself as unconventionally perfect lady. She exercises her own thinking in her actual life. Her living in Bingley’s house at Netherfield shows her playful wit, her spirit and quickness of thought to converse with Darcy, In “What Are Men to Rocks and Mountains? *Pride*

and Prejudice", Stuart M. Tave reveals that "Elizabeth, of course, is the central and most active character, and it is the mind and fortunes of her spirit we follow in its wit and wanderings. We pick up the bright and attractive quality of Elizabeth from the beginning" (Bloom 11). Her mother's uncivil, rude and ignorant attitude is covered by her quickness of thought and intelligence. Her clear-sighted analysis of Darcy's letter confirms her intelligence and her willingness to value other's view. Her keen ability for perception justifies her family members' actions which are overlooked by her love for family. She with readiness of mind acknowledges Jane's failure to show her true feelings towards Bingley. Moreover, she painfully analyses her members' fault which are "hopeless of remedy" (175). In warning of Lady Catherine not to cross her limitation of her family, she tactfully holds equality with Darcy, "In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal" (287). In "What is feminist literary criticism? How does this apply to *Pride and Prejudice*?" it is told that "To be equal to and have equal opportunity and rights with a man of such social ranking as Mr. Darcy is to epitomize the very cause of feminist literary criticism—to chiefly advocate for the rights and equality of women" (<http://chsaplitprideandprejudice.weebly.com/feminism.html>). She downrightly rejects her threat not to engage with Darcy by saying "I will make no promise of the kind" (287) which is right decision on marrying Darcy. She takes command on her by showing her liveliness, her integrity and proper intelligence. She shows that anyone cannot hinder her from rightful actions. Elizabeth shakes woman world to laugh off the insult of Darcy in Netherfield Park party by narrating the incident to her friends with great amusement. As having "a lively, playful disposition" (13), she is bold enough to make man's comment on her poor impression ridiculous. She determines to refuse Darcy's offer of dancing by believing him to act out of mere politeness because she overhears his conversation with Bingley, "she is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me" (13). She as a woman does not want to attach herself with man who has no regard for her. Not only that, again her refusal to dance with Darcy at the time Bingley's sister singing at the piano is for thinking of it his distaste of dancing and country living. This refusal dignifies the woman's position in society though Darcy is bewitched by "sweetness and archness in her manner" (46). She proves that a woman with liveliness, politeness, natural and pleasurable behaviour and honesty can attract anyone as Darcy is attracted by her. Moreover, she attracts Darcy not by eulogizing him but by taking a sensible place as an independent person who has her own view, "I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and non-sense, whims and inconsistencies do divert me" (50). Her conversational encounters with Darcy by provoking, teasing and arguing prove that she is intellectually equal to Darcy, the man. By the refusal of Darcy's love proposal, Elizabeth ascends the position of woman to a superior way. So incensed is Elizabeth what she believes in the ruin of Jane's chances of happiness, she thinks that Darcy's love offer is a kind of insult and is against his own reason, "why with so evident a design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character?" (158). So, she is determined to reject the man who ruins "happiness of a most beloved sister?" (158). Her rejection of Darcy without concerning his position and money and her own accomplishment is a challenging matter of her future but she does it for the sake of her sister's concern, her dignity and her search for the happiness in marriage. Avoiding all kinds of artificiality, she is in search of natural attitude from everyone. So in her visit to Pemberley House of Darcy, she is astonished of Darcy's character who "does not rattle away like other young man" (204). At this place, she is impressed by the evidence of

natural taste which creates her sense of gratitude, respect for Darcy. She not as a sensitive lover exposes her feelings and sentiments towards Darcy. Only after understanding Darcy's true feelings towards her, she hands over herself to Darcy holding own dignity and place. Sarah Melz in "Ideal Gender Roles and Individual Self-Expression in the Novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*" points out that "Elizabeth does not disregard all social tradition, which would have ruined her, but instead she learns that a healthy cynicism can go along with this recognition and she is allowed to settle comfortably with Darcy" (<https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/10691/>). By her own credit, she holds her better and happy future with Darcy maintaining respected and esteemed relationship with him. In the penultimate story of *Pride and Prejudice*, it is indicated that she is able to maintain and attain happiness and respectful position escaping discredit and misery by applying her own judgment, intelligence and her sense of value and dignity. Mirei Hirota in "The Rise of an Equal Marriage in *Pride and Prejudice*" exposes that "as activists as Elizabeth and Darcy are, Austen indicates that they will practice establishing an equal relationship. Deresiewicz sums up this process stating: Cognition and courtship (in other words, reason and love)- turn out to be central to her maturation. It is in her dealings with eligible men that Elizabeth is tripped up by and finally fights herself free from the cognitive constraints of her community, and it is through her love for one of those men that she belongs to establish a new and better community" (<http://www.lib.geidai.ac.jp/MBULL/33Hirota.pdf>).

In the other way, Madame Bovary without the proper knowledge of dignified woman self has the incapability to hold her own self. She clearly deconstructs the perfect womanhood of Elizabeth in her real life. Her inscrutable brain can not find out the proper person for her love and happiness. She easily avoids Charles's true love, dedication for her and runs into the unattainable fantasy and illusion. Her dull brain forces her to live in the imagination not analyzing the actual things. She prefers extra-marital love to real- marriage- love. Her lack of knowledge on her own value entangles in the enchantment of Leon without understanding his real motive- "nothing could be pleasanter- when one has the chance" (93) and in the trap of Rodolphe without understanding his true character, "I wear my jester's mask in public" (151). She for the absence of own concern is easily captivated by his impractical and absurd definition of duty and morality. Though her oscillated mind thinks somewhat that "we must take some notice of what the world thinks, and conform to its morality" (157), she is not strong enough to hold her view. She is so much obsessed with her immoral love that she sides away and ignores Rodolphe's annoyance of her unexpected arrival in his house. She does not comprehend his serious warning to her "her visit were becoming foolhardy- she was compromising herself" (177). Without understanding his false self, she becomes a doll in the hand of Rodolphe which leads to her doom. Her weak brain does not understand him who does not cope with her plan to run away with Emma, "I can't flee the country! And saddle with myself with a child!" and "it would have been too stupid" (212). So, he discards her giving a fabricated letter full of platonic condolence. Again, she develops a full fledged romance with Leon by taking a routine of visiting him in Rouen and returning in the carriage to Yonville and by living with him in hotel. She is so impractical to spend money by debt for running her adultery. She spends so much money opulently for Rodolphe and Leon. Heath in *Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary* also exposes that "Emma's expenditure traps [her and her husband] in Lheureux's system of credit, bringing their downfall; when Charles dies, nothing is left" (Heath 57). When a court order demanding her to pay eight thousand francs or lose all her

property comes, she begs to all persons who have utilized her – Lheureux, Leon and Rodolphe. All of them push away her like animal. Her tears become a matter of fun and rebuke. After realizing the absurdity of her adultery romance and feeling her desperate condition, she resolves her predicament by taking her life by arsenic. Roifah and Eliyanah also expresses that “Gustave Flaubert intends to punish Emma for what she has done. He punishes Emma for her being morally corrupted”

(<http://jurnalonline.um.ac.id/data/artikel/artikel15DF5771F7EF1671432B04FCB182FC631.pdf>). Though adultery is considered as a way of freedom in her society, Heath also points out that “Emma does not find freedom but more of the same, dropping from an initial elation into lassitude and hate.... Adultery is hers and very much not hers... and can thus only be disillusionment, that fatality of life itself. Which leaves this novel to end in platitude and nothingness (85). She plays her role not as a perfect woman like Elizabeth but as a foolish woman which causes her self- destructive spending. Not only that she gives a burden of immense debt to Charles which snatches away his all property and fells him into nothingness. Her infidelity to her husband soon discovered by him penetrates his innocent obtuseness which causes his death. Above all, Madame Bovary's aristocratic pretension- “unable to have a cradle with pink silk curtains, Emma loses interest in preparations for her baby; unable to ‘play at a concert in a short-sleeved velvet gown, lightly caressing the keys of an Erard’, she loses interest in music.... The image of this luxury, the freedom of expense as style, is aristocratic” (60), Heath also states, and her seeming romantic ideas give her child, Berthe, a life of destitute uncertainty. Her seeking freedom reversely takes the freedom of her child by imprisoning her in a life of poverty and dependence, “the little girl was then taken in by an aunt- old Rouault being paralyzed. The aunt is poor, and sends her to earn her living in a cotton mill” (361), though she would have enough opportunities for her better upbringings. Madame Bovary's romantic thinking, her exercise of freewill avoiding any kind of ethics and deconstruction of perfect womanhood of Elizabeth open a new path of obstacles for her child without her parents and financial solvency, which ultimately proves a misadventure of her life.

The brief overview of this paper is that Elizabeth having the perfection of womanhood brings happy ending in her life. Her consciousness as a woman creates harmony in the environment of her family. Her dignified woman self and quick intelligence assist her to take right decision. Jane Austen presents Elizabeth through her all actions as a woman self with individuality and equality in a society. Her practical personality and her sense of value establish woman's equality with man and prove that not only man but woman can do anything for society and family without ignoring her own dignified sense. Moreover, Madame Bovary's deconstruction of perfect womanhood which Elizabeth possesses proves the misadventure of her life. Her ill-education as a woman brings a disastrous condition in her family life. She, leading life not as a woman, puts her innocent little baby into a pit of suffering.

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