

## Questions for Literary Analysis

1. The following is the beginning of Jane Austen's Emma (1815). Read the passage in detail and analyze its narrative discourse. How does this piece of text work within the context of the novel? Explicate its textual logic, its sexual politics, and the narrator's subject and ideological position. (e.g., What are some of the narrative effects of such a discourse? As an exemplary "beginning" of a novel, how does the passage both foretell and at the same time foreclose certain narrative possibilities? To what extent is such a "beginning" in complicity with a distinct type of novelistic closure?) 50%

EMMA Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father, and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses, and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a mother in affection.

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. 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.

The real evils indeed of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived, that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her.

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2. The emergence into being of a literary/psychic product has evoked a lot of discussion in scholarly circles. Excerpts from two prominent writers are presented here. Please discuss them in terms of orientation and approach. 50%

"The literary text is not the 'expression' of ideology, nor is ideology the 'expression' of social class. The text, rather, is a certain 'production' of ideology, for which the analogy of a dramatic production is in some ways appropriate . . . The relation between text and production is a relation of 'labor': the theatrical instruments (staging, acting skills and so on) transform the 'raw materials' of the text into a specific product, which cannot be mechanically extrapolated from an inspection of the text itself."

from Terry Eagleton, Criticism and Ideology

"We may therefore suppose that dreams are given their shape in individual human beings by the operation of two psychical forces (or we may describe them as currents or systems): and that one of these forces constructs the wish which is expressed by the dream, while the other exercises a censorship upon this dream-wish and, by the use of that censorship, forcibly brings about a distortion in the expression of the wish."

from Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams

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