

Embodied Cognition: Space, Body and Ethical Growth in *Emma*

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Abstract

Jane Austen's *Emma* traces its heroine's transition from self-centeredness to ethical awareness. Previous studies have been largely confined to discourse analysis and psychological interpretation, with little systematic attention to the relationship between space, the body, and cognition. Based on Embodied Cognition Theory, this paper offers an analysis of the novel through the framework of "space—body—cognition". The Spatial Discipline of Hartfield Manor shapes Emma's initial self-centered cognition. Embodied Conflicts such as Mr. Elton's proposal and her mockery of Miss Bates unsettle her established cognitive system. Shifts in Sensory Experience ultimately drive her toward moral empathy and Ethical Growth. Therefore, Emma's growth is not just a mental process of self-reflection but also a cognitive change. Austen's narrative moves from embodied experience to moral cognition, revealing the physical basis of Ethical Growth. This offers a reference for the embodied cognition interpretation of realist novels.

Keywords

Jane Austen, *Emma*, embodied cognition, spatial discipline, sensory experience, ethical growth

1. Introduction

In the history of British literature in the 19th century, Jane Austen's creations occupy an important position with her delicate psychological portrayal and profound social insight. Her masterpiece *Emma* in her later years was "with unprecedented exquisiteness and delicacy, using a novelty corresponding to her delicate psychological and moral insight, psychological description" [1]. *Emma* takes the marriage and love misunderstanding of Emma, the squire's daughter, as a clue. It not only portrays the protagonist's journey of self-awareness awakening and moral emotional growth in the reflection with Mr. Knightley, but also reflects the phenomenon of class relations and women's awakening in British rural society in the early 19th century. In the novel, Emma's cognitive changes in social interaction and emotional entanglement have always been closely related to her environment and physical perception experience, which is the core proposition that Embodied Cognition Theory pays attention to. Embodied cognition emphasizes that "the mind is not isolated in the brain, but embodied, embedded and extended—inseparably intertwined with the body, action and environment" [2]. This perspective provides a new interpretation path for interpreting the emotions and cognition of the characters in *Emma*.

Austen's literary creation naturally fits the core idea of Embodied Cognition Theory. The delicate description of the physical reaction, sensory experience and social environment of characters in her works is highly consistent with the view that "the body and the world are the constituent elements of cognition" put forward by Shapiro [3]. At present, the foreign academic community has systematically examined Austen's novels including *Emma* and *Persuasion* from the perspective of "embodied experience and fictional mind" [4], but there are still obvious limitations: First, the exploration of the connotation of the embodied cognition of Austen's core works is insufficient, and the existing research is concentrated in a few works, for example, *Persuasion*, *Pride and Prejudice*, etc. [5, 6] failed to form a holistic explanation. Second, most of the embodied cognition research on *Emma* only has discourse analysis [7], and a systematic theoretical analysis framework has not been built. The relevant explanation of the four elements of embodied cognition is not deep enough.

Based on this, this article takes *Emma* as the core research object, and uses Embodied Cognition Theory to systematically analyze the impact of spatial discipline, embodied conflict and sensory experience on the cognitive development of characters. The research aims to fill the existing research gaps, clarify the development path of "space—body—senses—cognition", supplement the relevant interpretation perspective for the study of Austen's works, and provide reference for the application of Embodied Cognition Theory in the interpretation of literary texts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Embodied Cognition Theory

Embodied Cognition Theory has broken through the research paradigm of traditional computational cognitive science. Its core meaning is that cognition is not isolated from symbolic operations in the brain, but from the dynamic interaction between the body attributes, sensory motor ability and the environment of the organism. The body and the world are not external triggers of cognition, but constitutive elements of the cognitive process. The important views of this theory include four dimensions: the foundation concept of physical characteristics and the formation of world cognition. Cognition is naturally born in the symbiosis of body, mind and environment. The field of cognition extends from the brain to the body and environment, and cognition is deeply rooted in specific life and cultural contexts with the cycle of perception and action [8, 9].

The development of Embodied Cognition Theory has gone through two core stages. In the foundation stage of theory and thought (mid-to-late 20th century), Gibson's Ecological Approach to Perception and the Body Phenomenology in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* consolidates the foundation of philosophy and theory for physical research [10]. In the stage of theoretical integration and pluralistic development (from the 1990s to the present), Varela and others systematically explained the enactive cognition path in *The Embodied Mind*. Lakoff & Johnson used Conceptual Metaphor to reveal the construction effect of physical experience on abstract concepts. Clark's Extended Mind thesis breaks through the traditional boundaries of cognition, and the empirical research of dynamic system theory and neuroscience has made this theory realize the dual development of systematization and practice.

The transformation of Embodied Cognition Theory to literary research introduces the interactive association of "body—environment—cognition" into literary production, dissemination and acceptance, and breaks the binary opposition of "mind—text" in traditional research [11]. This shift is mainly reflected in three levels. First, the focus of the research shifted from analyzing the physiological mechanism of cognitive science to explaining the embodied experience and aesthetic meaning at the literary level. It is believed that literary meaning is the result of readers' interaction with the text world with physical perception and experience association. Second, the reconstruction of the role of the text, the author and the reader. The text changes from a static symbol to the trigger point for awakening sensory experience, the author changes from a rational narrator to an expressionist who integrates physical experience and cultural situation into the text, the reader changes from a passive receiver to a participant in the construction of meaning with embodied experience and emotional resonance [12]. Third, form an interdisciplinary integration in terms of research methods. On the basis of the tradition of text careful reading and cultural interpretation, we should moderately absorb the empirical perspective of cognitive science and promote the dialogue between literary research and cognitive science and neuroscience.

Embodied Cognition Theory provides a very inspiring perspective for interpreting Jane Austen's works. At present, the discussion in the academic community mainly focuses on three core works. By analyzing the relationship between the embodied experience of the characters and cognitive logic, the interpretation effectiveness of the theory is strongly confirmed. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's cognitive process of Darcy is rooted in the dynamic changes of embodied cognition. From the physiological shame caused by Darcy's indifferent words and deeds at the Meryton Ball to the sensory and emotional touch brought by her gentle behavior at the reunion of Pemberley Manor, the two key physical interactions gradually disintegrated her initial prejudice [13]. This cognitive change based on physical experience constitutes the core driving force for the development of character relationships in the novel. *Sense and Sensibility* reveals the mutual shaping of emotions and bodies through the sharp contrast between Eleanor and Marianne. Marianne's emotional dilemma is directly manifested as the depression of her physical state, while Eleanor has realized the rational regulation of emotions with focused daily practice and physical self-discipline, clearly showing the mind-body symbiosis in embodied cognition [14, 15]. In addition, the research perspective of *Persuasion* focuses on the embodied expression of emotions. Anne and Captain Wentworth's emotional bond is mainly deepened and confirmed through unconscious body language and non-verbal interaction, which deeply reveals the key role of physical emotion in the construction of character relationships.

2.2 Existing Research on *Emma*

At present, academic circles have accumulated certain academic achievements on the research of embodied cognition on *Emma*. Jones explores the psychological construction process of Emma and other characters in the novel, and proposes that Austen uses visual metaphors to expose the shaping of individual cognition by social gender norms [16]. Harbus makes a more detailed interpretation of the embodied consciousness in the text, pointing out that Austen outlines the cognitive picture that mind and body are inseparable through repeated descriptions of physical metaphors such as blushing and trembling [17].

As far as the research on embodied cognition of Emma is concerned, the existing results still have obvious limitations and deficiencies. Most of the researches stay at the surface discourse analysis, neither a systematic theoretical analysis framework nor an in-depth analysis of the core elements such as spatial discipline, embodied conflict, sensory experience and cognitive development. At the same time, the academic circle has not fully explored the value of sensory experience in the novel, nor has it further investigated how multi-dimensional sensory experience such as taste and touch become the embodied carrier of ethical empathy.

In view of this, this paper takes *Emma* as the research text, relies on Embodied Cognition Theory, systematically analyzes the shaping logic of spatial discipline on the initial cognition of characters, the practical path of embodied conflict promoting cognitive reconstruction, and the internal embodied connection between sensory experience and ethical empathy, and strives to build an analysis framework of "space—body—senses—cognition".

3. Spatial Discipline: The Initial Shaping of the Germ of Cognition

Embodied Cognition Theory believes that cognition is not an abstract thinking activity detached from reality, but a dynamic process in which the subject uses the body as an intermediary to generate and stereotype in continuous interaction with the external environment. In the 19th century British rural society presented by *Emma*, space is not only the narrative background of character activities, but also a realistic force that acts on cognition. The private living space of Hartfield Manor and the public social space of Highbury have a subtle influence on Emma's judgment and position with daily etiquette, class boundaries and life order. Her self-awareness, class concept and social attitude are gradually shaped in the long-term interaction between body and space.

Family space is the starting point for Emma's cognition. The closed and class characteristics of Hartfield Manor have established her initial cognition through physical discipline. The manor is separated from the outside world by walls, gardens, etc., so that Emma's sensory experience and daily interaction always revolve around fixed scenes. She sits by the fireplace in the living room, walks slowly on the garden path, and handles affairs in her father's study room. These repeated physical postures and spatial practices are constantly strengthening the identity consciousness of her "daughter of the squire" and also gradually made her develop

the habit of self-centeredness. There is a clear spatial order inside the manor: the main living room is the core of class decency and social intercourse, and the servant activity area is placed on the margins, forming a stable structure of the center and the subordinate. Emma enjoys full freedom of movement and speech priority in this space. Her sitting position, standing angle, and walking route are silently confirming her superior status. Embodied Cognition Theory points out that the spatial environment is directly involved in the shaping of abstract cognition. Hartfield's spatial order is internalized into the mind through physical perception, which affects Emma's judgment and choice. In the face of the marriage between Harriet and Robert Martin, she insisted that Robert Martin's origin and living environment were not worthy of Harriet, and tried her best to prevent Harriet from accepting the marriage proposal. It was to transform the spatial hierarchy in the manor into a judgment of class superiority and inferiority, and interfered with the emotional choices of others with her own social circle as the standard.

Mr. Woodhouse's spatial habits further strengthened Hartfield's closure and influenced Emma's cognitive pattern in a physical demonstration. Mr. Woodhouse is "preferred to the familiar environment and fixed routine". He is always worried about going out as a guest. He often deflects social invitations on the grounds that "there is a lot of dust on the road" and "the weather is easy to catch a cold". Even for Randalls, who is close at hand, he needs to be persuaded repeatedly before he is willing to go there occasionally. This avoidance and caution of external space has made Emma's social activities limited to the manor for a long time. At the same time, it was difficult for him to accept the change of identity brought about by the movement of space: Miss Taylor, the former tutor, married Randalls and became Mrs. Weston. He still habitually called "Miss Taylor" and repeatedly showed regret; for the eldest daughter Isabella, who was married far away, she was also "poor", regarding women's spatial migration caused by marriage as a kind of loss. This view that firmly binds class identity and living space is constantly passed on to Emma in daily life, so that she also takes this set of rules for granted. The body's dependence on familiar space and resistance to unfamiliar environment eventually turn into cognitive closure and stubbornness, which also makes her accustomed to measuring the value of others by her own spatial position.

Highbury's public space concretizes the class order, in which the invisible social rules continue to deepen Emma's class prejudice. As the core field of rural public life, the arrangement of church seats and the selection of dance partners in the ball all imply a strict hierarchical order. People's standing posture, bowing and conversing in these spaces are silent compliance with class rules. Highbury's public space gives Emma the dominant position of the squire class, and also constantly strengthens her sense of superiority. When Emma and Harriet passed by Mr. Elton's parsonage while visiting the poor, Emma brushed off Harriet's admiration, dismissing the idea of calling without a proper reason or bothering servants. As Lefebvre observes, space is never neutral; it produces and reproduces social hierarchy [18]. Emma's sluggish attitude towards parish residences is the true flow of class cognition under spatial regulation. The etiquette and order of rural public spaces constantly strengthen her sense of identity superiority, and also make her unconsciously use spatial standards to divide people and define relationships.

In contrast to Hartfield's insularity, Donwell Abbey offers an open, inclusive spatiality that begins to loosen Emma's convictions. The manor not only has a formal hall to receive distinguished guests, but also a public area where tenants, housekeepers and farmers can freely access. The spatial function is not strictly separated by the class. Mr. Knightley interacts with tenant farmers on an equal footing and talks cordially. This kind of class-breaking physical interaction brings a new sensory experience to Emma, who has been living in a closed environment for a long time. The theory of body perception shows that human sensory experience is attached to specific space, and the social attributes of space will directly change the way the body feels, thus impacting the inherent cognitive framework [19]. The equal scene at Donwell Abbey collided with Emma's habitual hierarchical order, which cracked her long-term stable cognition. Her physical posture in this space is no longer deliberately superior, and her eyes and expression are a little less scrutinizing. This subtle physical change is the external expression of the loosening of cognition. At the same time, the contrast between Highbury and London, Bath and other urban spaces also made her vaguely aware of the limitations of her vision. Although she did not go to those open social fields, she learned something through the story of her friend Jane Fairfax. The diverse and flowing cross-class interaction formed a strong contrast with Highbury's stereotyped closure. The difference in the body's feelings in different spaces made her gradually realize her narrowness and prejudice, which laid the foundation for the subsequent cognitive transformation.

In a word, the family space and public space in *Emma* participate in the shaping of Emma's initial cognition. Hartfield's closure and classiness, through daily physical practice, were internalized into her sense of superiority and self-centeredness thinking habits. Highbury's space rules, in the repeated confirmation of senses and actions, reinforced her class prejudice; and the physical impact brought by open spaces such as Donwell Abbey made her begin to reflect existing cognitive patterns. Space provides a realistic foundation for cognition, and the body is the key intermediary between space and mind. Emma's understanding of herself, others and society was limited by her space and physical experience from the beginning, which also laid an ambush for her subsequent cognitive collapse and growth transformation.

4. Embodied Conflict: Cognitive Shaking and Dissipation

Under the spatial discipline of Hartfield Manor and Highbury, Emma has formed a self-centered cognitive habit with a certain class prejudice. Here, she internalizes the privilege of space into cognitive authority, and regards her own experience as the sole measure of emotions and relationship. Embodied Cognition Theory emphasizes that cognition is not an abstract operation enclosed in the brain, but a product of the dynamic coupling of the body, action, and the environment. Embodied experience provides the material basis for mental change. Therefore, when constantly impacted by reality, it was her body that reacted first—stiffness, aphasia, retreat—thus taking the lead in announcing the loosening and collapse of the original cognitive system. Austen writes with a delicate body, reducing the cognitive transformation to a perceptible and knowable physical process.

Mr. Elton's proposal is the starting point of Emma's cognitive collapse, and it is also the most concentrated manifestation of physical conflict. For a long time, Emma has been the social leader, stubbornly thinking that Elton is devoted to Harriet, and constantly strengthens this misjudgment with arrangement, guidance and other actions to objectify other people's emotions. Elton's sudden confession in the carriage instantly broke her closed cognitive loop, making her "stand still, her hands and feet were cold, and she was speechless for a moment". This kind of physiological stress is far from a simple emotional panic, but a physical expression in which the inherent cognition begins to break. Body psychology research confirms that when the core belief is sharply in opposition to reality, the perception-action cycle is forced to be interrupted, and the body will produce typical reactions such as tremor, stiffness, aphasia, etc. before reason, which becomes an intuitive manifestation of cognitive collapse. Although this impact is strong, it only stays at the level of social judgment mistakes and has not touched the core of morality. Therefore, it can only trigger the initial loosening of Emma's cognition, which is not enough to completely disintegrate the underlying logic of her self-centeredness.

However, this cognitive misjudgment has caused Emma's physical behavior and spatial habits to change significantly, and her originally stable sense of power has gradually declined and converged, saving strength for deeper cognitive disintegration. Previously, she occupied the core position of the living room for a long time, gazing in a high seat and maintaining the central perspective of looking around the audience, and strengthening the cognitive illusion of "Master of Highbury" with space and body. After the incident, she no longer calmly sat in an authoritative position. Instead, she deliberately avoided the central area and curled up in the corner of the sofa, revealing the decline of power and confidence in a shrinking and low posture. As Merleau-Ponty argues that the body is the fundamental support for people to perceive the world and stand on life. The spatial environment and one's own every move together shape our true feelings about self-identity and interpersonal power. Emma's retreat in space is the external manifestation of the change of cognitive positioning. She is forced to admit her judgment mistakes and no longer regards herself as the absolute controller of the relationship. The sense of cognitive superiority given by spatial discipline begins to disintegrate. At the same time, Elton's reverse physical practice further deconstructs Emma's usual power pattern. At the ball after the failure of the marriage proposal, Elton expressed alienation and dissatisfaction with the attitude of "always turning his back to Emma's direction", and turned to complete the silent resistance with the body of "never face to her". This subtle action broke Emma's long-term social inertia of being obedient and looked up to, and made Emma experience the feeling of being excluded and ignored for the first time. In Austin's writing, the body posture itself is a concrete expression of the relationship between class and power, and a slight shift can complete the implicit subversion of the power relationship.

Cognitive shaking at the social level is just a transition. When the conflict turns into moral harm, the cognitive collapse really enters the core stage. Her mockery to Miss Bates pushed the physical conflict to the

moral level and became the key for destroying her self-centered cognition. In the group social situation, Emma was upset and mean, causing Miss Bates' face turned pale, lips trembling and fell into extreme embarrassment. This painful scene with great visual impact directly awakened Emma's moral perception. Damasio's Somatic Marker Theory suggests that moral reflection and emotional judgment are rooted in physical feelings, the painful expressions and posture of others activate physical sensations of guilt and self-examination [20]. Previously, Emma was blinded by class prejudice and ignored the emotional value of Miss Bates. At this moment, the physical pain of others turned into an unavoidable physical expression, forcing her to jump out of her own vision and face the harmfulness of words and the dignity of others. The reason why this incident can promote the deep collapse of cognition is that it touches the previously unshaken moral cognitive barriers. And the sense of moral guilt continues to ferment in the physical experience, which finally pushes Emma to complete the key step of moral awakening. She held Miss Bates's hand, "cold with remorse but firm in intention", conveying apology and respect with sincere physical contact. This is completely different from the control action of Harriet in the early days, which fades the meaning of transformation and domination, and becomes an emotional communication between equal person. This contact is not only a ceremonial apology, but also a moral revision completed with physical experience, announcing that she has begun to step out of self-centeredness and move towards recognition and care for others.

Layered embodied shocks—from the proposal, spatial retreat, and moral injury—gradually dismantle Emma's long-held cognitive system towards a comprehensive collapse and self-disposal. She no longer adhered to the illusion that the judgment was absolutely correct, frankly admitted that "my eyes and ears have deceived me", and attributed the cognitive bias to the common mistake of the senses and mind. Such reflection is not an empty psychological activity, but the result of physiological stress, spatial retreat and sensory awakening. The cognitive reconstruction of the character must be premised on the collapse of the old framework, and the body is the core medium that promotes this transformation. Therefore, Emma's cognitive collapse is not a negative failure, but a spiritual awakening that takes the initiative to break the spatial discipline and class prejudice, and clears obstacles for subsequent cognitive correction and ethical sublimation.

In summary, Emma's cognitive collapse always takes the body as the carrier and the physical experience as the inner driving force, presenting a clear progressive logic. The proposal broke the cognitive illusion and realized the initial loosening. The retreat of spatial posture and the resistance of others completed the middle-level disintegration, and the moral harm and tactile communication contributed to the complete collapse. From physiological tremor to moral awakening, from spatial retreat to equal empathy, cognitive transformation relies on physical reactions and sensory experience. Austin reveals the intrinsic relationship between the body, space and mind with delicate body writing, so that the growth of the character is a perceptible and explainable body process, so that the shaking and dissolution of cognition is no longer an abstract psychological activity, but a vivid and tangible life experience.

5. Sensory Integration: The Ethical Awakening of Cognition

When the cognitive inertia accumulated by spatial discipline slowly dissipates in embodied conflict, Emma's self-centeredness mindset gradually breaks down. Her inner growth and ideological transformation are not completed by abstract inner mind identification, but by relying on multiple sensory experiences such as vision, touch, hearing and taste. Embodied Cognition Theory holds that the maturity of cognition is not a closed rational introspection, but the result of two-way interaction and symbiosis between physical senses, behavioral posture and the surrounding environment. With a delicate sensory narrative, Austin integrates Emma's mental transformation into daily details, so that ethical awakening can be transformed into perceptible and explainable physical practice. Multiple sensory experiences are connected and progressive layer by layer, pushing Emma out of the self-enclosed cognitive limitations, gradually establishing respect, understanding and sympathy for others, and finally getting rid of self-limitations and forming a more gentle and rational concept of dealing with the world.

A shift in visual experience marks the start of Emma's ethical awakening, marking the withdrawal of subjective, controlling gaze. Gaze is a kind of watching with the meaning of power. The viewer objectifies others with a dominant posture and completes the implicit discipline and shaping in the eyes [21]. When Emma paints Harriet, she views and reshapes her from a position of control, forcing her own taste and class assumptions onto Harriet, and completes the implicit guidance and discipline of others with one-way gaze.

This visual style serves her self-serving manner. For Emma, Harriet is not an individual with independent emotions and will, but an object that can be transformed and meet her expectations. As the cognitive inertia gradually loosened, Emma's gaze changed quietly: she no longer judges from above, but accepts others as they are, voluntarily giving up visual dominance. Merleau-Ponty observes that body posture and viewing style together shape the subject's cognition of self and others. The shift from one-way gaze to flat vision means the decline of a strong mentality and the emergence of a sense of equality. Changes in perspective made Emma gradually jump out of the limitations of personal experience and no longer demand others with self-standards, which also laid the foundation for subsequent understanding and consideration of others.

The transformation of tactile behavior promotes Emma from implicit intervention to equal communication, so that the change of inner ideas is implemented in the details of daily life. When she got along with Harriet in the early days, Emma often guided her with the subtle movements of tidying up the shawl and adjusting the hair band, turning physical contact into a way of dominating others and highlighting her identity advantages. This kind of action seems to be gentle and considerate, but in fact it implies the intention of shaping and controlling other people's choices, which is a flow of its self-centered thinking in daily interaction. With the help of inadvertent body language, she subtly guided Harriet's emotions and behavior, but never really cared the others' true thoughts. When self-awareness is gradually improved, Emma's body language fades the color of deliberate manipulation and turns to equal and sincere emotional interaction. When Harriet spoke, she listened quietly, nod to signal, and did not interrupt and correct at will. Even if she disagreed, she gently accepted it with a smile and raised her hand, fully respecting the wishes of others. Cognitive literature research shows that touch, as the most immediate way of emotional communication, can reflect the maturity of inner concept and is also an important embodiment of reducing of prejudice and knowing how to respect [22]. The change of tactile behavior allows Emma to break the invisible class barrier with physical perception and transform the hazy ethical sympathy into tangible words and actions.

The awakening of auditory perception is the core node of Emma's ethical cognitive breakthrough, which realizes the true acceptance of other people's voices and emotions. From the perspective of physical phenomenology, empathy is not an abstract moral emotion, but the empathy ability rooted in the body perception and sensory experience. The subject realizes emotional interoperability and spiritual resonance with others through physical perception and interaction [23]. For a long time, class differences and self-centered ideas have made Emma habitually ignore the demands of the vulnerable. In the face of Miss Bates' confession and conversation, she often copes perfunctorily and lacks patience. She only accepts remarks that conform to her own ideas and ignore to the real situation and emotions of others, which is an important manifestation of her ethical perception and numbness. In social occasions, Miss Bates was embarrassed by Emma's ridicule. Her trembling voice and embarrassing words directly hit Emma's hearing, making her unable to avoid the pain she brought to others by her words and deeds. This strong sensory experience forced her to face her own arrogance and narrowness, and reflect on the measure and hurt behind her words. Damasio's Somatic Marker Theory notes that moral reflection is rooted in physical feelings, and the expression of other people's pain can awaken people's guilt and promote the awakening of ethical awakening. The awakening of hearing allows Emma to get out of the limitations of self-awareness, truly hear and understand the situation and dignity of others, and ethical cognition thus achieves a qualitative leap.

The return of taste experience completes the final transformation of Emma's ethical cognition and prompts her to look at the world around her with a peaceful and inclusive mentality. Roland Barthes proposed food in *Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*, the theory of material communication believes that food and diet are a symbolic communication system that "generalizes and transmits a situation, constitutes a message, and has an indicative role" [24]. Dietary behavior is not only a physiological need, but also a social symbol that carries identity, attitude and relationship. The sweet and sour apples sent by Mr. Knightley are simple and the simple taste experience, which breaks Emma's long-standing stereotype of dividing the level of taste by class. She used to divide identity differences by lifestyle taste and food preferences, binding exquisite life experience with her own class, thus strengthening her inner sense of identity superiority, and even judging other people's class affiliation by taste preferences. And this ordinary apple made her realize the purity and sincerity of the senses themselves, and she was no longer bound by class prejudice. She took the initiative to share the apple with Harriet, which made her taste fade the meaning of identity division, and became a gentle bond to convey goodwill and bring relationships closer [25]. Sensory research points out that dissipating of class prejudice at the taste level can reflect the improvement of people's inner tolerance,

representing that individuals gradually get rid of the shackles of inherent ideas. The flavor of the apple revives simple sensory awareness, helping Emma completely abandon class superiority and face the people around her with an equal and sincere attitude, and the ethical cognition moves towards stability and maturity.

Progressive shifts in sight, touch, hearing, and taste together bring Emma to sensory integration and ethical awakening. Putting down the visual prejudice of looking down, abandoning deliberate tactile intervention, accepting the auditory feelings of others, and fading the taste obsession of the class, Emma's every change in mentality is closely related to practical physical feelings. Relying on real daily experience to slowly correct cognition, Emma gradually dispelled self-centeredness and class obsession, and established a stable ethical cognition of respecting and sympathizing with others. Austin did not deliberately design a sudden ideological epiphany, nor did he have an empty preachy expression. Instead, she depicts growth through everyday sensory details to vividly interpret the connotation of embodied cognition. This writing not only makes Emma's ethical awakening real, credible, delicate and moving, but also makes the growth theme of Emma take root in real and touchable physical experience, get rid of empty moral preaching, and have ethical value and humanistic depth across time and space.

6. Conclusion

Emma follows the cognitive growth of the heroine, integrating spatial discipline, bodily practice, and sensory experience into its narrative, providing a vivid illustration of embodied cognition in literary form. Drawing on Embodied Cognition Theory, this paper examines the relations among space, body, and cognition. The spatial order of Hartfield and Highbury shapes Emma's initial self-centeredness worldview. Embodied conflicts triggered by Mr. Elton's proposal and her mockery of Miss Bates shook her inherent cognitive system with physical reactions and behavioral changes. The turn of sensory experience promotes the gradual awakening of moral sympathy, so that Emma finally achieves mental maturity and personality perfection. With delicate body writing and spatial narrative, Austin broke the binary opposition of mind and body, individual and environment, and proved that cognition is not an abstract psychological activity, but a dynamic process of physical and mental symbiosis and situational integration. The analysis of this article can provide a supplementary reference for the cognitive interpretation of Emma, hoping to provide new ideas and possibilities for the cognitive interpretation and aesthetic interpretation of classic literature.

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