

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Novels are literary works that are very dominant today. Readers of novels are not only educated people but people begin to enjoy novels with various genres. Various novels is written by writers, such as connoisseurs of literature, especially novels. But it will also be better if we can enjoy literature and have critical thinking. So that will be a process of literary criticism.

When reading literary works, especially novels, various questions will arise about the novel, Such as elements that contains in the novel in the form of intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

The novel that will discuss by researcher today is a novel by Jane Austen entitled *Emma*. *Emma* is a story about the everyday life of Emma Woodhouse and her circle of family, friends, and acquaintances where nothing ever really seems to happen. The story takes place in a time when many things are happening in the world, such as the French Revolution and the industrial revolution. None of the important happenings in the world appear in the story of *Emma*. On the surface it seems to be just a story about everyday life in the village of Highbury. However, if one takes a look beneath the surface at the history of writing and writers, in this case Jane Austen, one would see that Austen is trying to do much more than write a cute story about Emma and her friends. In *Emma*, Jane Austen addresses many issues important to women, making her a feminist of her time.

Jane Austen was by no means a radical feminist by today's standards, but she was indeed a feminist. Women have been feminists throughout history. Feminism as a defined term seems to be a relatively new concept but in fact has been around as long as women. They have worked within their confines to make their voices and opinions known. Austen has done this through her writing.

In *Emma*, Austen uses her writing to make some fairly gutsy remarks about women and their lives. Her feelings towards marriage stand out the most. In Emma's time, women were always taken care of through marriage or some other arrangement, such as being made a governess. As a general rule, women were not independent beings. Emma Woodhouse would have been breaking this rule. At present in the novel, she is a single woman living with her father on his estate called Hartfield. Her childhood governess, Miss Taylor, has recently left Hartfield to marry Mr. Weston. It would have been quite acceptable for Emma to live with her father under the expectation that she would eventually marry. In this case though, Austen makes Mr. Woodhouse a rather helpless invalid whom Emma has to take care of. Since her father isn't taking care of her, Emma is essentially independent.

Emma's thoughts on marriage make her situation even more unacceptable, according to the times. Emma and Harriet discuss Emma's feelings toward marriage as they are walking past the vicarage on their way to visit a poor, sick family on the edge of Highbury. Harriet begins the conversation by saying :

"I do so wonder, Miss Woodhouse, that you should not be married, or going to be married! so charming as you are!"—

Emma laughed, and replied,

"My being charming, Harriet, is not quite enough to induce me to marry; I must find other people charming—one other person at least. And I am not only, not going to be married, at present, but have very little intention of ever marrying at all."

[Emma goes on to say:]

"I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Were I to fall in love, indeed, it would be a different thing! but I never have been in love; it is not my way, or my nature; and I do not think I ever shall. And, without love, I am sure I should be a fool to change such a situation as mine. Fortune I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want: I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house as I am of Hartfield; and never, never could I expect to be so truly beloved and important; so always first and always right in any man's eyes as I am in my father's." (Page 75)

From the newly defined feminist movement, many feminist critics have sprung up in the literary world. Feminist criticism has multiple definitions that can be applied to the passage above. For the French, it is focused around linguistic development and the effect that a patriarchal society has on that development. French theory says that women are forced to conform to men's language or they must remain silent. In either case, they are kept in an inferior position as the "invisible and unheard sex" (Peterson 334).

In the scene above, Harriet believes that Emma should not be saying what she is. She believes that women should be happy to marry. However, Emma is in a position where she is independently wealthy. She does not need a man to take care of her financially. She is almost on an equal level with men as far as money is concerned. Here she speaks her mind with the same authority as a man would, choosing to use men's language rather than keeping silent. This scene shows how Austen chose to make her statement by putting men's words in Emma's mouth.

Austen is therefore not a conformist, as she is so often viewed. According to Claudia L. Johnson, in her book *Jane Austen Women, Politics, and the Novel*,

If Austen enters the canon because she seemed to deny or devalue her authority, Emma has been the heroine critics have loved to scold... Emma is often charged with the same transgressions – being ‘arrogant, self-important, and controlling’ or ‘narcissistic and perfectionist’ – from which critics diligently attempted to exempt Austen... (Johnson 122).

The American feminist critics take a broader approach. Some even base their criticism on “nonfeminist disciplines,” such as Marxism or psychoanalysis (Peterson 334). In general, Americans look at text from a female perspective, and attempt to bring unknown women writers to the forefront. An example of this would be when Alice Walker, a successful female writer in her own right and self-named ‘womanist,’ brought Zora Neale Hurston’s writing out of the dusty stacks by going to locate Hurston’s hidden gravesite and writing about Hurston and her work. Feminist critics find this a necessary task because, “women writers commonly took on urgent, social, political, and theological questions, since assigned to the ‘masculine sphere,’ and they have dropped out of later versions of literary history altogether as a result, leaving scarcely a trace” (Johnson xv). This was not necessary in Austen’s case since she was viewed as a conformist writing in the feminine style and therefore published.

In her article, “What is Feminist Criticism?,” Peterson states that American feminist critics also analyze works using gynocentrism. Gynocentrism is the examination of “the female literary tradition to find out how great women writers across the ages have felt, perceived themselves, and imagined reality” (334). The British theory tends to be more political. The British tend to have less emphasis on the differences between the sexes and more on the oppression of

women in history. This theory taken with the American concept of gynocentrism can be used to explain Jane Austen's feminist stance in *Emma* in the passage above.

1.2 Statement of the problem

To specify the research, this research conducted based on these following questions :

1. What is patriarchal culture in Jane Austen *Emma*?
2. What are feministic responses toward the patriarchal culture in Jane Austen *Emma*?
3. What are the effects of Emma's feministic point of views?

1.3 The scope of the problem

The subject of the study is Jane Austen's *Emma*. The researcher limits her analysis on finding out patriarchal culture, feministic responses toward the patriarchal culture. The researcher also focuses on and the effects of Emma's feministic point of views.

1.4 Objective of the study

This research purposes to discover two things based on novel written by Jane Austen entitled *Emma* :

1. To describe patriarchal culture in Jane Austen *Emma*
2. To describe feministic responses toward the patriarchal culture in Jane Austen *Emma*.
3. To describe the effects of Emma's feministic point of views.

1.5 Significance of the study

The research helps us to see more the works of Jane Austen. Particularly her novel *Emma*. It also discusses the impact of the book with a variety of issues inside it. As previously states, this study focuses on the conflict and describing of main female character in the novel. It reveal a women issue. This research aims for readers to give a different view when reading this novel.

By using this novel, It will help the student to learn about feminist issues. Additionally, this research also expects for similar research to develop the students understanding in doing literary criticism of this novel.