

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

There are so many things can be learned from a novel. People may get advantage by understanding human being. By reading a novel, people will able to know other people's point of view to see the problem of their life: "The novelist can teach you more about human nature ...The writer is not only influenced by society: he influences it."¹

Based on the quotation, the writer prefers to choose a novel to analyze. In this case, the writer chooses to analyze Jane Austen's "Emma". Emma is a picture of a woman who wants to be independent but she still can not avoid society's pressure at that time which demanded woman to get married. However, Emma married a man of her own choice, which shows that the spirit of feminism has started to exist although it is appropriated with the condition at that time:

The intermediate month was the one fixed on, as far as they dared, by Emma and Mr. Knightley. They had determined that their marriage ought to be concluded while John and Isabella were still at Hartfield, to allow them the fortnight's absence in a tour to the sea-side, which was the plan. John and Isabella, and every other friend, were agreed in approving it. But Mr. Woodhouse-how was Mr. Woodhouse to be induced to consent?-he, who had never yet alluded to their marriage but as a distant event.²

In the Romantic era, woman was in the second position. Woman did not do important things; she just did boring things as described below:

¹ Rene Welllek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, Australia: Penguin Books, 1956, 33&102

² Jane Austen, *Emma*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, 366

Women's lives were more boring, although during the winter there were frequent visits to London, where dances and parties held. But even the richest women's lives were limited by the idea that they could not take a share in more serious matters. They were only allowed to amuse themselves. As one Lord wrote: 'women are only children of larger growth...A man of sense only plays with them...he neither tells them about, not trust them, with serious matters.'³

'Emma' was made to illuminate woman's struggle to be independent. In 'Emma', the story only presented the social aspect. It did not present political aspect although political life had changed at that time:

The world in which Jane Austen (1775-1817) lived her comparatively short life of forty-two years was one of tremendous change and event. In the political field there occurred the French Revolution, the American War of the countries of Europe. The French Revolution brought many changes in thought and philosophy. In England, John and Charles Wesley began a revival in religion. The influence of this revival spread through the whole of the next century.⁴

Austen wrote her novel to show her idea about her daily life. She just wrote about someone's daily life and reflected her life in novel. She portrayed middle to upper class, love in the daily life to show the world:

Surrounded by Austen's lively and affectionate family and wholly immersed in her writing and domestic chores, Jane Austen led a life often noted for its lack of events. She did, however, attract several suitors and even accepted a proposal of marriage from one admirer-only to change her mind the following morning. Jane Austen's self-contained life often seems reflected in her novels, which, peopled as they are by impoverished clerical families, eligible country squires, foolish snobs, and husband-hunting women, seem to portray the world miniature.⁵

In this novel, Austen uses the concept of pastoral novel which criticize through dramatic dialogue about the way of thinking to facing life. This kind of novel

³ David Mc Dowall, *An Illustrated History of Britain*, London: Longman, 1985, 115-116

⁴ Jane Austen, *Emma*, Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2003, 7

⁵ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, London: Penguin Group, 1994, 1

contains “city, art and nature, the human and non-human, our social and our inner selves, our masculine and our feminine selves.”⁶

The pastoral can be a mode of political critique of present society, or it can be a dramatic form of unresolved dialogue about the tensions in that society, or it can be a retreat from politics into an apparently aesthetic landscape that is devoid of conflict and tension. It is this very versatility of the pastoral to both contain and city, art and nature, the human and the non-human, our social and our inner selves, our masculine and our feminine selves-that made the form so durable and so fascinating.⁷

In ‘Emma’, there is one heroine as a major character; she can present her character in the novel clearly. Even we will enjoy reading this novel because ‘Emma’ is full of intrigues in society:

‘Is not this most vexatious, Knightley?’ she cried. ‘And such weather for exploring!-These delays and disappointments are quite odious. What are we to do?-The year will wear away at this rate, and nothing done... ‘You had better explore to Donwell,’ replied Mr. Knightley. That may be done without horses. Come, and eat my strawberries. They are ripening fast.’ ... ‘You may depend on me,’ said she. ‘I certainly will come. Name your day, and I will come. You will allow me to bring Jane Fairfax?’

‘I cannot name a day,’ said he, ‘till I have spoken to some others whom I would wish to meet you,’

‘Oh! Leave all that to me. Only give me a carte-blanche. - I am Lady Patroness, you know. It is my party. I will bring friends with me.’

‘I hope you will bring Elton,’ said he: - ‘but I will not trouble you to give any other invitations.’ ...‘No,’ - he calmly replied, - ‘there is but one married woman in the world whom I can ever allow to invite what guests she pleases to Donwell.’⁸

In ‘Emma’, that heroine struggles for independent. Emma is a young girl who decides to be independent without married. She does not want to get married for two reasons. First, her father needs Emma to accompany him. Second, Emma does not want to depend on man:

⁶ Terry Gifford, *Pastoral*, London: Routledge, 1999, 11

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Jane Austen, *Emma*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, 267

Her father replied, 'Ah! My dear, I wish you would not make matches and foretell things, for whatever you say always comes to pass. Pray do not make any more matches.'

'I promise you to make none for my self, papa; but I must, indeed, for other people...

'Emma never thinks of herself, if she can do good to others,' rejoined Mr. Woodhouse, understanding but in part. 'But, my dear, pray do not make any more matches, they are silly things, and break up one's family circle grievously.'⁹

Emma Woodhouse is handsome, clever, and rich. She has a comfortable home. Her mother had died when she was very young and she had no clear memory of her. Miss Taylor has been engaged to act as governess to Emma. As Emma grows up, her relationship with Miss Taylor is no longer that of teacher and pupil, but rather that of friend. Emma respects Miss Taylor's judgment but generally follows her own.

Her first sorrow comes when Miss Taylor is married. Mr. Woodhouse, Emma's father, is a nervous man and easily depressed. In fact, he hates any changes. Marriage, which means change, is always disagreeable to him.

Emma gradually gets her father into a happier frame of mind. The evening has begun to pass tolerably well when a visitor was announced. It is Mr. Knightley, a man of about thirty-eight. It is a happy circumstance for Mr. Woodhouse. They talk about marriage. Mr. Woodhouse tells about his feeling that marriage is not important. Emma promises to her father that she will not make marriage for herself but she has to make marriage for other people.

The first time, Emma wants Harriet (her friend) married Mr. Elton. The fact is Mr. Elton falls in love with Emma. Mr. Elton says he has never thought

⁹ Ibid, 10-11

about of Harriet as his wife and she now believes him. She knows that it is her fault. She has decided that it is he who should marry Harriet and so he has been blind to the real purpose of her visits.

The second time, Emma matches make Harriet with Frank Churchill. In fact, Frank falls in love with Jane Fairfax. For the second time Harriet is the victim of Emma's mistake. Emma must tell her that painful truth as soon as possible. Finally Harriet marries a man of her own choice, Robert Martin. Emma also marries a man of her own choice, Mr. Knightley. Emma marries Mr. Knightley because she falls in love with Mr. Knightley:

Emma's eyes were instantly withdrawn; and she sat silently meditating, in a fixed attitude, for a few minutes. A few minutes were sufficient for making her acquainted with her own heart. A mind like her's, once opening to suspicion, made rapid progress. She touched—she admitted—she acknowledge the whole truth. Why was it so much worse that Harriet should be in love with Mr. Knightley, than with Frank Churchill? Why was the evil so dreadfully increased by Harriet's having some hope of a return? It darted through her, with the speed of an arrow, that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!¹⁰

From the novel, it can be seen that Jane Austen tries to reveal her feeling that woman should be independent and does not depend on man. That woman can stand alone but the influence of the society is still powerful at that time. In the end of the story it is known that Emma gets married, but she marries with her own choice, she does not let other people influence her decision.

At that time, there is no feminist but Austen tries to express feminism spirit. So the writer will analyze this novel using feminist approach because this approach is appropriate with the novel.

¹⁰ Ibid, 308

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of the study is literature.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The analysis will focus on the novel; the title is “The Spirit of Feminism Reflected in Austen’s Emma”. In analyzing this novel, the writer uses feminist approach to explain feminism spirit in Romanticism era. The writer focuses on Emma’s personality as a major character based on the theory of Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor Mill, and John Stuart Mill.

1.4 Problem Formulation

1. What kind of a woman is Emma?
2. What are Emma’s opinions about marriage?
3. What are Emma’s spirits of feminism according to Liberal Feminists?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To show what kind of a woman Emma is.
2. To show what Emma’s opinions about marriage are.
3. To reveal Emma’s spirit of feminism according to Liberal Feminists.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The benefit of the study is for other student who is interested to learn about the social condition in the eighteen century and the spirit of feminism occurred at that time. The writer wants the reader can enlarge their knowledge that women can be independent although women married with men.

The writer expects that this paper will enrich the students and lecturers of Faculty of Letters Soegijapranata Catholic University with more sources on the spirit of feminism.

1.7 Definition of Terms

a. Spirit of feminism

Willingness to assert oneself to believe in the principle that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.¹¹

b. Feminist literary criticism

Often a political attack upon other modes of criticism and theory, and its social orientation moves beyond traditional literary criticism. Feminist literary critics try to explain how power imbalances due to gender in a given culture are reflected in or challenged by literary texts.¹²

c. Independent woman

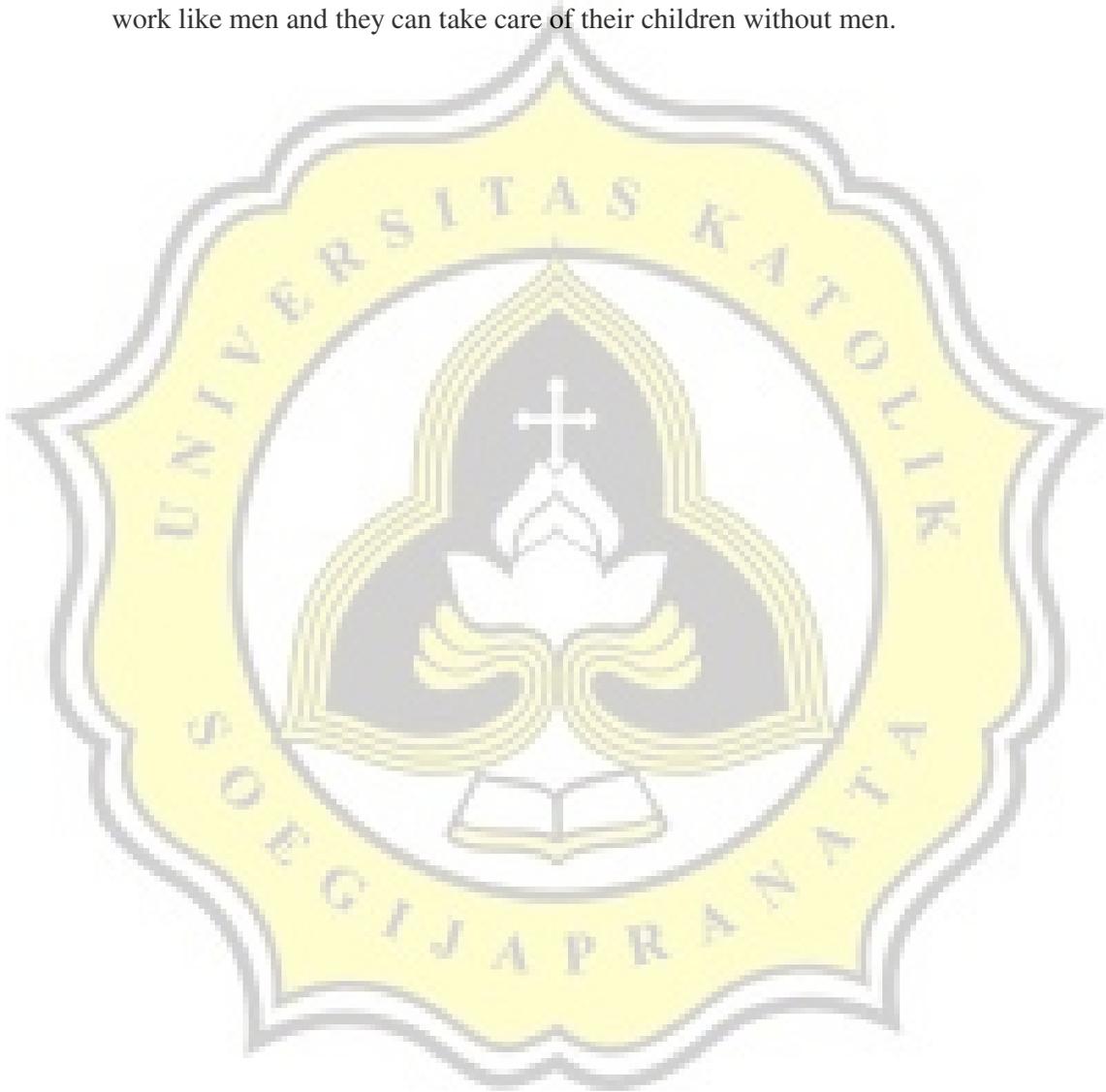
The roles of women have gone through the most dramatic changes. They have changed more in the last two generations than in the last two millennia. Due to mass media, urbanization and politics, women have achieved equality to men in education and the workplace and everywhere else. And thanks to the sexual revolution, people have freed their minds. Women are now able to support themselves and raise their own children without the help of a man, thus escaping the traditional role of "mother" and "wife". New found independence is something people fear giving back. The independent woman does not want to be controlled

¹¹ A S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 428&1146

¹² L.Wilfred Guerin, Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, Jeanne C. Reesman, John R. Willingham, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 196

or told what to do. She will never again be the docile little lamb once sought after for marrying purposes.¹³

Today, women are independent. They can be single mother. They can work like men and they can take care of their children without men.



¹³ Anon, <<http://www.singlescafe.net/independent-woman.html>>, (28.06.2005)