



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Adolescence marks the transition from childhood to adulthood, and during this period individuals go through biological, psychological, and social changes that shape how they see themselves and relate to others. Physical maturation is one obvious sign of this stage, but adolescence also brings emotional growth and new expectations from family and society. As Donelson and Nilsen (1980) state, "Puberty is a universal experience, but adolescence is not," meaning adolescence is shaped by cultural and social context, not just biology. Adolescents begin questioning their values, social roles, and future plans as they work out who they really are, and this questioning is what makes adolescence a period in which individuals try to build a stable identity. Identity formation at this stage has drawn attention from many developmental psychologists, including Erik Erikson, who sees identity development as the central task of adolescence.

Erikson (1968) describes adolescence as the period when people begin asking fundamental questions about who they are and who they want to become. Building a stable identity means bringing together their experiences, values, abilities, and future goals. When this works out, adolescents become more confident making their own choices; when it doesn't, they end up uncertain, struggling to define their role in society and to make personal decisions. Erikson (1968) further explains that "the growing and developing youths, faced with this physiological revolution within them, and with tangible

adult tasks ahead of them, are now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are" (p. 128). In other words, adolescents often feel torn between understanding themselves and meeting other people's expectations. Since questions of identity are part of everyday human experience, it makes sense that many literary works explore this issue through their characters.

Literary works give authors room to examine psychological conflicts that are harder to observe in everyday life. Through fictional characters, readers can see how identity develops under the influence of family, society, and personal experience. This theme runs through both modern and classical literature. In *Looking for Alaska* (2005), for instance, the protagonist struggles to redefine himself after entering a new social environment. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) shows something similar: Charlie struggles to understand himself while dealing with trauma and his relationships with others. Older works take up the same theme. In *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Holden Caulfield questions the values of society and struggles to find his place in the adult world, while Pip in *Great Expectations* (1861) tries to reshape his identity to fit social expectations. Identity development is not tied to one period of literature; it keeps showing up across different times and genres.

Jane Austen is one classical author who returns to this issue often. Johnson (1988) argues that Austen focuses on "the education of the heroine," where characters gradually gain self-awareness through experience. Butler (1975) makes a similar point, describing Austen's version of personal development as shaped by social interaction and moral learning. Austen's

novels are usually read for their treatment of marriage and social class, but they also show how individuals build their identities while responding to the expectations around them.

Emma centers on Emma Woodhouse as its protagonist, but the novel also gives real psychological weight to another character: Harriet Smith. Throughout the novel, Harriet is consistently unsure of her own judgment and identity. Instead of trusting herself, she often adopts Emma's views without question and changes her decisions easily whenever Emma advises her to. This suggests Harriet has not yet built a stable sense of identity and remains highly influenced by what others expect of her. Read through Erikson's framework, Harriet's dependence on others and her trouble making independent choices look like identity confusion, which makes her a useful character for examining how identity forms.

Although *Emma* has been widely studied, most scholarly discussion centers on Emma Woodhouse. Harriet Smith gets far less attention, especially when it comes to her psychological development, and few studies have looked at her identity formation through Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, particularly the stage of Identity versus Role Confusion. Erikson's theory works well for literary characters whose identities develop through social interaction and personal conflict, which makes this gap worth addressing: a closer look at Harriet's psychological development could add to how we understand identity formation in a supporting character within a classical work.

This study analyzes Harriet Smith's identity formation in *Emma* using

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, particularly the stage of Identity versus Role Confusion. It focuses on Harriet's dependence on others, the influence of her social environment, and her difficulty making independent decisions, in order to understand how these factors shape her identity development. The aim is to contribute to discussions of identity development in literature by offering a psychological reading of Harriet Smith as a supporting character.

1.2.Problem of the Study

The topic aims to explain on the following question:

1. What are the Characteristics of Harriet Smith's role confusion in *Emma* (1815)?
2. What are the Causes of Harriet Smith's role confusion in *Emma* (1815)?

1.3.Purpose of the Study

Based on the explanation above, the research questions sought to be answered in this study are:

1. To find out the Characteristics of Harriet Smith's role confusion in *Emma* (1815).
2. To find out the Causes of Harriet Smith's role confusion in *Emma* (1815).

1.4.Hypothesis

Harriet Smith experiences role confusion in *Emma* (1815) by Jane Austen

1.5.Previous Studies

To support this study, several previous studies related to *Emma* by Jane

Austen are reviewed. These studies provide useful references and theoretical support to help understand the characters and the issues discussed in the novel, especially in relation to social and psychological aspects.

First, Mammadova conducted a study entitled *Class and Character in Emma: Jane Austen's Subtle Critique of Social Hierarchies* (2025). This study uses a sociological approach to analyze the representation of social class in *Emma*. The research focuses on how social hierarchy, wealth, and status influence characters' behavior and relationships, particularly through characterization and irony. The study concludes that Austen subtly critiques social hierarchy by emphasizing the moral responsibility of the upper class rather than openly rejecting the class system.

Second, Fitria conducted a thesis entitled *The Women Movements in Jane Austen's Emma* (2021). This study applies feminist literary criticism as its theoretical framework to examine the struggles of female characters in *Emma*. The research analyzes women's efforts to challenge patriarchal limitations and to achieve equality and independence. The study concludes that the novel reflects feminist ideas that emphasize women's agency and resistance to social restrictions.

Third, Nurrahma conducted a study entitled *The Analysis of Conflicts of the Main Character in Jane Austen's Emma* (2021). This study applied a structuralism approach. his thesis aimed to analyze the intrinsic aspects of the novel and to find the internal and external conflicts experienced by the main character, Emma Woodhouse. This study used a descriptive qualitative method and to examine intrinsic elements such as character, plot, setting, and theme.

The findings show that the conflicts experienced by Emma Woodhouse are divided into internal conflicts, including emotional and moral struggles, and external conflicts involving her interactions with other characters, particularly in matters of marriage and social relationships. The study concludes that these conflicts play a significant role in shaping the narrative development of the novel.

Fourth, Kriker conducted a dissertation entitled *Significance of Irony in Jane Austen's Emma* (2019). This study employs a stylistic and literary analysis approach focusing on irony as a literary device. The research concludes that irony plays a crucial role in shaping characterization and expressing social criticism in *Emma*.

Fifth, Bahri and Fouzia conducted a study entitled *Ideology and Point of View in Jane Austen's Novel Emma* (2017). This study applies a feminist and narratological approach, focusing on point of view and Free Indirect Speech (FIS). The study concludes that Austen uses narrative techniques to subtly criticize patriarchal ideology and social class distinctions.

Based on the review of the previous studies, it can be concluded that although many researchers have discussed *Emma* by Jane Austen from various perspectives, but none of these studies focus specifically on Harriet Smith's psychosocial development using Erik Erikson's theory. The present research shifts the focus to Harriet Smith by examining her identity development through psychosocial development. By applying this theoretical perspective, this research aims to fill the gap in existing studies and provide a new contribution to the discussion of character development in *Emma*.

Table 1 Previous Studies

No	Title	Material Object	Formal Object (Theoretical Framework)	Methodology and Findings
1.	Class and Character in Emma: Jane Austen's Subtle Critique of Social Hierarchies (Mammadova, 2025)	<i>Emma</i>	Sociological Approach	Descriptive qualitative analysis. The study examines how social hierarchy, wealth, and status influence characters' behavior and relationships through characterization and irony. It finds that Austen subtly critiques social hierarchy by emphasizing the moral responsibility of the upper class rather than directly rejecting the class system.
2.	The Women Movements in Jane Austen's Emma (Fitria, 2021)	<i>Emma</i>	Feminist Criticism	Descriptive qualitative analysis. The study examines female characters' struggles against patriarchal limitations. It finds that Emma reflects feminist ideas through women's agency and resistance to social restrictions.
3.	The Analysis of Conflicts of the Main Character in Jane Austen's Emma	<i>Emma</i>	Structuralism Approach	Descriptive qualitative analysis. The study examines the intrinsic elements and conflicts experienced by Emma Woodhouse. The

	(Nurrahma, 2021)			findings identify internal conflicts involving emotional and moral struggles and external conflicts involving marriage and social relationship.
4.	Significance of Irony in Jane Austen's Emma (Kriker, 2019)	<i>Emma</i>	Stylistic and Literary Analysis	Literary textual analysis. The study examines the use of irony in Emma. The findings show that irony plays an important role in developing characterization and expressing Austen's social criticism.
5.	Ideology and Point of View in Jane Austen's Novel Emma (Bahri & Fouzia, 2017)	<i>Emma</i>	Feminist and Narratological Approach	Qualitative textual analysis. The study examines point of view and FIS in relation to ideology. The findings show that Austen uses narrative techniques to subtly criticize patriarchal ideology and social class distinctions.

1.6.Theoretical Framework

1.6.1.Psychological Criticism

Psychological criticism is literary analysis that utilizes psychological theories. According to Dobie (2012, p. 54), psychological theories are attempts to explore and describe the growth, development, and structure of the human personality. In literary criticism, psychological criticism is considered to have originated from Freud's theories and concepts about the human psyche. Freud's approach emphasizes the role of the unconscious mind in influencing human thoughts, feelings, motivations, and behavior. Therefore, psychological criticism attempts to understand literary characters by examining their psychological conditions and the underlying factors that influence their behavior.

Sigmund Freud's Psychological approach provided the basis for examining the relationship between human psychology and behavior in literary works. Through this approach, actions, emotions, conflicts, and character motivation can be interpreted as representations of psychological processes. Therefore, psychological criticism allows researchers to explore the inner experiences of literary characters and understand how their psychological conditions are represented through the text. In this study, psychological criticism is used as a general approach to examine Harriet Smith's psychological development before applying a more specific psychological theory to explain her experience of role confusion.

1.6.2. Psychosocial Development Theory of Erik Erikson's

Erik Erikson developed the theory of psychosocial development to explain how human personality grows through social interaction and life experiences across the lifespan. He believes that development does not stop in childhood, but continues as individuals face different challenges in each stage of life. According to Boeree (2013), "Erikson is best known for his theory of psychosocial development, which emphasizes the influence of society and culture on the individual's growth." This idea highlights that a person's identity is shaped not only by internal factors, but also by their relationships and social environment. Erikson explains that human development takes place through eight stages, and each stage presents a central conflict that must be resolved for individuals to grow in a healthy way (Erikson, 1950).

In addition, Erikson describes each stage as a "crisis," which can be understood as an important moment in development. Boeree (2013) states that "a crisis is not necessarily a catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential." This means that every stage offers both challenges and opportunities for personal growth. When individuals are able to resolve the conflict successfully, they develop positive qualities that support their personality and identity. However, if they fail to resolve it, this may create difficulties that affect later stages of life (Erikson, 1968). Therefore, Erikson's theory explains development as a continuous process from infancy to old age, where each stage plays an important role in shaping a person's identity and psychological well-being.

1.6.3.The Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development

To understand how identity develops across the human lifespan, it is important to first explain Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, which consists of eight developmental stages.

a. First Stage: Trust vs. Mistrust (0–1 Year)

This first stage happens during infancy when babies completely depend on their caregivers. At this time, babies learn whether the world is safe or not through daily experiences such as being fed, held, and comforted. If caregivers respond consistently with love and protection, the baby develops trust. The child begins to feel that people are reliable and that their needs will be met. However, if care is inconsistent, cold, or neglectful, the baby may develop mistrust and insecurity. For example, a baby who cries and is gently comforted learns that others can be trusted. Erikson (1963) explains that early trust forms the foundation for healthy personality development in later life.

b. Second Stage: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (1–3 Years)

In this stage, children begin to explore their independence. They start learning simple skills such as walking, eating by themselves, or choosing their clothes. When parents give support and patience, children develop autonomy and confidence in their abilities. However, if parents are too strict, critical, or controlling, children may feel ashamed of their mistakes and begin to doubt themselves. For example, a child who is allowed to try tying their shoes—even if they fail at first will feel proud when they succeed. This stage teaches

children that making small mistakes is part of learning.

c. Third Stage: Initiative vs. Guilt (3–6 Years)

At this stage, children become more active and imaginative. They begin to plan activities, ask many questions, and interact more with others. If adults encourage their curiosity and creativity, children develop initiative and confidence. But if their ideas are constantly rejected or criticized, they may feel guilty for trying new things. For example, when a child pretends to be a teacher or doctor during play and is supported, they learn to take initiative. This stage helps children build leadership skills and social confidence.

d. Forth Stage: Industry vs. Inferiority (7–11 Years)

During the school years, children focus on learning new skills and gaining competence. They compare themselves with peers in academic work, sports, or social activities. When children receive encouragement and experience success, they develop a sense of industry and capability. However, repeated failure or negative comparison can make them feel inferior. For instance, a student who practices and improves in math will feel proud of their progress. According to Santrock (2018), positive feedback during middle childhood strengthens a child's sense of competence and motivation.

e. Fifth Stage: Identity vs. Role Confusion (12–18 Years)

Adolescence is an especially important stage because individuals begin to seriously question who they are. Teenagers explore their values, beliefs,

goals, and social roles. They may experiment with different friendships, styles, or ideas while trying to understand themselves. If they successfully explore and make commitments, they develop a strong sense of identity. However, if they feel confused or overly dependent on others' opinions, they may experience role confusion. For example, a teenager who always follows friends without thinking independently may struggle to build a stable sense of identity. However, not all adolescents are able to resolve this stage successfully. Erikson (1968) states that failure in this stage can lead to uncertainty about one's place in society and difficulty making independent decisions. According to Erikson, this failure occurs when adolescents are unable to integrate their experiences, values, abilities, and future goals into a coherent sense of identity. Based on this concept, this study identifies several characteristics that indicate Harriet Smith's role confusion, including dependence on others in making important decisions, uncertainty about social identity, low self-confidence and lack of independent judgment, instability in romantic aspirations and future goals, and excessive need for social acceptance. These characteristics are used as analytical indicators to examine Harriet's difficulty in developing a stable and independent sense of identity.

f. Sixth Stage: Intimacy vs. Isolation (19–29 Years)

In young adulthood, individuals look for close and meaningful relationships. They want emotional connection, trust, and commitment with others. When they can share themselves openly, they develop intimacy. But if they fear rejection or avoid deep relationships, they may experience isolation and loneliness. For example, someone who builds a supportive romantic

relationship feels emotionally secure, while someone who avoids closeness may feel alone even in social settings.

g. Seventh Stage: Generativity vs. Stagnation (30–64 Years)

At this stage, adults focus on contributing to society and supporting the next generation. This can happen through work, parenting, mentoring, or community involvement. When individuals feel productive and useful, they experience generativity. However, if they feel unproductive or disconnected from society, they may feel stagnant. For example, a parent who actively guides their children or a worker who mentors younger colleagues may feel fulfilled and meaningful.

h. Eighth Stage: Integrity vs. Despair (Old Age: 65 Years and Above)

In the final stage, older adults reflect on their lives. They think about their achievements, relationships, and choices. If they feel satisfied and accept their life as meaningful, they develop integrity. But if they focus on regrets and missed opportunities, they may feel despair. For instance, an elderly person who feels grateful for their experiences will feel peaceful, while someone who constantly regrets the past may struggle emotionally.

This research focuses specifically on the fifth stage: Identity vs. Role Confusion, because Harriet Smith is portrayed as a young woman who has not yet developed a stable sense of identity. Based on her age and social position in *Emma* (1815), Harriet is situated in a transitional phase called adolescence.

Erikson (1968) explains that individuals who fail to resolve this stage often experience uncertainty, dependence on others, and difficulty defining their social roles.

Harriet Smith's repeated confusion about her social status, romantic choices, and dependence on Emma Woodhouse clearly reflects the characteristics of role confusion. Therefore, Erikson's psychosocial development theory, particularly the fifth stage, provides a strong theoretical basis for analyzing Harriet's psychological condition in the novel.

1.7. Research Method

The research method used in this study is Qualitative, which means the data are not related to calculation or numbers. According to Creswell (2013), the Qualitative method is a type of study that investigates and understands the meaning of different individuals or groups of people due to social problems. This qualitative was chosen to be able to present factual, systematic, and exact data following existing facts (Nazir, 1988). In addition, this method is suitable because the study focuses on understanding a character's thoughts, feelings, and development as presented in the novel. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to interpret narrative details, dialogues, and character behavior in order to explain psychological conditions and identity issues that cannot be examined through numerical data.

1.7.1. Data Collection Method

The data in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. The

primary data are taken from Jane Austen's novel *Emma* (1815). In literary studies, the literary text itself functions as the primary source of analysis (Abrams, 1999). The novel is read carefully to understand the overall narrative and to focus on the portrayal of characters, particularly Harriet Smith, in order to examine her role and development within the story.

The secondary data are obtained from relevant academic journals, books, and previous studies that discuss *Emma* and related literary theories. These sources are used to support the analysis, strengthen the theoretical framework, and situate this study within the existing scholarly discussion of Jane Austen's *Emma*.

1.7.2. Data Analysis Method

This study employs the method of close reading to examine the development of Harriet Smith as depicted in Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815). According to Tyson (2006), close reading is “the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of text,” which is essential in literary studies because it allows the researcher to understand the text in depth through careful attention to language, narration, and characterization. Through this method, the researcher focuses on the portrayal of Harriet Smith in order to examine her psychological development and identity confusion as presented in the novel.

To answer the research questions, Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory is applied to analyze Harriet Smith's development during adolescence from a psychosocial perspective. The data are categorized based on Erikson's developmental stages and analyzed to find Harriet's psychosocial condition.