

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Adultery has become a very prominent problem in today's society. "It's spreading faster than many people could imagine and is almost uncontrollable." ("Adultery"). Adultery can happen to anybody who is not satisfied with his or her spouse and it happens to people of any social status. "Today our culture has gone from adultery being the worst thing a person could do, to now being something that's considered common amongst everyone." ("An Analysis Why People are Unfaithful to Their Partners"). Although it is socially immoral, until now this kind of relationship still exists. This issue is raised in the novels in a very interesting way.

The two novels I have chosen Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert and Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy deal with the issue of adultery. Both Madame Bovary and Anna Karenina are written in the same century, 19th century, the first is set in France and the latter in Russia, which proves that adultery exists anywhere and anytime. However, the society pretends that adultery does not exist,

since it is a disgrace to the society. “Under the old code of behaviour, if you committed adultery you kept it discreet and people pretended not to notice.” (Rauch).

Gustave Flaubert is a French novelist. From all Flaubert’s works I choose Madame Bovary because I am curious to know why at that time adultery could happen while the norm in the 19th century was very strong. It is considered “One of the most important French novels of the 19th century. It is vastly regarded as Flaubert's most important work...” (“Celebrating Gustave Flaubert’s Famous Work”). Also, this novel is very sentimental since, “... Flaubert used his adulterous affair with Colet as source material for the novel, and attributed some of his own personality traits and values to Emma Bovary...” (“Gustave Flaubert”).

The other novelist whose work I choose to analyze is Leo Tolstoy. Anna Karenina is considered the greatest novel ever written in the world. “...Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina (1878) was placed on Time magazine’s ten greatest novels of all time, first place respectively.” (“Leo Tolstoy”). It happens because “Tolstoy’s understanding of human nature and the human condition is incredibly profound, and it seems very modern.” (“The Making of Anna Karenina”).

In my thesis, I would like to analyze the portrayal of the protagonists. In both novels I choose this topic because the protagonists of the two novels have to deal with a controversial issue, i.e. adultery, and the authors of the novels have different ways of presenting the characters, especially how the protagonists have to respond to the issue of adultery. Characterization is important in fiction because “Without characterization, no*thesis, no*plot, and no*setting can develop genuine

interest for a reader or cause him to care what happens, or does not happen, to whom and why.” (Shaw 71). In both Madame Bovary and Anna Karenina the protagonist of each story is a married woman who is involved in adulterous relationship.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems are stated as follows:

1. How do the authors portray the protagonists?
2. What are the purposes of the authors in creating such characters?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the statement of the problems above, the purpose of the study is:

1. To show how the authors portray the protagonists in the novels.
2. To show the purposes of the authors in creating such characters.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

For my research, I use library research, by first reading Madame Bovary and Anna Karenina as the primary texts. I also read and compile some texts that are taken from books and the Internet to support the study of the two texts. The information and the knowledge that have been gathered are then used to analyse the two texts. Finally, I draw a conclusion from the research I have conducted.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis contains four chapters. The thesis starts with the Preface. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the discussion of Madame Bovary. Chapter Three is the discussion of Anna Karenina. The last chapter is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendix, which contains the Synopses of the two novels and the Biographies of the Authors.