

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Self-discovery is commonly defined as “[t]he act or process of achieving understanding or knowledge of oneself” (“Self-discovery”). The two novels She’s Come Undone and White Oleander raise a very interesting issue about two women who have traumatic experiences in the form of parental fights and abandonment in their past. These experiences later make them try to find their true selves and the meaning of their lives. Each main character goes into a journey of self discovery. They begin with analyzing the causes of their broken lives and then struggle to make their lives better.

In my opinion, these two books are astonishingly wonderful because each of them is the first novel from each author, yet each of them becomes the bestseller. Wally Lamb is an outstanding author who has the guts to use a new method in his first novel, She’s Come Undone. In this novel, Lamb tries to put himself in a woman’s position and situation by creating a woman protagonist. Moreover, he creates a woman protagonist, who is not just a common woman, but

a woman who undergoes mental illness. Surprisingly, Lamb succeeds to delve into her mind in detail. “Lamb's choice of the female voice has been praised by critics” (“She’s Come Undone: Female Voice”) and his guts have earned him some awards.

The author of White Oleander, Janet Fitch is a talented author who has dozens of journalistic experiences. Her experiences make her able to create an intricate character and “the artistry of her work, the lines that take the reader's breath away, are hard-won” (“About the Author”). Fitch admired Edgar Allan Poe’s works which make some of her works much influenced by him. She does not “follow Poe’s storyline in anyway” (“From White to Black”), but she makes her works concern more “in part, with the internal corruption and destruction ... [and She] cast a Poe-like shadowy spell” (“From White to Black”).

In my major thesis, I am going to analyze how the protagonists are portrayed in She’s Come Undone and White Oleander using formalism. Protagonist is defined as “the main character in a play, film/movie or book” (Hornby 1060). So, to portray a protagonist means to describe the main character’s characteristics in a particular way.

In these two novels, the protagonists have round and dynamic characteristics because the circumstances change them. And, these complex characteristics influence the story. So in my analysis, I am going to discuss the changes of these characteristics and how the protagonists’ experiences help change those characteristics.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statements of the problem in my major thesis are:

1. How are the protagonists portrayed in the novels?
2. What are the purposes of the authors in creating such protagonists?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purposes of the study in my major thesis are:

1. I want to analyze how the protagonists are portrayed in the novels.
2. I want to show the purposes of the authors in creating such protagonists.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

In analysing She's Come Undone by Wally Lamb and White Oleander by Janet Fitch, I use library research. First, I read the two novels as the primary texts. Next, I find some literary criticisms about the authors and the works from the internet to help the writing of my analysis. Finally, I finish the analysis with a conclusion.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of four chapters, beginning with the Acknowledgement. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two consists of the portrayal of the protagonist in She's Come Undone. Chapter Three is the portrayal of the protagonist in White Oleander. Chapter Four, is the Conclusion.

At the end of the thesis, there are Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the synopsis of the two novels and the biography of the authors.