

## Reflections of Fornication and Self-Immolation of Heroines in the Select Modern Novels: A Comparative Study

Md. Jahidul Azad\*

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Prime University, Bangladesh

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\*Corresponding author: Md. Jahidul Azad

### Abstract

### Original Research Article

Modern novels with the issue of fornication deal with the reinforcement of dominant ideologies with feminist aspects of status quo. Modern novels, like *Lewdness* are easily defined, being based on sexual relation between two, at least one of them already got married, has long served as a public challenge to marriage. As a result, fornicated relation is considered a vicious and forbidden deed, whether of personal, social, or religious in nature. This paper shows how novels of fornicated relation have been theorized as the novels of bold relationship, not merely as the novels of fornication as the word determines social disobedience and offence. This paper would like to examine an emotional emptiness of the heroines which facilitates them embracing the fornicated relation with severe pain and challenges. Thus, it emphasises on its own theoretical perspective by presenting the heroines in select modern novels, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* [1], Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* [2], and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* [3] with a view to displaying traditional feminine behaviors and desires from their roots which are, consequently, their fate to self-immolation.

**Keywords:** Fornicated Relation, Challenge to Marriage, Social Disobedience, Feminine Behavior, and Self-immolation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Fornicated relation plays an important role in English literature, especially in poems, plays, and novels in the modern age. Adultery is a literary genre that is dealt with anthropological and sociological concerns for marriage is related to human life. Divorce is a result of the contradiction of the holy bond. Adultery causes and effects on individual and society. To comprehend adultery, it is essential to look at historical and modern views. It is defined as "sex between a married person and somebody who is not their husband or wife" [4].

Fornicated relation has been presented in Western literature with the passage of time. Disloyalty has become a part of human existence as long as there has been marriage. Marriage conveys passionate feelings. It brings its own conflict between people concerned and between sexual desires and a sense of loyalty. As marriage and family are considered as foundation of society, a story of fornicated relation shows the conflict between social pressure and individual struggle for contentment. It happens a conflict between people concerned and sexual desires. It shows a disagreement between social pressure and

individual struggle for happiness. Though it is controversial, adultery is very common issue. It has not been for marriage, adultery would have been meaningless. In society, marriage is considered as sacred and vital; adultery is its result if marriage does not meet human demands. For this purpose, this study would like to examine themes and its structures through adhering to self-immolation of heroines in select modern novels of the two French novelists, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) [1] and Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1867) [2] as well as Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1878) [3].

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is:

- To know the reason of modern heroine's refusal of displaying traditional feminine behaviors
- To explore the reason of modern heroine's association in fornicated relation and their consequences to self-immolation

## METHODOLOGY

The study has employed qualitative approach in collecting and arranging information through observing and analyzing resources. It is a critical

analysis of the theme of fornicated relation and self-immolation as being reflected in the select texts of the modern novelists. The information and the idea used in this study have been derived from secondary sources. References being used to authenticate the study have been cited from different books and literary articles being published in the peer reviewed journals. The original texts have been fortified for references for the authentication of the analysis presented in the study.

### An Analysis of the Select Novels

Gustave Flaubert is one of the greatest fiction writers in 19<sup>th</sup>- century France. He studies law at Paris in 1840; he is terminated by nerve disease, and failure at the law exam, leads him devote himself to literature. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* differs in a striking way from other canonical, male authors' realist novels of female adultery in 19<sup>th</sup>-century. The plot of the novel is mid-19-century; and its setting is France. Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* is the story of a fornicated one, including a doctor, and a lawyer. Emma Bovary, the heroine of Flaubert, beautiful and adoring wife of a doctor, feels trapped in a tedious life of a doctor, and seeks relief in an affairs with a young man from an aristocracy, and later on with a lawyer. When Emma meets a young and attractive man, she loses self-control. She has a desire for sexuality, while she waits for a man to help her complete yearning. Leon Dupuis and Rodolphe Boulanger become her secret lovers. Leon, a young law student stimulates Emma to behave immorally. He has a taste of reading romantic feeling like Emma. Romantic emotion takes her from the morality of a respectable woman.

Fantasy makes her incapable of taking action for herself. She blames Leon for her disappointed hopes, as though he betrayed her; and she wished for a catastrophe about separation since she did not have any courage to take any action herself [5]. When she finds no hope of life, she kills herself leaving Charles, her husband, a wreck. Charles too dies soon, leaving a daughter orphaned.

Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina* presents Anna as a lovable character because the novelist reveals her desire to find a quest of life. She does not compromise her love for Vronsky by hiding their affair. In *Anna Karenina*, Leo Tolstoy portrays a young woman who has been ill-matched to an older man. Their difference in age separates them emotionally and physically [6].

Anna loses herself for love and true happiness since unhappy marriage has led to unhappy family. Edwina Cruise [7] suggests in an article "Women, Sexuality and the Family in Tolstoy", that he seems to be enthralled at the outcome of the characters' lives. At the time of writing of *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy emerges from his shaking his head in bewilderment. Tolstoy links the causes that lead to Anna's downfall to her husband's negligence. Anna is faced with freedom and

no direction from her husband who is consumed with work than with fostering his relationship with his wife and son. Anna is presented with a tempting offer of intimacy with a man around his adoration for such an attractive woman.

Anna develops further illustrates why self-immolation seems to Tolstoy as to his contemporaries, the only conclusion to Anna's life although Tolstoy makes it very clear that her brother Stiva gets involved in a relationship beyond his marriage. It seems to an encounter to create a kind of climate where her affair is not unheard that there is a strain of amorousness in a blood, he points out that Stiva does not face adversities that Anna faces. In Tolstoy's novel, while the main protagonist Anna's story is at a forefront, her brother Stiva's adventure comprises a subplot of the story. Stiva's adventure is an emphatic love affair. A man hardly attains the point of ditching his wife and children by disbanding his family. As a reflection of socio-psychological parameters, Stiva entreats his wife to forgive him by keeping his marriage intact. Tolstoy suggests to the reader that women in desire for a man's love throw themselves into the arms of the first man who satisfies their impulsive needs. For Anna the man seems to be Karenin who is a politician despite the fact that dissimilarity in age between them is rather a great one. For Emma in *Madame Bovary*, the man is Charles Bovary, the doctor of the area, whom, as she thinks, gratifies her romantic fantasy.

On the other hand, Thérèse Raquin, Émile Zola's heroine in *Thérèse Raquin*, beholdens to marry her aunt's son, because of the obligation she feels for bringing her up. But she finds her husband, Camille, is sickly and egocentric, and when a chance arises, Raquin penetrates into a passionate affair with Camille's friend, Laurent. The novelist tranquils her passionate nature. However, her true instinct is awoken by Laurent [8]. Heroines in the novels experience a boredom with conjugal life. Men with whom they are married to be cable of providing them much but not concerned with love. In a patriarchal society women turn into the case of fornicate relationship.

Anna, in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is frustrated and for reasons dumps her husband. It is clear that marriage between Anna and Karenin is incompatible one because of their different emotions, and inclinations guide Anna to go for a fornicated relation. In her *The Novel of Adultery*, Armstrong [9] states that a proper understanding of a society's ideas on adultery involves an understanding of marriage. Emma is seen unable to lure her lover for taking her away and leaving husband and country since he is not in love with her, and their love affair in his eyes is nothing but a casual one. On the other hand, Thérèse Raquin is more successful than Emma. She wields to lure her lover for assassinating her husband.

Three heroines are found to be nervous breakdown. Anna begins to take drugs and her relationship with Vronski turns convoluted. Anna imagines that he has become fed up with her company and consequently dumps her. Her inner conflict is self-immolation. Emma, like Anna, being abandoned by her lover and immersed in debts, also kills herself. The crime she commits breaks both her and her lover Laurent's nerves. Craving to flee from despondency, they try to slay each other when they decide to self-immolate together.

Novelists has depicted female emotional deprivation and tumultuous psychology vividly. The authors bring an ending of stories through self-immolation of heroines. The punishment of heroines is a manifestation of society. In the case of Tolstoy, there may be an additional, delicate, reason in place. Tolstoy evolves his fiction with regard to bold relationship from the simple and contemptuous treatment of Helena, the wife of Pier in *War and Peace* 1867, to the self-immolation of his heroine in *Anna Karenina*. Tolstoy, being a Russian aristocrat, is unattractive and his wife is seventeen years younger than him. When Tolstoy starts writing *Anna Karenina*, he is forty-four and his wife is only twenty-seven. The probability that Tolstoy intends the novel as a premonition toward his young and attractive wife. The actuality that some critics justify Anna's death as a self-punishment since such relationship is pledged by Tolstoy seducing a young peasant woman.

Novelists demote heroines not by their bold relations but by their self-immolation. While in the circumstance of Tolstoy the punishment of the heroine is dealt with a Puritanism, an advocated by Maxim Gorky and his patriarchal view, his mindset with regard to his wife. Flaubert's case refers to an influence of the author's biography consequential being articulated in his novel as an outcome of sexual intuition. An abortive relationship of Flaubert with the poet Luise Colet intends his solitary life and thus Flaubert's own maxim "Madame Bovary, that's me", represents a clear autobiographical elements. In contrast Zola, who himself is bold seems to be blurred. If Zola is apprehended from a different viewpoint, heroes are always negative in character and at last they are punished because of the evil they have grounded. In the case of Zola, to a certain extent it is an issue of concentrating on the negative heroines rather not on his negative heroes.

Women are victimized in a patriarchal society does not contemplate in literature where societal circumstances are fictionalized as analogies of society. Plots are the acts of authors' individual suppressions and rationalizations. The autobiographical material tenders the ground of the deconstruction of the novel, and the unlocking of the concealed intentions of the author. The three prominent authors Tolstoy, Flaubert and Zola are less bounteous to a married woman, whose dejections escort her to explore such a fornicated relationship.

## CONCLUSION

The vivid picture of fornicated and self-immolation has been reflected in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*, and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* 1878 [3]. To show the theme of marriage and love, this paper has depicted defiance, despair, self-existence and frustration of heroines in the light of male dominated society. The authors want to present a mental emptiness of heroines and their struggles to define self-freedom through psychological freedom rather than sexual pleasure, which simultaneously signifies an intense pressure of male dominance in the patriarchal society that stimulates women to get engaged in fornicated relationship. And, the only way of heroines' emotional abyss is self-immolation.

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