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THEMATIC TREATMENT OF FEMALE  
CHARACTERS IN  
ANNA KARENINA, THE AWAKENING  
and MADAME BOVARY

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- 145929 -

by

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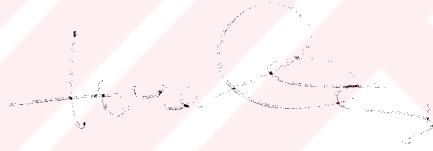
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## AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The thesis describes thematic treatment of female characters in Anna Karenina, The Awakening and Madame Bovary. For this aim the thesis benefits from three major sources:

- i) Tolstoy's Anna Karenina,
- ii) Kate Chopin's The Awakening,
- iii) Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary.

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## ABSTRACT

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### THEMATIC TREATMENT OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN ANNA KARENINA, THE AWAKENING and MADAME BOVARY

This thesis involves a comparative analysis of the major female characters in the works of; Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, Kate Chopin's The Awakening, and Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary.

The research focuses on the woman's status in different societies and the relation between the desires of the individual and the society. The major heroines are analysed according to different social conditions. The similarities and differences between the woman characters, their relation with the other members of the society and the marriage concept are underlined. Relation between man and woman especially after marriage is examined in detail. In the novels women begin to fight with the strict rules and norms of the society and discover their own potentiality. They try to fulfil their own needs. However rebelling against the oppression of their cultures and finding their own inherent happiness put them in a different position in the society.

#### Key words:

Marriage

Woman

Individualism

Suicide

Self-discovery

Divorce

## KISA ÖZET

YASEMİN ÖZAKÇA

Ağustos 2004

### ANNA KARENİNA, THE AWAKENING ve MADAME BOVARY'DEKİ KADIN KARAKTERLERİN TEMATİK İŞLENİŞİ

Bu tez; Tolstoy'un Anna Karenina, Kate Chopin'in The Awakening ve Gustave Flaubert'in Madame Bovary eserlerindeki temel kadın karakterlerinin, karşılaştırılmalı analizini içermektedir.

Araştırma, farklı toplumlardaki kadının konumu ile, birey ve toplumun istekleri arasındaki ilişkide yoğunlaşır. Ana kahramanlar, farklı sosyal toplumlara göre incelenmektedir. Kadın karakter arasındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar, onların toplumun diğer bireyleriyle ilişkileri ve evlilik kavramı vurgulanmaktadır. Özellikle evlilik sonrası kadın ve erkek arasındaki ilişki ayrıntılı incelenmektedir. Eserlerde kadınlar, toplumun katı kuralları ve normları ile savaşılmaya başlar ve kendi potansiyellerini fark ederler. Kendi ihtiyaçlarını yerine getirmeye çalışırlar. Bununla birlikte kültürlerinin baskısına karşı isyan etmeleri ve kendi doğal mutluluğu bulmaları, onları toplumda farklı bir pozisyona getirir.

#### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Evlilik

Kadın

Bireysellik

İntihar

Kendini keşfetme

Boşanma

## LIST OF CONTENTS

Author Declarations	iv
Abstract	v
Kısa Özet	vi
List of Contents	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Introduction	1
CHAPTER I	
1. General Background of the Novels	5
1.1. Russia in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century (Socio Economic Conditions & Role of Woman)	5
1.2. America in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century (Socio Economic Conditions & Role of Woman)	13
1.3. France in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century (Socio Economic Conditions & Role of Woman)	21
CHAPTER II	
2. Major Feminine Figures In Question	27
2.1. Anna in <u>Anna Karenina</u>	27
2.2. Edna in <u>The Awakening</u>	37
2.3. Emma in <u>Madame Bovary</u>	45
CHAPTER III	
3.1. Marriage and Divorce in <u>Anna Karenina</u> , <u>The Awakening</u> & <u>Madame Bovary</u> ,	55
Conclusion	63
Bibliography	68

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis involves a comparative research upon the feminine figures in the works of three authors; Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, Kate Chopin's The Awakening and Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary. In all the three novels, the positions of women are reflected considering the social circumstances. Each protagonist will be examined in detail through a comparative approach.

Anna Karenina, which reflects many of the social conditions of its era, was published in the 1870s. This was a time of social change and political upheaval. Tolstoy illustrates many details about love and marriage in Russian society. Anna who is a young woman married to a powerful minister, falls in love with Count Brodsky. Having an affair with him, she becomes pregnant. She leaves her husband and son to continue her life with her lover. But she is isolated from society, while Brodsky enjoys his freedom. She throws herself in front of an oncoming train and dies at the end.

Kate Chopin's Edna of The Awakening is a married woman of 28 years of age with two children. The novel reflects a woman's life in America in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bold, rebellious personality of Chopin's protagonist is reflected in detail throughout the novel. Chopin "maintains a neutral, non-judgmental tone throughout and appears to even condone her character's unconventional actions."<sup>1</sup> Conditions of Creole society lead her to discover her feminine potentiality and she plunges into sexual adventures. She refuses to be identified with her husband's social position.

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<sup>1</sup> "Classic Notes" [http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/Kate\\_c.htm](http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/Kate_c.htm) (11 March 2004)

Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*, depicts the life of a married woman in the 1850s who reads a lot about imaginary romantic heroines. She identifies herself with those romantic characters. She marries a country doctor, hoping to fulfil her romantic dreams of the purest love. Charles Bovary who is a country doctor does not succeed to satisfy Emma who finds marriage less romantic than she has imagined. Emma develops a relationship with Leon; a young lawyer. After he leaves town, she meets Rodolphe who seduces Emma only to pass his time. At last, Emma returns to Leon. But as an inevitable end she finds the solution in death. By producing Madame Bovary, Flaubert attacks the 'romantic movement' of his time. Giving a vivid portrayal of Emma, he tries to indicate how the imaginary worlds of the stories destruct the life of young girls.

The first chapter pursues the most important events and the most influential trends of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Focusing on the unity between a literary work and its period, the chapter deals with the historical and political context of the different countries in 19<sup>th</sup> century.

First the historical and social background of the novels will be analysed. The settings of the novels in question as the physical surroundings and the points in time are highly appropriate to the characters that are associated with them. Exerting a deep influence on the characters, different societies share common features. The works point out the conditions of women in patriarchal society. Within the framework of this thesis, traditional attitudes towards marriage, family and woman in 19<sup>th</sup> century will be analysed intensively. Equality or limitless freedom of the males constitutes the other subject of the study.

Depending on themes, the novels raise some questions in our minds; what is the balance between the couples? What is the role of the women or in what ways do the women obey the social norms around them? What are the boundaries of the relation between opposite sexes or individual and societies? This study intends to seek the answer to these questions.

The second chapter is intended to underline women's journey of self-discovery in their different social circles. The social status of woman compared to that of man is reflected in the novels in question. The position of women in different societies is examined in detail. It is reflected that women are not able to fulfil their own psychological and emotional needs as a result of the roles that society has assigned to them. These heroines, situation refers to the fact that they do not want to be restricted by their set roles. Disregarding moral consideration of the societies, they challenge the traditional duties of motherhood. They refuse to dedicate themselves to their domestic sphere. Becoming only interested in their own selves, they try to protect their freedom. Their position outside the traditional boundaries creates their own isolation.

Considering their struggle to establish their own identity, this thesis tries to clarify how socially acceptable roles limit individual freedom and how individualism refers to some negative connotations in some societies. When people show self-interested behaviours, "Individualism can be seen as a gift or a curse, depending on the context in which it occurs."<sup>2</sup> It is underlined that individualism leads these woman characters to be 'selfish'.

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<sup>2</sup> "Americans And Individualism"

[http://www.digitaltermpapers.com/view.php/Misc/Americans\\_and\\_1.htm](http://www.digitaltermpapers.com/view.php/Misc/Americans_and_1.htm) (10 May 2004)

The third chapter concludes with a general outlook to heroines considering their position in the family. As stated before, 19<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by extreme movements and ideologies. When women begin to question their role within marriage and in the community, this created a problem. This chapter is intended to underline the question such as; what brings two individuals to establish a family? What is the importance of the link of love, marriage and family? What is the importance of social circumstances and standards of the society for a marriage?

In addition to this, this chapter tries to determine the position of each partner within the boundaries of the family or whether a limitless freedom is possible or not. One has his or her own personal qualities and features. However some of the qualities that are attributed to a person cause some conflict in the social sphere. The evident point is that men and women have different roles. There is no doubt that the stronger have tried to dominate the weaker ones throughout the centuries. Putting someone in the superior position caused inequality between the opposite sexes.

In general, as Tolstoy, Gustave Flaubert and Kate Chopin indicate in their novels, men have been superior to women. It means that, they are in dominant position. It is referred that, it is the woman who arranges everything around the home as a result of her domestic responsibility. When they do not carry out their task, a problem appears within the marriage institution.

## CHAPTER I

### 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE NOVELS

#### 1.1. Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

##### (Socio Economic Conditions & Role of Woman)

Anna Karenina was published in 1873-1877 when huge historical changes existed within Russia. During the period of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, Western politics, thoughts and technology were affecting Russia. Although some intellectuals were supporting the process of Westernization some of them such as Tolstoy were questioning the changes in Russia. Because they believed that Russian traditions must continue against Western thought. For this reason the importance of the land takes on a spiritual aspect throughout the book. There are many questions about the land and the peasants and these were the problems of the Russian society at that time. Especially Tolstoy's portrayal of Levin and his agricultural theories takes an important place in the novel. There are two types of characters. Some of them as Levin, choose to live in the country. Others believe in the primacy of city life. So the setting of Anna Karenina is placed between the city and the country side. Firstly all the new ideas from Europe appear in the cities where Russian society is centred.

Tolstoy's work of adultery and self-discovery reflects the battle between the old patriarchal values of landowning aristocracy and the new liberal values of Westernizers. The first movement wanted to keep alive the spirit of the land. The second one, the ideas of the West, belief in technology, democracy and rationalism. Old timer conservatives believe in traditions like authoritarian government. The clash between these groups shows itself in Levin's difficulty with his peasants who deny

Russian aristocrats travelled extensively in Western Europe and adapted French as the language of polite discourse. They read French and English Literature and philosophy followed Western fashions and generally considered themselves a part of Modern Europe. St. Petersburg was created the new capital of Russia in 1721, and remained the most Westernized of Russian cities.<sup>3</sup>

However Western progress caused some questions such as: the rise of capitalism, disconnection of people from the land etc. Tolstoy was one of these intellectuals so that he reflects some elements of modernization as bad events which will ruin Russia. For example in the novel train symbolize the change and disaster. "Anna first makes her ill-fated acquaintance with Vronsky in a train station, and she sees the death of a railway worker after this meeting as a bad omen. The omen is fulfilled when Anna throws herself under the train near the end of the novel, literally making the railway her killer."<sup>4</sup> As a result of the introduction of railroads urban centres became the centres of social life.

In addition to these, Anna Karenina reflects the woman and family conditions in Russian society. Three major families, The Oblanskys, The Karenin and The Levins clarify the moral values of the society. Some were considered lower than others. In the novel, Tolstoy portrays society's rules and habits such as parties, dinners and horse riding. Especially religious theme is an important theme in the novel. The characters have some dilemmas about moral and religious system. For example Anna has some moral conflicts after she begins her relation with Vronsky. Levin is another one who questions religion in the beginning of the story but then he undergoes some transformations and struggles to find God.

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<sup>3</sup> Brians, Paul (1998: March 22) "19th-Century Russian Literature"  
[http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~brians/hum\\_303/russian.html](http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~brians/hum_303/russian.html) (15 April 2004)

<sup>4</sup> "Themes, Motifs & Symbols" <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/anna/themes.html> (19 March 2004)

In 19<sup>th</sup> century in Russia a woman's life was controlled by the woman's father or husband. They could not vote and hold their own passports like Anna Karenina. Until the 1850's women could not attend secondary education and until 1870's higher education was inaccessible to them. High-born women had some little limited rights.

Within the aristocracy, parents arranged marriages and couples married with people who will increase their social and economical status so that the class position has an important role. The women did not have the chance to choose their own husbands. "A married woman must accept her role as a holy privilege. The 1836 Code of Russian Laws stated; the woman must obey her husband, reside with him in love, respect and unlimited obedience and offer him every pleasantness and affection as the ruler of the household."<sup>5</sup> There was a legal inequality between the couples.

Men were expected to get married to women who follow accepted moral standards and well behaviours. In the marriage institution the rules of the strict, patriarchal family were dominant. When women wanted to rebel against the societal norms, they are considered as abnormal. It was suggested that these women must be treated harshly. For example:

The Russian book *Domostroi*, or *Household Arrangements*, written by a 17<sup>th</sup> century monk named Sylvester, advocated methods of wife-beating for those women who disobeyed; his only admonishment was to go easy on pregnant women for the sake of the unborn child. He also advised against damaging a woman's eyes, because a blind wife wouldn't be able to carry out her tasks.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Anna Karenina - Essays + Interviews "The Woman Question"  
[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/anna/ei\\_woman.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/anna/ei_woman.html) (26 February 2004)

<sup>6</sup> Anna Karenina - Essays + Interviews "The Woman Question"  
[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/anna/ei\\_woman.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/anna/ei_woman.html) (26 February 2004)

Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian intellectuals began to question 'condition of women' in the society. Most of the writers were male because women remained uneducated for a long time. Education for the peasants and women was accepted as a goal but this did not change some social conditions. For example divorces were not allowed easily in society. Women who leave their husbands and choose to live with their lovers, like Anna Karenina live outcasts from the society. It shows that men had greater freedom in every institution of the society such as marriage. Tolstoy was one of the important figures of the time who discussed the question of women. He created 'Anna' as an adulteress who tried to find happiness and true love. Lack of women's independence and social inequality caused hypocrisy in the society. Because when they did not obey the rules, men were not punished as women were. In addition to Russian male writers, female reformers began to emerge around mid-century. Historians divided these groups into three categories: feminists, nihilists and radicals. All three groups had their members from the upper class.

Although feminists did not do any revolution, they achieved many changes in the society such as medical schools, universities for women. Nihilists behaved much more radical than feminist groups. They tried to be more independent in every part of society and they applied their thoughts to everyday life as having short hair, smoking cigarettes. They chose city life instead of family life because of enjoying much more freedom. Radicals interrogated government system. Because of their revolutionary movement, many of them were arrested or jailed.

In the upper class of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois view of women began to spread quickly. They regarded women as moral models and the guardians of home. Woman's role was to make home a pleasant institution for husband and



children. However, woman's superiority was only within the boundaries of the home but not outside world. "On the bourgeois view, 'fallen' or 'forward' women are doubly evil; they are both immoral and unnatural. Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and Flaubert's Madame Bovary exemplify the fate of 'fallen' bourgeois woman of the period."<sup>7</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century new woman type appeared with independent demands of life, fighting for their own interest, inner world and individual desires as representatives of their sex. "The contemporary woman is demanding, she seeks for and enjoys esteem for her personality, her sensibility. She demands respects for her 'ego'. She does not endure despotism."<sup>8</sup> They have no fear of independence and go beyond the narrow circle of the family of the home. They protest against the common and universal role of woman in the family, society and even in the state. This new woman was away from the traditional ones who did not do anything without being a shadow of her husband. Anna Karenina is one of the representative figures of this new type. She was not afraid of new life with Vronsky. She was proud of her inner strength. Although she did not have any chance to join the social groups as Vronsky her rebellion against the loss of freedom made her self reliant.

Her struggle for existence, the struggle against the morality of the society made her personality to grow and strengthen itself. She did not separate herself from her daily activities in spite of the bad circumstances. She did not want to belong to her husband like an object and she searched for her own freedom. However her new love

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<sup>7</sup> LaFave, Sandra: West Valley Collage, "Marxism and its Critique of Consumer Culture"  
[http://instruct.westvalley.edu/lafave/marxism\\_and\\_culture.html](http://instruct.westvalley.edu/lafave/marxism_and_culture.html) (10 January 2004)

<sup>8</sup> Kollontai, Alexandra (1971), "New Woman from The New Morality and the Working Class"  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/works/new.htm> (10 December 2003)

does not give her what she had been seeking. Her feminine nature caused her to feel terribly lonely. So that woman types as Anna Karenina was considered as fallen creatures in the society. Struggle with her relatives and the other members of the society, separation from the first husband and love with Vronsky emerged sinful woman.

The common feature of the new woman type was her experience of love. All of the female heroines in 'Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina and The Awakening' tried to change their empty, poor life by help of their emotional search. They went beyond the walls of their homes which separated them from the outside world and their love-experiences caused them to be 'fallen creatures'. They became mothers without being married as 'Anna Karenina'. Alexandra Kollontai refers that:

But who are they, these single new women? How has life created them? The single woman is a child of the large-scale capitalist economic system. The single woman is not a rare phenomenon. The woman in the progress of formation stands in a relation of closest dependency to the historical stage of economic development which mankind is going through. With the change of economic conditions, with the evolution of the production relations, the inner physiognomy of woman also changes.<sup>9</sup>

In the 19th century writers were also accepted as social figures. Literature as representing the social and historical events of its conception had an important role in society. Russian literature has been a vehicle to answer the social, moral and political question of Russia in those days. "Without a tradition to parallel the parliamentary debates of the West, Russia continued to look to it's writers to act not only as

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<sup>9</sup> Kollontai, Alexandra (1971), "*New Woman* from The New Morality and the Working Class" <http://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/works/new.htm> (10 December 2003)

craftsman, but also as political figures and philosophers.”<sup>10</sup> By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, traditions for implied social and political messages had been established in Russian literature. In addition to political factors, religious and spiritual traditions were also very important for Russian writers. The Russian Orthodox Church continued its central role throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century prior to the Westernizing reforms.

By the development of utilitarian criticism in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature included social messages and comments on the state of Russian society. Realism was the style of literature in these years. The novelists were expected to represent reality clearly and they focus on portraying Russian life accurately. The social function of writers led them to choose their subjects from contemporary Russian life.

There are innumerable books and papers on the treatment of the state or society or the economy or this and the other articulate social phenomenon by any number of writers in any number of countries and languages. These more or less reliable repositories of factual information, though written for the most part by literary people and therefore more or less haphazardous in matters of social theory, can not be dismissed lightly. They evaluate literature as secondary source material for historical analysis and become all the more valuable the scarcer the primary sources for any specific period. Furthermore, they contribute our knowledge of the kind of perception which a specific social group-writers-has of specific social phenomena.<sup>11</sup>

Anna Karenina as a work of the 19<sup>th</sup> century exemplifies these feature of literature. Tolstoy with his great work reflected the social conditions of his time.

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<sup>10</sup> Werbach, Kevin Daniel, (1991: May) Senior Honors Thesis “Literary Models for Alternative Social Development in Russia” <http://www.werbach.com/stuff/thesis.html> (12 March 2004)

<sup>11</sup> Lowenthal, Leo (1948), “On Sociology of Literature” <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/lowenthal/1948/literature.htm> (24 March 2004)

## 1.2. America in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

### (Socio Economic Conditions & Role of Woman)

The Awakening was written at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The social, scientific and cultural changes of the United States in this century caused a transition from the old to new and from the traditional to the modern. The industrialization, urbanization and restoration of the country led it towards radical changes.

Darwin's theories of the evolution, World Exposition in Chicago in 1904 which gave rise to the machine age and Higher Criticism of the Bible happened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As seen in The Awakening the effects of three cultures American, Southern and Creole created some cultural conflicts in Louisiana. Creole culture which was Catholic was very conservative. In spite of the feminist movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, men continued to have control over family and women. However as a result of Industrial Revolution, handicrafts were transformed into mass-produced industry and lower-class women began to earn money as factory workers by the help of their handicrafts but in addition to this their husbands or fathers controlled their income. Middle class or upper class women were still the angles of their house. They cared for their children, homes and husbands. They were expected to do their duties as perfect mothers as Adele in The Awakening. So that The Awakening indicates the climate of the time. Change was present in every institution of society.

The first women's rights conference was held in Seneca Fall in New York in 1848. After this event women began to make progress in their new identity.

Mari Jo Buhle notes that women during the post-Civil War era "regularly participated in the marketplace, gained their own sources of support. And broke once

and for all humiliating forms of financial dependency on men.” (Culley, 1976:51). Women “at all levels of society were active in attempts to better their lot, and the ‘New Woman’ the late 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of the ‘liberated woman’, was much on the public mind.” (Culley, 1976:117) Edna Pontellier symbolizes this New Woman of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. She was passionate individualistic and had enough courage to live her own life. However Kate Chopin and her work The Awakening were found unsuccessful by many critics considering Puritan morality and religion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was accepted valuable if it had moral lessons for readers. However liberal and progressive social culture of the late 1960 supported Chopin’s work.

The Awakening portrays the Creole culture of Louisiana in detail. It recreates its culture, dialect and customs in detail.

The environment of The Awakening reflects the social condition of men and women in society. The characters represent what society views as the accepted and unaccepted figures. The society of Grand Isle wants the women to belong to the men. “Edna Pontellier’s society, therefore, abounds with ‘mother women’ who idolized their children, worshipped their husbands, and esteemed it to a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals.”<sup>12</sup>

The period of The Awakening was a time of great change in literary critics and in the moral climate of America. The Awakening was written in Victorian Era. The typical Victorian woman must participate in the traditional role given to her. “The nineteenth-century ‘cult of gentility’ gave women particular responsibility for

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<sup>12</sup> “The Hopeless Plight: Edna’s Struggle With Identity And Society”  
[http://www.studyworld.com/newsite/ReportEssay/Literature/Novel/The\\_Awakening-381048.htm](http://www.studyworld.com/newsite/ReportEssay/Literature/Novel/The_Awakening-381048.htm)  
(11 March 2004)

safeguarding the moral and spiritual tenor of the family and, by extension, the nation.” (Walker, 1993:142) With her heroine Edna Kate Chopin reflects the conflict between the ideas of the Victorian woman and ‘the new woman’ of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and also the novel clarifies the attitudes toward motherhood and sexuality. In her rebellion against the natural role of wife and mother, Edna exemplifies the new woman. Mademoiselle Ratignolle as the ideal Grand Isle woman has the characteristic of a good wife, and a loving mother. She devotes the society’s standards to be an ideal woman.

Throughout much of the history women are expected to fulfil their roles as mothers and wives. The majority of the women had their influence within the boundaries of the home but not outside. All of the females are defined by their roles as mother figures. As a result of their domestic duties, women try to keep order in the family and control the events of the domestic sphere. Edna’s struggle with the maternal role, both within the family and in society in general led her to be against the public values and beliefs. Although the feminist movement began to emerge in some parts of America, the conservative state of Louisiana was away from it. Under a Louisiana law a woman was still a property of her husband.

“Society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave a heightened meaning to what it means to be a woman. According to the commonly known ‘code of true womanhood’, women were supposed to be docile domestic creatures whose main concerns in life were to be raising of their children on submissiveness to their husbands.”<sup>13</sup> However all of the women characters in The Awakening, Anna Karenina and Madame Bovary, turned

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<sup>13</sup> Jones, Emma (2003: April) “A study of the extent to which Edna Pontellier, in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*, marks a departure from the female characters of earlier nineteenth-century American novels” <http://www.english-literature.org/essays/chopin.html> (9 May 2004)

down these expected roles of patriarchal society. These heroines rebel against the social constructs and question the codes of the society in which they live. As the representative figures of their time and society, their thoughts and behaviours were social reforms. Through these women characters of the novels written at this time we can understand how society's attitudes changed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The three novels were written during the different terms of 19<sup>th</sup> century. So they can show us how the authors chose realism considering the social facts of their periods. This reflects the changing conditions of the period.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century different views appeared towards the religion in America. Some intellectuals began to criticize traditional religion with separate outlooks. Rationalism was one of these movements. As a result of the enlightenment, many Americans began to question certain elements of the Christian faith, embracing new rational views on religion. According to them religious beliefs can be accepted through science and logic. Deists who were the most extreme rationalists "believed that a rational God, like a celestial clockmaker, had created a perfect universe and then stepped back to let it operate according to natural laws."<sup>14</sup>

Universalism and Unitarianism were other rationalist movements. Some other religious reform movements occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to challenge rationalism. One of these movements was 'transcendentalism' that emerged during the 1830's. Transcendentalists believed that knowledge gained not only through the intellect but also through the senses intuition and inner selves. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were the authors who agreed with the idea of transcendentalist group.

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<sup>14</sup> SAT II U.S. HISTORY "Religion"  
<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=transcendentalism,literature&pd=0&page=chapter9section2.rhtml&guide=%2ftestprep%2fbooks%2fsat2%2fhistory> (18 November 2003)

They advocated emotional openness. Mormonism was another one. They had a book which was similar to the Bible considering the form and style. “Its founder, Joseph Smith claimed that, God and Jesus Christ appeared to him and directed him to a buried book of revelation.”<sup>15</sup>

Although some women began to earn money from jobs, many educated women continued to be housewives. However some social workers appeared in the society. “Famous among these was Jane Adams who founded Hull House, a settlement house in 1887. Settlement houses were social projects that sought to provide an outpost of Middle-class culture within poor neighbourhoods.”<sup>16</sup>

Industrialization effected American society in many ways. Considering some socio-economic divides in the society, some social theories are developed to address the needs of the society. The growing gap between rich and poor emerged some social theories to help the poor. Literature was used to criticize the capitalist system. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, most middle-class reformers;

Sought to *Americanize* poor immigrants and rid them of customs deemed offensive or impractical. Their programs mostly targeted children, whom they believed to be the most malleable. Organizations like the Young Men’s Christian Association, and later the Young Women’s Christian Association (YMCA, YWCA) provided housing and recreational activities for urban children.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> SAT II U.S. HISTORY “ Religion”

<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=transcendentalism,literature&pd=0&page=chapter9section2.rhtml&guide=%2fstprep%2fbooks%2fsat2%2fhistory> (18 November 2003)

<sup>16</sup> “Gilded Age (1876-1900)”

<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=ideas,new,reform,women&pd=0&page=section10.rhtml&guide=%2fhistory%2famerican%2fgildedage> (17 November 2003)

<sup>17</sup> SAT II U.S. HISTORY “ The Social Response to Industrialization”

<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=society,awakening&pd=0&page=chapter12section4.rhtml&guide=%2fstprep%2fbooks%2fsat2%2fhistory> (18 November 2003)



In the industrial age middle class women passed away the boundaries of home. As a result of rapid industrialization, they gained power in labour force. Step by step, they began to have social and political power in the society. It was indicated that:

“Women were especially prominent in the temperance movements primarily through the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WTCU) Other issues included prison reform, labour arbitration, and public health concerns. As social activism among women increased, so did their desire for the right to vote.”<sup>18</sup> Some higher learning institutions and separate school for women were founded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Civil war is one of the most important events of this period:

With President Abraham Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the Civil War became a war to save the union and the abolish slavery. In actual numbers, African American soldiers comprised 10 % of the entire Union Army. Losses among African Americans were high, and from all reported casualties, approximately one-third of all African Americans enrolled in the military lost their lives during the Civil War.<sup>19</sup>

‘Gilded Age’ is an expression first used by Mark. It contains the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the Gilded Age there were two ideas. Darwinism and Historicism were affecting the world.

Darwinism was Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution based on the idea that the fittest individuals in a species were ‘naturally selected’ over time. Historicism, a German school of thought forwarded by Johann

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<sup>18</sup> SAT II U.S. HISTORY “ The Social Response to Industrialization”  
<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=society.awakening&pd=0&page=chapter12section4.rhtm&guide=%2ftestprep%2fbooks%2fsat2%2fhistory> (18 November 2003)

<sup>19</sup> Civil War History, “History Of African Americans in the Civil War”  
[http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/history/aa\\_history.htm](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/history/aa_history.htm) (05 May 2004)

Herder and G.F. Hegel, said that reality was complex and that history had power over natural law.<sup>20</sup>

All of these new ideas developed in the Gilded Age enabled people to think about changing political, economic and social conditions of the society. Education system began to develop in this age. Colleges and universities spread during the Gilded Age.

As a result of industrialization a gap between rich and poor emerged in society. Social theories in this century appeared to help the people who suffer under the effects of industrial society. However, most middle-class reformers thought that the bad conditions of people were the result of the lack of morality and discipline.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century great political process appeared in America. However women, blacks and Native American were not accepted by politicians. For this reason some reform movements were organized to influence political era of the society. They worked to abolish slavery and some reformist tried to do something for woman's rights. 'Abolitionism' which was anti-slave movement wanted equal civil rights for blacks. Fredrick Douglass was one of the abolitionists.

To spread the abolition fervour, he founded the New England Anti-Slavery society in 1832 and the American Anti-Slavery society in 1833. By 1840, these organizations had spawned more than 1,500 local chapters. Even so, abolitionists were a small minority in the United States in the 1830's and 1840's, often subjected to jeering and physical violence. Opposed to abolitionism, Southern congressmen succeeded in pushing the gag rule through Congress in 1836. This rule tabled all abolitionist petitions in Congress and thereby served as a pre-emptive strike against all anti-slavery discussions.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Gilded Age (1876-1900)"

[http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=ideas,new\\_reform,women&pd=0&page=section10.rhtml&guide=%2fhistory%2famerican%2fgildedage](http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=ideas,new_reform,women&pd=0&page=section10.rhtml&guide=%2fhistory%2famerican%2fgildedage) (17 November 2003)

<sup>21</sup> SAT II U.S. HISTORY "Social Reform"

<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=society,awakening&pd=0&page=chapter9section3.rhtml&guide=%2fstprep%2fbooks%2fsat2%2fhistory> (18 November 2003)

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century American women were inferior to men in many places. They did not have right to vote, they couldn't gain their own earning. Reform movement led American women to join the public arena. In 1848 some activities were organized in the society. For example:

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized a women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. The Seneca Falls Convention issued a Declaration of Sentiments, modelled on the Declaration of Independence that stated that all men and women are created equal. The Declaration and other reformist strategies however, effected little change.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to these, many reform movements appeared in different parts of the society such as public schools, prison and poorhouse. All of these progresses refer that something was changing fluently in the society. Some of them showed great effects and some of them may be did not go beyond to organize something. However it was clear that people began to question some accepted cultural values of the period. For example school reformers tried to make some changes in the education system such as to increase state's expenditure on education, separate grades for students and having longer school years. The temperance movement emerged against the increasing popularity of drink. They commented drink as an immoral and harmful event that affects the society in bad ways. Another social activity was made for prisons. According to them prisons can be turned into useful places which enable people to produce something. In addition to these, poorhouses were built for people.

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<sup>22</sup> SAT II U.S. HISTORY "Social Reform"  
<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=society.awakening&pd=0&page=chapter9section3.rhtml&guide=%2ftestprep%2fbooks%2fsat2%2fhistory> (18 November 2003)

In 19<sup>th</sup> century there were different movements in the literature such as romanticism and realism. As it is seen in The Awakening literary context of the novel were affected from various elements. In The Awakening some motifs of Romantic Movement show itself such as inner thoughts of characters, personified sea birds, music and many nature elements. Realism which chose characters from everyday life developed as a reaction against Romanticism. Social changes such as the effects of Civil War, Darwinism and Higher Criticism of the Bible caused the rise of Realism. Naturalism which was seen clearly in The Awakening was another one. Especially the portrayal of Edna reflecting her as a victim fits the naturalism. Characterizations of people, reflections of the social norms of Creole society, social conditions of men and women, detailed descriptions of places and events are the features of Local Colour Movement. This movement focuses on a particular region reflecting its social life related with the area.

### **1.3. France in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

#### **(Socio Economic Conditions & Role of Woman)**

Flaubert's novel Madame Bovary, reflects the social and economical conditions of France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a time of the rise of a new middle class, bourgeoisie which was formed by merchants and capitalists. Gustave Flaubert, as a member of educated group, hated this merchant class. In Madame Bovary, he criticizes the harsh realities of the life reflecting Emma's life in middle class environment.

In the early years of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 1830's and 1840's great industrial progress and growth were happened in France. Socialism was increasing day by day and

working class became more powerful. It tried to enable economical equality for the various members of the society.

Socialism looked at the free-market economies of Western Europe in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and saw exploited workers leading miserable existences while manufacturers profited enormously. Socialists therefore wanted to nationalize parts of the economy, such as industrial and financial sectors, giving these areas of the economy over the government control.<sup>23</sup>

The Revolutions of 1830 and the Reform movement of 1832 enabled more political and social power to the wealthy *bourgeoisie*. Industry was growing rapidly but although the rich were getting richer, the workers were having bad conditions in the society. Some people were supporting system as the welfare of the society.

Because they thought that better conditions for the workers would bring problems for the society. However many thinkers and workers suggested to organize society and change the system. The workers began to share the economic growth of the 19<sup>th</sup> century although they had had very little incomes in the early years of this century and they were starting to enter political area. At this time new ideologies were appearing in the society. “The ‘ism’ was reactions to or products of Enlightenment thinking, although they all went in a variety of different directions. Many of the new movements therefore dealt with ideas that had been around for a while.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Europe (1815-1848), “Battling Ideologies (1815-1830)”  
<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=19th,france,society,century&pd=0&page=section4.rhtml&guide=%2fhistory%2feuropean%2f1848> (27 January 2004)

<sup>24</sup> Europe (1815-1848), “Battling Ideologies (1815-1830)”  
<http://cgi.sparknotes.com/hlite.rmpl?words=19th,france,society,century&pd=0&page=section4.rhtml&guide=%2fhistory%2feuropean%2f1848> (27 January 2004)

Classical Liberalism, Radicalism and Republicanism, Socialism, Nationalism, Conservatism were some of them. They were related or competing ideologies of their own times. However they even continue to affect the society today.

The Revolution had the major impact on 19<sup>th</sup> century life in France and in other European countries. It effected many organizations of the society. 19<sup>th</sup> century was very important period for France. During this period, the French economy began to gain power in the world. France was having a time of great change. After the economic crisis of 1848 and changing its regime in 1851 the country showed most productive time in its history. It changed its government system in this period. The effects of strong monarchy system and strong religious control in France resulted in revolution in the country. The leaders of the country advocated conservative movements until 1830s.

The beginning of the 1830s marked the beginning of the 'July monarchy' under Louis Philippe. Philippe served as a general during the French revolution and was the first choice of the people as the new leader of France: He was proclaimed as the 'King of the French' not only by the grace of God, but also by the will of the people. In February of 1848 protests broke out on the streets of Paris. These protests eventually turned into a full revolution.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of this event monarchy in France ended and establishment of republic led the country into a new system. After democracy was established, France began to progress towards a rise time. All of these developments in the government system supported the rise of economy in France. Especially in the second half of the 1800s, the growth of economy appeared clearly.

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<sup>25</sup> "Government" <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/southeast/bovary/government.htm> (3 March 2004).

Government investment in public works mobilized a new and productive labour and attracted new foreign investment in the country. Sewers and market places were enlarged, new neighbourhoods were built, and immense roads were constructed straight through Paris which produced new markets for the rich agricultural areas of the region. By 1870 France was covered by telegraph wires which produced increased trade associated with these new communication capabilities.<sup>26</sup>

Development of railroad system gave chance to French economy to spread into foreign markets. Although the French economy was directed by an improving industry sector, the importance of agricultural community was still affecting the most of the production. Majority of the population were peasants. In addition to this, improving industrial systems created better conditions for them as having their own land and marketing their own production. All of these changes of the economy system emerged some social differences in the community. The rise of the industry and economic expansion caused an upper and middle class society.

One event in a country is affected and influenced by another event in that country. So that when an event takes place in history, it leads the other institutions and organizations of the society at the same time. The French Revolution was one of these important historical events that influenced 19<sup>th</sup> century French life and cultural values of the society. Before the Revolution, strict rules of the government gave no right to people to express their feelings. By the Revolution people began to have more chance and freedom to tend their emotions. It enabled the rise of Romanticism in this period and literature as a mirror of the society focused on emotion and imagination. Flaubert reflects the effect of Romanticism by his heroine, Emma who is very romantic, unrealistic. She dreams a life in Paris among the nobility and

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<sup>26</sup> "Economy" <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/southeast/bovary/economy> (3 March 2004).

dreams a love like in the novels. By her heroine Flaubert criticizes romanticism and its bad results. Emma is unable to accept the realities of her life and her imaginations about life cause her to be away from her ordinary life and her own failure. Flaubert also wants to reflect the negative results of French bourgeoisie. A sensitive person as Emma could be easily trapped in this society. If she had money she would be free to do everything that she wants. Emma's imagination, inner feelings and emotions were reflected as the characteristics of Romanticism. As a result it can be said that the French Revolution influenced the progression of Romanticism in this period. As the revolution brought political change to France it played a major role in the literature. Romantic writers were popular in France in the mid-nineteenth centuries. They wrote emotional subjective novels.

Emma's society was portrayed as a materialist environment. All of the characters of Tolstoy's novel represent the types of bourgeoisie class. The events in the novel also refer the financial terms. There are many scenes about buying, selling or lending. Money was shown as an important term. Especially its power is clear when Emma searches money for herself. All of these terms were the elements of capitalist society. However, Emma denies hard work or good economic management. Her life was full of imagination and passion. The world of 'bourgeoisie' was established with industrial and commercial success. This materialist world was the opposite of Emma's imaginative world. Flaubert, portraying Emma's position as a woman in this society makes a harsh critique of the period. His hatred of this middle class, bourgeoisie was portrayed by the help of powerlessness of Emma. Flaubert also refers the women condition in this period. Financial power means everything in the boundaries of the society. If you passes the power you have chance to control the



life. Even women were accepted as the objects of the men's gaze. For example Emma's only power in the novel is her sexuality. "Emma's prostitution is the result of her self-destructive spending, but the fact that as a woman, she has no other means of finding money is a result of the misogynistic society in which she lives."<sup>27</sup>



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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/bovary/context.html> (12 September 2003)

## CHAPTER II

### 2. MAJOR FEMININE FIGURES IN QUESTION

#### 2.1. Anna in Anna Karenina

Anna Karenina is a story of a fashionable married woman who falls in love with a man, Count Vronsky. She betrays the proper role of a woman in life. She is dissatisfied with her life, her marriage to Karenin and social activities around her. Anna is a romantic woman who views the world as fantasy. The fantasy in which she has lived led her to isolation. When she loses the control over her life she finds salvation in suicide which is an inevitable end for all of the heroines in the novels in question. When her relation with Vronsky is getting worse and worse she finds herself trapped in the boundaries of her lonely life. Both Anna and Vronsky cannot do anything to rescue their relation. When she understands that she cannot escape from her troubles she chooses the death.

Tolstoy introduces Anna as a beautiful, attractive and energetic woman. He refers Anna's beauty by reflecting its effects upon others. People can recognize her high position in the society at a glance. When they meet at the station, she calls Vronsky attention with her lovely face. Anthony Thorlby notes that:

Tolstoy also shows the effect of Anna's beauty upon women and in particular on the two Shcherbatsky sisters, Kitty and Dolly. They both take to her at once, responding to her sympathetic warmth and friendliness; beyond that they are each fascinated by her appearance in different ways idealizing it, and even envying it. (Thorlby, 1987:46)

Her physical appearance, her beauty makes a strong impression upon other people even they cannot take their eyes off her. Throughout the novel we realize,

many descriptions are focused on Anna's beauty. Her meeting with Levin is another sample about this fact. When he saw her, he was impressed by her beauty. Anna's devotion to her appearance causes her not to have any more children until her relationship with Vronsky. This is also her rebellion to settled wife and mother role in the society.

She meets with Vronsky who succeed to seduce her when she arrives in St. Petersburg. Anna loses herself in the love so powerfully that it directs her life. Her union with Vronsky deepens over time and brings her the love in her dreams. However it does not lead to great happiness and fulfilment. Her affair scandalizes Russian society. She clarifies her feelings and love to Karenin without fear. She also says that she hates him and she can do whatever she wants. Her husband struggles with her infidelity. As a wronged husband he does not attempt to duel with Vronsky. The Karenin's, husband and wife, continues to live in the same house for a while. Then Vronsky and Anna begin to live in Italy. Leaving with Vronsky Anna defines herself with her actions that enables her to go farther than other ones. She denies living for the pleasures of society. Meeting with Vronsky causes a journey of self-discovery for Anna. Before Vronsky enters her life, she does not have any sense whether she is happy or not. In that moment she realizes the dissatisfaction of her marriage.

Anna has been faithful to her husband until she falls in love with Vronsky. There has not been any problem for her until that time or she did not realize anything. However her mind is filled with her changing feelings about Vronsky. She begins to notice everything around her in a different way. Especially her thoughts and feelings towards her husband begin to shake.

In St. Petersburg; as soon as the train stopped and she got out of the railway carriage, the first face that attracted her attention was the face of her husband. 'O heavens, where did he ever get such ears?' she thought, looking at his cold and stately figure, and especially at what had so startled her now, the cartilages of his ears which supported the sides of his round hat. (Tolstoy, 2003:103)

Her first meeting with her husband after her travel reveals her new outlooks towards him and her marriage. By her changed attitude to the world, to her husband and to the society she begins to notice everything around her. The change over Anna's mind causes the awakening in her life. Throughout the novel it affects her behaviours. Although her husband forgives her when she is face to face with death, nothing changes in her feelings. She leaves him and begins to live with her lover. Anna's frankness makes her an unfaithful woman. If she continues to live in her husband's house having her relationship with Vronsky, she wouldn't be the victim of the top circle of Petersburg society. The moral standards do not allow her to establish a new life with her lover. Karenin's thoughts about divorce are one of the reasons that cause Anna's tragedy.

Although Anna's sacrifice, her marriage is shown as a result of her sexual desires, there is something more than it. She is very wedded to her own emotions. Emotional power strengthens her character but this change when their togetherness turns in to a chaos.

Anna seeks personal happiness. She is obsessed with trying to establish her own emotional pleasure. She refuses her social role and custom of her social set. Love is not an important factor for marriage which is arranged for relatives in those circumstances. Divorce is not accepted in Anna's social circle. Although most

husbands and wives have lovers they hide it and continue to live their lives as society wants from them. Vronsky as an aristocrat and soldier closes his eyes to his career in order to be with Anna. They want to marry and establish a new family life themselves. However he does not achieve to understand Anna's pain.

In the novel Tolstoy portrays how the society idealizes the institution of family and limits the freedom of individuals. Restrictions of personal desires within the society lead people to have double face: one of for their own needs and one of for the other ones. Tolstoy, portraying the relation between Levin and Kitty, signifies the importance of family life. Anna's betrayal of her husband makes her the guilty party and a sinner woman who does not let Karenin to control most aspects of her life. However Anna's choice can be accepted as selfishness when we consider her son's position. When Anna begins to live Vronsky openly it appears that the society which both of them had been accustomed is closed to them now. As a married woman of high society she commits adultery.

Anna's marriage to Karenin is based on public considerations. According to social circumstances and demands of Karenin's social circle they fit well. Their family is not based on love and desire to support each other. If the couple are well adapted to accepted social rules nothing is important anymore. Tolstoy portrays his heroine's wilful betrayal of her marriage principles in detail. Following of her heart's desire gives her enough courage to progress. However her passion towards Vronsky pushes her into a deadlock. "Tolstoy with uncanny psychological skill analyzes the conscious and unconscious elements of Anna's nature and the planned and fortuitous circumstances of her daily existence which step transformed what might have been merely a passing flirtation into a deeply serious love." (Simmons, 1973:98) Her

increasing isolation and oppression of hypocritical society causes incoherence of her behaviour and thoughts. She cannot achieve to balance her inner feelings with her social duty. Her choices about love and violation of external thoughts complicate Anna's position. Anna's adultery seem wrongly when we consider the ethics rules, however social injustice around her lessens her crime. Infact many characters in the novel have love affairs but they keep their relations secret.

Throughout her speech to Dolly Anna wants to explain her happiness after she comes to Italy. However she also questions the reality and her feelings under the surface. Despite she tries to forget her painful past and tries to be happy there is something else behind her words.

'You look at me,' she said, 'and think, can she be happy in her situation? Well, and what? It's embarrassing to admit it, but I.... I'm unforgivably happy. Something magical has happened to me, like a dream, when you feel frightened, creepy, and suddenly wake up and feel fear, and for a long time now, especially since we came here, I've been so happy! .....

.....' she said, looking at Dolly with a timid, questioning smile. (Tolstoy, 2003:613)

Anna also feels herself in a dilemma. Her sympathy and hope for her new life is in conflict with her domestic and social situation as a mother and wife. Losing her son and realizing the fact she will not have any chance to get him again forces her to deny the harsh reality. She tries to defend her love not only to her social circle, but also herself. During her speech to Vronsky about divorce she emphasizes that her love is beyond everything. Nothing else matters to her. She refers that she can do the same thing in all conditions.

Anna's tragedy can be explained in numerous ways:

Some see it as the inevitable result of her character and her act of adultery; others see it primarily in terms of the oppression of outmoded social conventions and antiquated divorce laws; others see it as the result of Anna's leaving one inadequate man for another; still others see it primarily as the tragedy of unhappy family life. (Jones, 1978: 89)

But one of the most important reasons is her husband, Karenin who does not understand her feelings and changing emotions. Karenin, Anna's husband, obeys every convention of the society. His feelings and behaviour are not sincere. The hypocrisy in his actions appears when he learns Anna's affair with Vronsky. He says that he can forgive her and their life can continue as usual. As an important government official in St. Petersburg he is a slave to his career. When nobody find out that anything is wrong in their marriage there is not any problem for him. The romance or sexual excitement does not mean anything for him as other men who regard marriage as a social convention. Karenin "lives a passionless life, governed by intellect, precision, and formality. He avoids direct confrontation with his emotions and problems - in short with life - by burying himself in work and encasing himself within the walls of his study." (Jones, 1995:97)

First Karenin was portrayed as very kind and sensitive man. He tries to do everything to have Anna back. When his wife becomes ill, he seems very helpful and merciful. He even permits Vronsky to visit Anna. However he is the man of Petersburg society where life depends on the rules and bureaucracy. So that after a while he begins to behave as society wants. His character is one of the most important reasons which lead Anna to love another man. Henri Troyat notes that:

Karenin becomes a dries up, self-centred narrow minded man, a pure product of Petersburg bureaucracy. Life is hidden from him by administrative regulations; every-gesture he makes is an expression of

the law, of convention; he paralyses and his figures everything he touches; for him his wife is simply one item of his establishment. (Troyat, 1965:360)

Karenin forces Anna to stay with him considering how divorce would be humiliating for him. Karenin's behaviour depending on bureaucratic role in the society makes her to feel colder towards him. He is concerned with social appearances and his career so much that these become the dominant elements in his life. This makes Anna crazy. There is not any love traces on their togetherness. After Anna begins to meet Vronsky in social circles, he even does not consider his own emotions. He is concerned about what society thinks about their marriage and him rather than their relation and togetherness.

As you know; I look upon jealousy as an insulting and humiliating feeling and I would never allow of propriety against which one cannot trespass with impunity. I did not notice in this evening, but everyone notice that you behaved and bore yourself not quite as one might wish.....

'I really do not understand' said Anna, shrugging her shoulders. 'He does not care' she thought, 'but society noticed and that troubles him' (Tolstoy, 2003:146)

Anna sits on a separate table with Vronsky in a group and has conversation. This does not give any feeling to Karenin but because of public opinion, he decides to speak with Anna. His speech makes Anna to feel how far her husband from her.

Anna's decision to travel in Italy with Vronsky makes Karenin to suffer under the humiliations of society. However after a while he lets Anna to see her son, Seryozha. Anna's sufferings began to increase when she saw her son. However Vronsky could not understand her and this led her loneliness. Society does not forgive them because



of not to struggle with the public opinion Vronsky was not as the same as her. Anna gets more jealous and lonely in the course of time. Vronsky's leaving from Moscow and staying there more than he planned makes Anna unhappy.

Vronsky's masculine power and freedom makes Anna to crave independence like him. Her discontent toward life makes her to take morphine before going to bed. She demands Vronsky to devote himself to their relationship. Vronsky's independence and the growth of her ruined social position turn her love to jealousy. She begins to think that Vronsky does not love her any more. Her fear to lose Vronsky's love makes her paranoid and she becomes unable to realize the events around her.

Anna's fears that Vronsky has suddenly ceased to love her are groundless. While he may seek diversion in politicking, or in the company of male friends such as Yashvin and while he may feel constricted, even suffocated by Anna's excessive need for his company, Vronsky has no thought of being unfaithful to her, nor even of ceasing to love her. Yet Anna invents this possibility and dwells on it more and more obsessively. (Armstrong, 1988:101)

Her love for Vronsky had given her stronger reason to believe in the goodness of her choice and attitudes. This had made her more powerful to fight against the doctrines of society. But now her personal doubts in her relationship resulted in jealousy. She begins to accuse him not to be faithful to her. She thinks that she cannot affect Vronsky by her beauty any longer. Having nightmares and taking drugs leads her to pessimism and finally death becomes the only solution for her. To escape from such depressing life there is only one remedy; suicide. Her insufficiency to communicate with Vronsky limits her. "Anna cannot share her deepest and most imperious feelings with her lover, and she suppresses them and banished them from

her own consciousness.” (Jones, 1978:101) A new life had begun for her at the train station and now again she kills herself under a train.

The relation between Anna and Vronsky reflects the double standards within their environment. Vronsky can go everywhere that he wishes. However Anna is not as lucky as Vronsky. She is excluded from social circles as a sinful woman. Not only do the people around her and also Vronsky not want her to enter the organizations in their lives. This refers that as a product of his society, he believes in the superiority of the society. Anna’s desire for respect romance resulted in alienation. Vronsky’s independence causes her to progress towards her self-destruction. She makes painful choices as the opera. Although Vronsky does not want her to go there she follows her own thought that causes her decline. Vronsky is fearful about public opinion. However it gave immense satisfaction to Anna. Intensity of her love and passion blinds her eyes towards the society. Living with her husband in the same home makes Anna feel more hopeless. Her increasing passion resulted in her avowal to Karenin of her love. Now their love continues outside the boundaries of her house away from Karenin. However life does not go as they desire. They have no plan for the future. Although they try to do something they fail. When she goes to social organizations of high society many people debase her with their behaviours. Anna is trapped within the problems of existence. She is unable to limit herself to the routine of everyday life. When she did not find the solution ‘the suicide’ appears as the only remedy.

Anna and Vronsky's action in asserting their freedom from society's wishes and values sets up an equal and opposite reaction, Anna's jealous demands that Vronsky should devote himself to her alone set up an equal and opposite reaction. He does not achieve to understand Anna's pain. (Williams, 1990:381)

In spite of society's judgment Anna is only content to possess Vronsky. Although some people like Princess Betsy support the affair between Anna and Vronsky, they begin to refuse to see Anna in a company. Betsy's croquet match where the women in high society are together with their lovers and husbands reveals the hypocrisy of relations.

Many women in high society have both lovers and husbands. However they continue to have affairs retaining their social position. Although the society is aware of the position they do not take into consideration. Anna ignores to have mask for her relationship. In addition to hypocrisy about relationship men and women have double standards in the society and that is the most important reason which leads Anna jealousy.

Anna does not accept this kind of situation because she was bored with her marriage so that Anna goes on through her destructive love affair to the climax of their relationship which is not a healthy, socially acceptable one. That is one of the reasons why Anna cannot find peace and happiness in the novel.

When they are alone they follow their own ideas but in a company they turn into a puppet. Society organizes sexuality, marriage and even people's desires. Anna's relationship, if it is seen as only a sexual desire, may not be honourable. But her relationship with Vronsky is not only for her physical needs, but also for her spiritual side. For this reason her actions progresses depending on her love unconsciously

without considering the boundaries. Gareth Williams, the writer of *The Influence of Tolstoy On Readers of His Works* expresses the psychological position of Anna:

After Karenin has forgiven her, she could choose to return to normal married life and renounce Vronsky, but she unconsciously decides, with little inner debate for Vronsky. She does not drift into love with Vronsky or into her decision to leave Karenin. A tremendous struggle is going on within her occupying the whole of her being at both the conscious and subconscious level. (Williams, 1990:373)

The conflicts in her soul are reflected not only at the beginning of her relationship, but also throughout the novel. It is clearly viewed when she leaves her son and in the lost scene of her desire for death. Vronsky's cold and indifferent behaviours are one of the reasons of Anna's suicide. Especially in the last part of the novel Vronsky's meeting with her mother who supports her son to marry with another girl leads Anna in a mental state. She begins to see everything nonsense and ridiculous. Meaningless of the events prepares her end. Love in her heart makes Anna to concede herself Vronsky completely.

## **2.2. Edna in The Awakening**

Kate Chopin's novel The Awakening depicts the life of a woman in a patriarchal society. Edna's struggle for self-discovery within the boundaries of her surroundings is reflected throughout the novel. Her rebellion against the social constraints as a married woman allows her to come face to face with stereo typical views of women. Mrs. Pontellier who is upper-middle class woman is aware of the social norms of her society. However her own desire to reflect her 'self' causes her to break down these norms. She begins to question her life and search for her own personality.

The Awakening begins in Grand Isle where the wealthy families relaxing at Oceanside. That is the place that enables Edna's awakening which causes her liberation against the social limitations on women. In Creole society, the woman must devote herself to her family as a mother. She must take care of her children and must do her daily works as a good wife. "Edna Pontellier appears to reject the domestic empire of the mother and the sororal world of women's culture. Seemingly beyond the bonds of womanhood, she has neither mother nor daughter." (Martin, 1988:43)

Sexual openness in conversation in Creole society shocks Edna at first. A man can make a married woman feel beautiful and their husbands never get jealous. This is the common characteristics of the men in the novels in question. A Creole man believes that his wife is only devoted them. For this reason at the first stage the relation between Edna and Robert does not seem strange or unusual to Creole society. During their togetherness on the Grand Isle, they spend their time together sharing their thoughts and feelings.

Mrs. Pontellier is an outsider for Creole customs because of growing up in the Protestant South. For this reason, she does not think the same as the other people of Louisiana. This causes some problems during her relation to Robert. A flirtatious relationship is accepted as other married women. But being a foreigner allows Edna to feel something seriously. A. Nancy Walker criticizes the social conditions of Creole society:

Another way of interpreting The Awakening through historical context is to examine the values of the Creole culture that Chopin depicts and to explore the effect, they could have had on a young Presbyterian woman from Kentucky. Such an approach raises several

questions; does the open sensuality of characters such as Robert Lebrun and Adele Ratignolle cause Edna to experience a sexual awakening? Does her inability to reconcile her strict upbringing with the openness of Creole society lead to her death? (Walker, 1993:150)

Robert's presence plays an important role in Edna's awakening that occurs first in the ocean. The ocean scene refers that Edna feels ready to open her 'self' to the outside world. Edna's rebirth begins in the ocean which refers a symbolic meaning in literature; "the baptism of Jesus and John occurred in the Jordan River and Venus, Aphrodite emerged, fully formed from the ocean."<sup>28</sup> As same as achieving to swim in the ocean; she begins to be aware of her own individuality. Ocean helps her to realize that she can control her body which will affect her to gain her spiritual freedom as the second step.

Trying to fulfil her own desires, she begins to rebel against the limitations of the society. Her rebellion begins when she refuses to obey the things that her husband wants. One night when her husband wants her to go inside the bed she responds "Leonce go to bed. I don't wish to go in, and I don't intend to. Don't speak to me like that again; I shall not answer to you." (Chopin, 1995:33) Step by step Edna moves into her new life. She continues to act without public opinion or social conservations. In her boat journey with Robert, she only enjoys her time. "She could only realize that, she herself – her present self was in some way different from the other self. That she was seeing with different eyes." (Chopin, 1995:42) But Robert is more careful about the social boundaries. In Anna Karenina although Anna only behaves as she wants, Vronsky is careful about not to cross certain boundaries.

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<sup>28</sup> "Classic Notes" [http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/Kate\\_c.htm](http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/Kate_c.htm) (11 March 2004)

Robert's company makes her recognize. She has a place in world without being a wife and mother. Her rebirths which can be seen mostly as a result of lack of emotional connect with her husband leads Edna to her inner emotions. When Mademoiselle Reisz played the piano in the party "it was the first time she was ready; perhaps the first time her being was tempered to take an impress of the abiding truth." (Chopin, 1995:28) Mademoiselle Reisz who is the opposite of Adele is an unmarried musician. She has got an important role in the novel as introducing Edna to the art. Reisz symbolizes an independent woman but this is not what Edna wants. Lack of love causes her not to be a model woman for Edna. "Mademoiselle Reisz is a renegade, self-assertive and outspoken. She has no patience with petty social rules and violates the most basic expectations of femininity." (Martin, 1988:46)

Edna begins to neglect her children and this causes Madame Ratignolle to warn her. She responds that "I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I couldn't give myself." (Chopin, 1995:49) Adele Ratignolle suits the image of perfect mother woman who lives for her husband and children. She supports Edna to take the same way in the society. She "initiates Edna into the world of female love and ritual on the first step of her sensual voyage of self-discovery." (Martin, 1988:45) Robert's sudden departure causes Edna to feel miserable. She does not realize the fact that Robert escapes the realities. When Robert leaves for Mexico, Edna completely understands her feelings towards him. In Madame Bovary, after Leon's departure Emma Bovary also feels disappointed. Realizing the nature of their feelings, they disregard their responsibilities which cause their husband to think that they are ill. But step by step, they are progressing to be themselves. Although Emma

is not satisfied with her social and economic surroundings, Edna feels comfortable with her situation. “Both heroines become estranged from their husbands; neglect their children; have lovers: lose the sense of responsibility, and take their own lives.” (Seyersted, 1969:138)

When they turn back to their home, Mr. Pontellier continues to spend most of his time outside the home. He does not care how his wife spends her time. Throughout the novel; it is clear that Mr. Pontellier’s male world is divided from Edna’s female sphere. Spending most of his time playing billiards at the hotel, he is associated with his own social circle. He does not consider the world out of his business and responsibilities. At the beach, his non-existence facilitates the closeness between Robert and Mrs. Pontellier who enjoy both doing the same social activities. Leonce regards her as one of his possessions. He sometimes implies that Edna must be careful about her duty.

If it was not a mother’s place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself had his hands full with his brokerage business. He could not be in two places at once: making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell them. (Chopin, 1995:7)

According to him Edna must limit herself in her domestic sphere. This is the rule of idealized femininity. Devoting all her energy to her husband and children, she will obey her task. In Mr. Pontellier’s eyes her behaviours indicates irresponsibility. Occupying herself with other concerns Edna tries to do something more than being a mother. Adele Ratignolle warns Edna about Mr. Pontellier’s social activities in club’s life. She advises that they must spend much more time together. ‘Oh! Dear



no!' Edna responds "What should I do if he stayed home? We wouldn't have anything to say each other." (Chopin, 1995:70)

Edna enjoys her free time in the home without her husband. Edna's interest in painting is another way of expressing her own feelings. This is a form of escapism from the outside world. It allows her to organize her time differently. This is a kind of rebellion to her domestic duties. "She feels motherhood to be a responsibility which she had blindly assumed and for which fate had not fitted her." (Seyersted, 1969:134) Art symbolizes freedom and escape. Edna's interest to painting is a way of self expression. The more she increases her interest, the more she becomes eccentric and alone. Her husband begins to think that she is mentally ill. Mr. Pontellier visits a family physician Dr. Mondelet and explains her changing behaviours. The doctor asks him whether she has any connection with 'pseudo intellectual'<sup>29</sup> feminists. Like Mr. Pontellier, Charles Bovary explains her wife's situation to a physician. In this position Edna shares the same features with Mademoiselle Reisz who affects Edna with her music. She "by her divine art; seemed to reach Edna's spirit and set it free." (Chopin, 1995:80) She also supports Edna to realize her senses towards Robert. Showing Robert's letters to Edna, she helps her to continue her interest.

Edna's radical behaviours leads her to live completely free of social constraints in her own surroundings. Edna neglects to attend her sister wedding ceremony. Her behaviours make her father very angry. In their discussion, her father warns Leonce "authority, coercion are what is needed. Put your food down, good and hard: the only way to manage a wife." (Chopin, 1995:73) This refers the male attitudes towards

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<sup>29</sup> "Classic Notes" [http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/Kate\\_c.htm](http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/Kate_c.htm) (11 March 2004)

women. Edna's rebellion to traditions signifies her search for new identity. She needs to be alone. She is trying to live as an independent woman rejecting the set rules.

According to her:

Her marriage to the twelve years older Leonce was 'purely an accident' he fell in love, and she liked him and was flattered by his devotion. She thought that they had much in common, but once married, she found out that this was not so. (Seyersted, 1969:134)

Edna's relation with Arobin signifies another important point in the novel. In associating with him Edna shows her sexual desires. However she feels herself unfaithful to Robert but not her husband. This clarifies her thoughts about marriage and love. She is still in love with Robert and Arobin is a vehicle to occupy her time. Arobin means nothing to her emotionally but she needs him for only her sexual desire.

"Every step which she took toward relieving herself from obligations added to her strength and expansion as an individual." (Chopin, 1995:96) She sends her children to live in the country with their grandparents; she refuses to go to bed when her husband insists, she does not want to travel with him, she starts to be interested in painting and music. In addition to these as the last step, she moves out of the house. Leaving her house facilitates Edna's position to finish her enslavement to her duties as a wife and mother. She considers herself as a free woman with her own choices. She finds the right to break the rules which do not satisfy her. Her dinner party that she gives before leaving, her home is like a celebration of her freedom and rebellion. Edna's words "I know I shall like it, like the feeling of freedom and independence" (Chopin, 1995:91) indicates that she tries to establish her own life. Her decision to

move another house represents her inward world. She is consciously refusing to stay with her husband whom she does not love. She calls herself as; “I am devilishly wicked specimen of the sex” (Chopin, 1995:84) because she rejects to sacrifice her own freedom. She places herself as the individual against the society. Her actions cause a breakdown of her status as an ideal motherly figure in Creole society.

Mr. Pontellier becomes displeased when Edna decides to leave house because of the public opinion. “He begged her to consider first, foremost, and above all else, what people would say.” (Chopin, 1995:95) As other husbands in the novels in question social responsibilities are the most important elements in his choices. She does not consider any emotional side of her departure.

Edna’s longing for sexual and sensual emancipation disobeys the respectable morality. She escapes from the tradition and authority. She begins “to look with her own eyes: to see and to apprehend the deeper undercurrents of life.” (Chopin, 1995:96) However by the time she realizes that she can not ignore her responsibilities as she wants. Her awakening blinds her eyes to the social reality around her. After Roberts comes back, she continues her relation with him. But Robert flees again before anything happens. His words “I love you. Goodbye, because I love you” leads her into a chaos. (Chopin, 1995:114) Edna realizes that she does not simply deny her existence as a social agent. When she remembers her duties as a mother, she discovers that she can not sacrifice them without considering the results. This causes the end of her fight. Choosing the death signifies that she can not continue her life without her love. The ocean which is a symbol of freedom and escape is the source of her self-awareness. And now she turns back to this place again. The ocean, according to Jungian theory, is “the mother of life, spiritual

mystery and infinity; death and rebirth; timelessness and eternity and the unconscious.” (Guerin, 1993:158)

Throughout the novel step by step Edna progresses towards the suicide. Her reactions emphasizes that she has power to shape her own life. However the patriarchal society can not accept this kind of unusual woman. Mr. Pontellier as an ordinary man does not understand her feelings as other men in the novels in question. “To a certain extent, *The Awakening* shows Edna at the mercy of a patriarchal husband, a hot climate, a Creole lifestyle and the circumscribed expectations of a particular class of Louisiana woman.” (Taylor, 1989:195) Denying her domestic and social responsibilities she challenges her role as a mother woman who cares her children and worships her husband. This leads her to the inevitable end which is same for all of the heroines:

Edna refuses to return to a world that values only her performance as a mother, whose highest expectations for women are self-sacrifice and self-effacement. She refuses to return to a world in which this idea is pervasive and inescapable and unavoidably colours even her own thinking. For Edna, there is, ideally, a truth greater than that of motherhood. Motherhood compared with it, becomes yet another illusion that Edna must dispel. That final truth, that greater truth, can not coexist with the social, the moral, or even the biological obligations of motherhood. (Dyer, 1993:105)

### **2.3. Emma in Madame Bovary**

Madame Bovary is a story of a young woman, Emma who is not satisfied with her marriage, tries to find her ideal love. Emma grows up on a farm with her father after the death of her mother. Within the boundaries of this traditional, boring world Emma creates her own ideal world of imagination which is formed by the images of romance novels. Romantic heroines in these novels decorate her inward world.

Growing up in traditional ways Emma always hopes to reach imaginary lands of love. Charles's marriage proposal gives her a chance to obtain the happiness that she has imagined.

Charles who is a country doctor meets Emma during her father's, Monseigneur Rouault, treatment. Although he is a married man, he develops an attachment to her during his visits. Charles's first marriage with his old wife was arranged by his mother to enable him a financial support. His domineering wife controls him during their marriage. Her death enables Charles to rescue the strict sphere of his past life. Emma accepts to marry with him to attain a new life which is away from the monotonous village life. Emma dreams a marriage which she has read in romances. She wants her husband to introduce the things in her imagination. She wants for Charles to take her away from her peasant background. Emma concentrates to reach her ideal love. In the first stages of her marriage Flaubert begins to portray Emma. "Emma tries the comically inapposite stimulus of reciting passionate poetry to Charles by moonlight when he is merely thankful to get off his horse and have a good meal: as he does not react romantically she overlooks his intense if inarticulate feeling, and concludes that this cannot be love." (Fairlie, 1962:43) As a romantic girl, she wants to be a great lady. She realizes that her conventional marriage with Charles does not correspond with the images in the dreams. Reading love poems to Charles, tries to spark romance into her marriage.

Her husband tries to fulfil her needs and desires. He devotes himself to Emma. However he is unable to understand her feelings and passion so that Emma's romantic dream neglects her marriage. This is the common characteristics of the all

male figures in the novels. Considering their wives only a possession, they do not care their emotional world.

Emma realizes that there is a wide gap between her and Charles:

She can never discuss her yearnings with Charles. He is dull, insensitive and stupid. His conversation is 'as flat as a sidewalk' and he's unaware of life's refinements. So Emma spends her days playing the piano, drawing and writing letters to Charles patients who have not paid their bills. Charles idolizes his wife and has no idea that she isn't happy with their life.<sup>30</sup>

The ball at La Vaubyessard which includes the guests of high aristocracy music, food and drinks offer Emma's world of dreams. Discovering the surroundings of upper class people Emma is affected this kind of life style that she has never found in the boredom of farm life before. After the ball she finds herself in emptiness.

Testing her dream world in the ball, Emma finds herself. The life in Tostes with its boring, rural surroundings becomes unbearable for her. Her increasing unhappiness leads her to neglect her household duties. F. Benjamin Bart, the writer of *Flaubert* describes Emma's thoughts:

Emma knew she was the equal of those other women who had peopled her books and her dreams and who had such happy lives, for she had seen duchesses at the Chateau and they were less beautiful than she. She cursed the injustice of God and learned her head against the wall to weep and envy the tumultuous lives, the masked balls, the insolent pleasures and unrestrained passions which such lives must of necessity provide. (Bart, 1967:279)

Reading has an important role both in Anna Karenina and Madame Bovary. The heroines of these novels try to escape from the dissatisfaction of everyday life by the

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<sup>30</sup> "Barron's Booknotes" <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/mbovary3.asp> (12 March 2004)

help of reading. However captivity of reading closes their eyes to the reality around them. Imagining the life in the novels Emma makes sudden decisions without thinking in detail. Her marriage, her relation with Rodolphe and Leon are the result of her fantasies about love. Like Emma, Anna seeks some kind of romantic love. While she is reading novels, she imagines herself as the heroines of the novels. Books allow Emma to create her own world outside the boundaries of her village life. Emma's obsession with reading leads Emma having an affair with Leon. Both Anna and Emma become trapped in their fantasy world, so that they are not aware of the reality around them. When they do not solve their problem, they see escape through death.

Emma's desire to have a son signifies the dominant social norms. Emma wants to have a son because a man has more chance to reach the conditions of her idealised world.

She wanted a son; he would be strong and dark, he would be strong and dark, she would call him George; and this idea of having a male child was like an anticipated reverse for the powerlessness of her past. A man, at least, is free; he can explore each passion and every kingdom, conquer obstacles, and feast upon the most exotic pleasures. But a woman is continually thwarted. (Bovary, 1992:82).

Throughout the novel, she behaves towards her daughter harshly neglecting her existence. She thinks that the child will bound her freedom bringing some restriction on her personal desires.

Flaubert signifies the social responsibility of motherhood. The role of women, as a mother, requires some sacrifices. But Emma finds her child as a kind of burden who will obstruct her to fulfil her repressed desires. Edna Pontellier in The Awakening also thinks that her child cause some restrictions on her freedom. She rejects to

devote herself to her children and husband. Rebelling to motherhood duties, Edna seeks independence.

Meeting with Leon, Emma discovers her feminine potential. Now she has someone to talk about the latest fashion, music, poetry, novels. The dinner party where they have chance to share their inward feelings and thoughts to each other leaves trace in their hearts. According to Emma love “had to come suddenly, with a great clap of thunder and a lightning flash, a tempest from heaven that falls upon your life, like devastation, scatters your ideals like leaves and hurls your very soul into the abyss.” (Bovary, 1992:93) Leon’s company gives Emma great pleasure. Leaving alone with Leon, Charles cannot aware of the growing desire of her wife. Emma wants to experience a complete love and sensual pleasure. She seeks only her individual satisfaction. Brombert states that “Leon is probably the most physical manifestation of her need to *liberate* herself.”(1966:58) Leon accompanies Emma on her way, while she is going to visit her daughter. Walking with a man who is not her husband Emma rebels the values of the people of Yonville. Emma’s values are contrasts the principles of town people.

Leon’s accompaniment does not arouse any jealousy for Charles. His inability to understand his wife’s unhappiness, he cannot realize the events around him. This is a common characteristic of male figures in the novels. Men do not get jealous with the others who behave their wives in this way. In each novel close relation with other men does not arouse any feeling for their husbands. In *The Awakening* Robert’s close attitudes towards Edna Pontellier is accepted quite normal. In *Anna Karenina*, her husband does not get jealous when Anna spends time with Vronsky but only he thinks about the public opinion. There is not any emotional devotion among the couple.



It refers that marriage does not go beyond a contract. When they fulfil their task as a husband and father, they think that they do everything that a relation wants. However they cannot realize the fact that step by step the women build their own independent and free world.

Leon's own qualities support her passion. Although she becomes aware of her increasing desire for him, she cannot know how to behave him. Thinking that she does not love him, Leon decides to leave which causes Emma's depression.

Desires of the flesh, desires for money, and the melancholy of concealed and silent passion, all became a single, confused suffering within her. For all of this she blamed her husband whose placid obliviousness seemed a kind of ingratitude for her suffering and her sacrifices. (Bart, 1967:284)

She fantasized about having a romantic relationship for a long time. Her hatred of middle class raised her feelings in her own surroundings. After Leon's departure, Emma is plunged into a life of hopelessness. According to Charles's mother Emma's trouble is the result of her lack of responsibility about houseworks. She needs to work and she must not read these romantic novels that take her away the reality. "Flaubert insists on her imbalance and morbid excesses: the neglect of house and child, the taste of orgiastic books, the loss of pudeur, the rapacious desire for money, the aggressive sensuality." (Brombert, 1966:84) Emma's disappointment results in her illness which leads her to religion. She only wants to have a pure love which is above all earth values. Emma's visit to priest refers her confusion. She needs someone to understand and help her. However the priest talking about worldly things cannot achieve to solve her problem. Flaubert refers that the priest, as a part of religious system is far to determine Emma's needs. He loses his function. Emma realizes that "motherhood,

family, the church had proved of no avail.”(Bart, 1967:285) Emma’s sorrow covers her soul. Her lack of ability to transform the world to fit her dreams results in setting herself a world away from her husband and child. To satisfy herself, Emma plunges into buying luxurious items. Her weakness and her romantic nature lead her to have a relation with Rodolphe who tries to seduce her. Rodolphe as an experienced man understand Emma’s desire for a love affair at a glance. Emma lets Rodolphe to enter her life because she needs someone who can achieve to fill the blanks in her soul. Emma’s long struggle within herself facilitates Rodolphe’s success in winning and controlling of Emma. On their ride into the forest he talks about his love. “Rodolphe from time to time, leaned across and put a kiss upon her hand.” When she comes home, she shuts herself away in her room. She clarifies to herself. ‘I have a lover, A lover!’ (Bovary, 1992:150) Now she sees herself as one of those great lovers in the numerous stories she has read. Flaubert emphasizes Anna’s transformation into a world where she can feel her heart again. Her attachment to Rodolphe turns her into a puppet doing whatever he wants. In her adulterous affair Rodolphe achieves to dominate her. Rodolphe’s relation is not based on love but only sexual satisfaction. For him, she is a pretty mistress but nothing more. Her words; “I am your slave and concubine! You are my king, my ido! You are good! Beautiful! Intelligent! Strong!” cannot influence Rodolphe.” (Bovary, 1992:177) He is bored possessing Emma and this is the time to finish this relation.

“Bit by bit Emma came to understand that Rodolphe had meant something else by their liaison, something very simple and very earthly sensual.” (Bart, 1967:292) However her mind and her heart so full of the innocent gestures of love that she decides to run off with Rodolphe. Her husband is not aware of the reality that lay

ahead of him. Emma's escape plans fizzle out when Rodolphe realizes the meaning of his action. She becomes the victim of Rodolphe's seduction. She thought that "Rodolphe is the lover who for a time both fulfils her romantic dreams and satisfies her physical needs." (Fairlie, 1962:26)

In the novel Flaubert portrays the materialist world of bourgeois society where people gain power only by money. Personal relationships depend on financial considerations. The marriages between the couples are organized considering the money. For example, Charles's first wife, who is a wealthy woman, is chosen by his mother. Emma's failure is not only the result of her character. If she has enough money to have the life she desires, her attempt to escape will be successful.

Emma's borrowing money to pay for gifts for her lovers and her luxuries spending cause her disappointment. Emma challenges the principles of the society. Emma's behaviours about spending money refer her critique about the harsh realities of this life. Her dissatisfaction with his materialistic world leads her to search her own imaginative life. Her fault is not to accept the world as it is. She is trapped in the boundaries of her status and time. She is married to a middle class doctor who cannot supply her wishes for romantic love, social status or richness. "Her dreams may have been conventional, her desires mere insipid idealism, her appetites may have found no outlet but adultery, but at least she rose above her environment to the extent of rejecting the awful materialism of a society that was greedy, cowardly, and dense." (Nadeau, 1972:138)

In opera scene Flaubert portrays how Emma's senses revive for Leon. After Leon comes back Emma's love recurs towards her. However this time Emma cannot satisfy her passion. Like Anna, she tries to dominate Leon. She forces him to obey her

desires. Her togetherness results in disappointment. Leon gets bored because of Emma's oppression. Leon's cold behaviours cause Emma to think whether he has another mistress or not. Same scene is realised in Anna Karenina. "Leon and Rodolphe seem opposites, but with each the affair follows the same ineluctable course; resistance, seduction, delight, a growing sense of monotony and disillusion countered by a frantic whipping up of possessiveness, to be met by the weary, instinctive withdrawal of the lover." (Fairlie, 1962:26)

Anna thinks that Vronsky does not love her anymore and he has a new mistress. Her jealousy causes Vronsky's boredom. As it is stated before Rodolphe achieves to control Emma in many ways. But now Emma is in the dominant role and more controlling over her lover. Going through experiences she realises the power of the sexuality. She can easily take him under her control.

As a result of her financial problems and complicated feelings she finds herself in a trap. Her soul cannot achieve to escape from the harsh reality which makes her to decide on suicide, eating arsenic. Emma is disappointed both economically and spiritually. She has no chance to find money to pay her debts. When Emma goes to lawyer to barrow some money, he offers her to sleep with him. Emma says that she is not for sale. As a romantic dreamer she wants to have the purest love. Her fall is inevitable now. Emma's inability to accept the real world her devotion to luxury creates a dilemma. Her ideal world which she reads in the novels makes her unable to see her own circumstances.

"Emma's lust, her longing for money and her sentimental aspirations all became *confused* in one single, vague and oppressive sense of suffering." (Brombert, 1966:63)

There are many factors that cause Emma's downfall. First of all her choices about husband, having lovers and borrowing money. Second one is the society itself and the men around her. Throughout the novel, it is stated that Emma's existence depends on her male companion's power. As a woman she is incapable of living on her own way. Although she chooses the many elements in her life, the social conditions contribute her downfall. She dreams of better things but she has not power to fulfil her own desires. She must continue to live in Yonville. She never manages to escape as Leon Flaubert draws the reader's attention to Emma's entrapment.



## CHAPTER III

### 3.1. Marriage and Divorce in Anna Karenina, The Awakening & Madame Bovary.

Marriage “is the institution which people join together their lives in emotional and economic ways through forming a household. It often confers rights and obligations with respect to raising children, holding property, sexual behaviour, kinship ties, tribal membership, and relationship to society, inheritance emotional intimacy, and love.”<sup>31</sup> It is the first step to establish the domestic life of family. As it is referred in the meaning of this term there are many elements that form the marriage institution. Considering the social circles of their own and their personal choices, people try to obey the tasks that are given to them. Marriage, as a small institution of the community, serves both the interests of the individuals as husband, wife and also demands of society. Many societies adopt some restrictions on the individuals and feminist critics claim that, in many cultures usually this disadvantageous side is the woman. In many parts of the world her father arranges a marriage for a girl.

In some traditions marriage could be a traumatic, unpleasant turn of events for a girl. ‘The Lot of Women’ written in Athens in the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century laments this situation: Young women, in my opinion, have the sweetest existence known to mortals in their father's homes, for their innocence always keeps children safe and happy. But when we reach puberty and can understand, we are thrust out and sold away from our ancestral gods and from our parents. Some go to strange men's homes, others to foreigner's, some to joyless houses, some to hostile. And all

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<sup>31</sup> “Rights and obligations” <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/marriage> (15 Apr 2004)

this once the first night has yoked us to our husband we are forced to praise and say that all is well.<sup>32</sup>

Women are wanted to focus more attention on the raising of their children. Man has a role which enables them to care for children and wives in financial ways. Women have responsibility to obey their husband and domestic sphere. Couple's progress in a healthy relationship depends on being adapting to the given responsibilities according to the accepted rules of society.

Seventeenth and eighteenth century families were primarily economic units in which men and women developed partnerships centred in the home. In the early nineteenth century, industrialisation gave rise to a new urban middle class and took men involved in commerce and industry away from the home for their work. This separation of the home and family from the work place led to a redefinition of the home as primarily the woman's sphere. Traditional woman's work, such as cooking, cleaning and rising children, was now separated from the outside world of work and money. Contemporary authors, writing of men's sphere and woman's sphere, redefined the ideal woman in a way that devalued woman's work and created a prescriptive woman's role Victorian, middle-class women now sought fulfilment through self-sacrifice. Today, historians call this role of women the 'cult of domesticity'.<sup>33</sup>

In the marriage institution one partner is wanted to balance personal demands and the needs with the needs of his partner. When they do not achieve to respect their choices the conflicts appear. The marriage is the union of two people. So, each one has the equal standards of living. It indicates that, the persons are bound not only as the member of the groups but also individuals.

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<sup>32</sup> "Criticisms of marriage" <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/marriage> (15 Arp 2004)

<sup>33</sup> "The Cult of Domesticity" <http://womenshistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2Fcatalog.socialstudies.com%2F%2F%402LX-121B> (15 Arp 2004)

“If certain stereotypes can be broken down, women can have the respect of man intellectually, physically and emotionally.”<sup>34</sup> If women are educated and developed they will be able to go beyond the boundaries of the home and direct themselves as they want. Equality gets broken down in a marriage as the result of

Household partnership, where the man goes of the work and makes a living to support the family and the woman stays home barefoot and pregnant, takes care of the children and tends to the house. There is a mutual admiration between the husband and wife because they both keep up their end of the bargain. But there is no love built into this relationship. Couples like these are merely supplementing each others existence, he by working to support her and her by cooking and cleaning for him<sup>35</sup>.

Throughout the century, the function and types of marriage change from culture to culture. In the West marriage is based on emotional attachments between the both members of the couple. In the Islamic world a man can marry up to four women. In imperial China, although a man is married to one woman he could have several concubines that “is either the state of a couple living together as lovers with no obligation created by vows, legal marriage, or religious ceremony, or the state of a woman supported by a male lover who is married to and usually living with someone else.”<sup>36</sup> In some societies to marry more than one woman at the same time signifies the wealth and power. Two brothers can marry to same woman in rural regions of India, Nepal, and China. Group marriage is another form of marriage. It refers that more than one man and more than one woman form a family unit. Many religions

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<sup>34</sup> “Woman inthe 19th Century”

[http://www.courseworkbank.co.uk/coursework/woman\\_the\\_th\\_century\\_2628/](http://www.courseworkbank.co.uk/coursework/woman_the_th_century_2628/) (15 Arp 2004)

<sup>35</sup> “Woman inthe 19th Century”

[http://www.courseworkbank.co.uk/coursework/woman\\_the\\_th\\_century\\_2628/](http://www.courseworkbank.co.uk/coursework/woman_the_th_century_2628/) (15 Arp 2004)

<sup>36</sup> “Types of Marriage” <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/marriage> (15 Arp 2004)



support marriage in different ways. “In Judaism, marriage is so important that remaining unmarried is deemed unnatural. Islam also recommends marriage highly; among other things it helps in the pursuit of spiritual perfection. Hinduism sees marriage as a secret duty.”<sup>37</sup>

All of the novels in question address a social problem: the condition of women in patriarchal institution of marriage. Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina has numerous elements as pictures of Russian family life among the aristocracy, marriage institution and place of women in the society. Concentrating our attention especially on two families, two pair of lovers and on their private life Tolstoy portrays the relationship between the couples. The first sentence of Anna Karenina “all happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy on its own way” lead reader to think about the structure of marriages. (Tolstoy, 2003:1)

The story presents three marriages: Anna and Karenin, Levin and Kitty, Dolly and Stiva. Tolstoy couples indicate the standard of the each partner in the society. Comparing the relations between these marriages it can be realised that, there are set role for each partner. At the first stage of the novel Tolstoy introduces the reader the marriage of Oblonsky and Dolly. Dolly is upset because of Oblonsky’s affairs. Anna manages to convince Dolly to forgive him. His position refers that it is acceptable for men to be unfaithful in marriage. However this condition changes when the woman does the same act. In spite of his affairs, Oblonsky continues his position in the society. When Anna leaves her husband for a new life with Vronsky, she is excluded from the social circles. Although Anna’s marriage seems suitable from the start she becomes unhappy after she meets Vronsky. As Gareth Williams observes:

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<sup>37</sup> “Marriage and religion” <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/marriage> (15 Apr 2004)

There is something in the structure of the novel; beginning with the seeming Levin's happy marriage to Anna's unhappy marriage, which lures the reader on to make judgements which contrast reason and the irrational, faith and reason, good and evil, the physical and spiritual, inward looking individualism and outward looking love for others, spontaneity and the conventional. The novel makes us reflect on all these issues but it can not be reduced to any binary system. (Williams, 1990:377)

Tolstoy signifies the different life styles of Levin and Anna. He indicates the importance of country life for marriage and family. Levin's life in the country which is more family based and has very different set of values enable the conditions of happy marriage. Comparing the relation between Levin's marriage and Anna's relation both her husband and lover, Tolstoy refers the basic elements of family life. Kitty and Levin achieve to reach happiness because they obey the settled traditions of the society. They sacrifice their own desires for their happiness. Kitty decides to go Levin's estate and to continue her life with him. Before his marriage Levin is also afraid of loosing his freedom. However his love towards Kitty is so great that he becomes ready to do everything that Kitty wants. It is realised that for his love Levin is ready to sacrifice himself. He begins to concern events that he has not like before:

After three months of her marriage, Levin is happy but not in the way he had expected. Before marriage he had been contemptuous of the forms he had seen marriage take in the married people whom he knew and it had seemed to him that his married life would be completely different. He has now found that his new life: not only did not take any particular new form but, on the contrary, become totally composed of all those petty trifles which he had so despised before, but which now against his will assumed and unusual and incontrovertible significance. (Williams, 1990:403)

Tolstoy refers that family life can not be a merely institution. The links between the love and the marriage is the basic unit of happy family life which depends on self

sacrifices. "Kitty does acquire her positive semiotic value from the place she occupies in the traditions of the national culture." (Armstrong, 1988:111) Portraying the perfect marriage of Levin and Kitty, Tolstoy's refers the reasons of Anna's unhappiness. Anna's marriage to Karenin was arranged by relatives. She does not love her husband. There is not any passion in her marriage with Karenin. This contributes Anna's emotional struggle within her inward world. In Anna's society, marriage is regarded as social convention. Romance or sexual excitements between the couples which Anna search is not needed for the marriage institution. She does not have a chance to choose right person to share the rest of her live. Tolstoy refers that Anna is not successful both with her relation to husband and Vronsky because of her selfish and individualistic love.

In 19<sup>th</sup> century divorce is not as common as today. Once they get married the couples continue their relationship until death separates them. This condition was the same for Russian society. A divorce was excluded by the innocent party and guilty party could not attend any marriage again. She could not have any right of children. It indicates that as Vronsky's mistress, Anna must continue her life without her son. This causes Anna to loose all legal power in her social relationships. Divorce will be publicly humiliating both her and her husband.

Emma Bovary marries Charles to have the life in her dreams. Their marriages makes Charles the happiest man in world but his incapability to understand his wives desires causes Emma's hatred. She does not love her husband and her marriage does not satisfy her needs. Emma begins to question why she got married with this bored man. Throughout the novel Emma is seen creating her fantasy world and rejecting the harsh reality around her. At first she tries to create the romance in her marriage.

But “she easily convinced herself that there was nothing startling about Charles’s passion. His eagerness had turned into a routine; he embraced her at the same time everyday. It was a habit like any other, a favourite after the monotony of dinner.” (Flaubert, 2003:41)

Although she accepts Charles marriage proposal as a hope to escape the boring life of form, she can not have the happiness. After a while she understands that her marriage does not correspond with marriage she has dreamed of. Like Emma, Edna Pontellier tries to escape boredom of her life. Both Charles and Leonce Pontellier look their wives like possessions. They consider their wives as a piece of property. This is the reason why they do not consider their emotional side. As Brita Seyersted indicated:

Emma enters marriage believing that it will give her the ‘bliss’, ‘passion’ and ‘rapture’... That had seemed so beautiful to her in books and as soon as the ball at the Chateau has made her reality unbearable to her, she is ready to act out the roles she has inherited from romantic literature. When Edna meets Leonce, she infatuated with a tragedian and dreams of the ‘acme of bliss’ that a marriage with him would mean; she weds Pontellier in the world of reality and forget her dreams for ever, but finds years later that they can suddenly flare up again. (Seyersted, 1969:139)

It is realised that their physical attraction to their lovers arouses their awakening. Power of passion which they can not find in their marriages emancipates them from the rules of society. They try to satisfy their restless and excited feelings by a new partner. Ordinary daily life of the marriage can not enable them the standards they have imagined. Edna’s position in marriage differs in some ways from Emma’s. Emma’s marriage can not supply both economic and spiritual needs of her. She wants to find a luxurious life during her marriage. However Edna has a comfortable

life there is not any economic boundary for her desires. But she does not obey the classic meaning of woman who is supposed to find happiness in the restrictive boundaries of the marriage. “One of the first acts of rebellion that anticipates Edna’s sexual awakening is her refusal to obey her husband’s command that she go inside the house after dark. Instead, she swings in the hammock until the moon sets.” (Martin, 1988:22) In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the public view of the marriage reveals the fact that women’s social position or rights are tied to their husbands. These heroines in the novels challenge the social order which denies their individual rights. Their sexual awareness opens discussion of adultery in the society. “American culture in the late 1890s was not ready for an open assault on women’s social identification with marriage or even for an open defence of women’s sexual and sensual individualism.” (Koloski, 1988:34)

## CONCLUSION

Every society creates some rules to organize the life and moral values of each society change according to time and place. The members of different social conditions take their roles in their environment as the representative figures. However there may be different outlooks to the life and events, in the same social environment. There have been always wars between the people's claims and the rules of the society. When the society wants to limit people according to its own circumstances instead of human nature, the differences between the individuals and society show itself. This gap also appears in the different institutions of the societies as 'marriage'.

When a person does not achieve to respond the social norms struggle begins to show itself. The struggle between the institutions of society and the needs of individual's causes the isolation of the person-society with a fixed belief, with a fixed hierarchy wants to put its members with these basic orders. The problem is that when the people want to avoid to self sacrifice, they turn into a self-centred agent. Recognizing their singular nature of their existence they realize their self-interests.

The struggle between the sexes appears throughout the centuries. In different parts of the world, women have been deceived, raped and used only as an object to realize the domestic duties. Superior and dominant position of man both economically and socially have obstructed woman development. They can not develop individuality and become the victims of both their husbands and social circles. For the construction of their own free identity, they are forced to alienate

themselves. When they can not achieve to satisfy their needs they find themselves in depression which leads them to inevitable end; 'suicide'.

In the early 1900s discriminatory treatment towards women were held by men in the society. Women without having any control over themselves and their lifestyles were only perceived to be possessions of the men. They were expected to suit the image and role that society had decided for them. Although women were dissatisfied with their life, they did not find enough power to explain this.

Performing their domestic duties in the best way their life were restricted in their marriages. As soon as a woman married a man, she lost all her rights in legal system. A married woman can not have own property or control her own earnings. However single woman have her own independent choices. Busy domestic life of a married woman forces her to play the role of a mother and wife. She performs her daily task as pleasing her husband, bearing children and taking care of them. She is the dominant figure only in the boundaries of the house depending on her social role and husband. Spending most of their times to obey their social roles they are limited in the home.

All of the novels tell about wives who recognize the happiness outside their marriages. There can be seen numerous similarities between the novels considering their characterization and plots. Author's portrayal of womanhood in the story line depicts the relation of the couples and woman's role. Exploring everything a man has got much more freedom than woman. Man's attitude towards woman has got a materialistic nature. Chopin describes Mr. Pontellier as "looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property." (Chopin, 1995:4) Edna is portrayed as an object.

All of the woman characters in the novels in question are exposed to have love affairs because of the emptiness in their family lives. In Madame Bovary, Emma gets bored within the boundaries of her marriage, which is far away the romantic love in the novels she has read. In The Awakening Mr. Pontellier's long business trips and his club's life causes Edna to enjoy Robert's company. Edna Pontellier, Emma Bovary and Anna Karenina are fully awakened to their femininity after their marriage. All of the protagonists fall in love with a young man who leads them to have adulterous love. Until they meet a person who reminds them their sexual desires, they have been faithful to their husbands. They try to obey the social roles. Becoming bored of their monotonous marriages they commit adultery. They have been excluded by the other members of their social circle. Focusing on their freedom and individuality they deny their responsibilities as a mother. Edna's interest to painting and music indicates her search for self-expression. Edna searches her sexual and spiritual freedom as an independent woman Chopin refers "Edna's awakening to the loneliness of imperative sexuality, of illusory, evanescent love." (Seyersted, 1969:147) Reading enables Anna and Emma to reach their ideal life. They reject their children to bind them the daily routine of life. Concentrating on their emotions all of the women characters show romantic features.

Love which is the most powerful thing in the world can change people. These women sacrifice their children, family and social status for the sake of love. But their fault is not to find socially acceptable outlets for their personal desires and needs. This places them in the abnormal standing individual fighting against the society. Their independent behaviours lead them to breakdown their moral integrity. However they choose to self-sacrifice rather than morality. Ignoring the mother



woman role in the society, they enjoy their own choices. They have “changed from a physically unawakened woman to an alive, sexual creature.” (Koloski, 1988:42) The newborn selves do not accept to be slave of their surroundings even their own children. Gradual awareness of their soul leads them to the act of escaping the realities and builds their own individual world.

At the first stage, they do not seek sexual satisfaction. But after a while they take the dominant roles of men using their sexuality as a vehicle. Both Emma Bovary and Edna Pontellier have relations after their lovers leave them. Although they do not feel something emotionally, they only try to satisfy themselves. Edna insists on to have a self. Making her own independent choices as her lovers, she finds enough capability to direct her own life. She does not allow Creole society to decide on her own fate. Edna’s position differs in many ways from Anna and Emma. Because these heroines are captures with the ideas of romance much more than Edna. Edna “feels no shame, and she knows by now that passions are transitory and transferable; therefore she seems to foresee only an affair with Robert.” (Seyersted, 1969:144)

The adventures of all the women characters in these novels are inevitably the same. All of the heroines are introduced as strong women but as the stories progresses, they loose their self-confidence. Their husbands are portrayed as the victims of these women heroines. They change their nature of wife who is very dutiful and obedient. The violation of the laws brings with it misery and ruin for their future. The society’s mechanical influence on the minds of its members puts them into a cage. These women characters strive for freedom. Their only fault is to be their own individuals.

The conflict between the exterior world and interior reality of their emotions make them victims of their social surroundings. They are trapped in a world of the standards and traditions that do not satisfy them in any way. There was a great abyss between what they really wanted out of life and what society expected from them. Their emotional instincts are awakened by male figures except their husbands. Tired of their ordinary marriage and insensitive husbands, they long for something or someone more exciting. Their desire to break through the stereotype of the passive housewife, and escape the limitations in their role as a woman, leads them to establish their own world. They realize that marriage is unsatisfying and block their independence. They question their role as a wife and mother. Realizing the fact that in the society they mean nothing without being a wife, mother or daughter, they make many steps towards independence. They need more to express who they are. The basic perception of their society and century that “women are mothers first and individuals second or not at all.” (Dyer, 1993:106) They deny its power and superiority. Their suicide is tragic because they can not achieve to be persons; they desire to be as a result of the restrictions, society placed on woman. They choose to sacrifice themselves rather than their freedom treatment towards.

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