

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

This chapter begins with the background of the study. Here, several reasons are written in order to show why a novel is chosen instead of plays and poems. Then, the reasons of choosing Russian literature and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, one of Russia's greatest novelists are also added. In addition, there are some paragraphs explaining the reasons to analyze Fyodor Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, the topic of humanity, and the main character named Alyosha Karamazov.

### **I.1. Background of the Study**

A novel is chosen for this thesis because among the other forms of imaginative literature, the novel becomes the favorite of both writers and readers for a long time (Kennedy 180). According to X.J. Kennedy, "a novel is a book-length story in prose, whose author tries to create the sense that, while we read, we experience actual life" (180). This sense of actuality is the quality that sets the novel apart from other literary forms (180). Besides, a novel focuses on one or a few major characters that undergo some kind of change as they meet other characters or face some conflicts in their life (189). Thus, reading a novel is interesting for the writer because she can easily imagine the characters, which are close with the reality of men. Based on these reasons, the writer is interested in studying a novel, instead of plays or poems.

Furthermore, the writer prefers to discuss a Russian novel to English and American novels because the writer finds out that the Russian literature is as good as English and American literature. The proof comes from a critic namely Bernard Guilbert Guerney

who says, "Sixty centuries of civilization have produced three literatures which are acknowledged as supremely great: Greek, English, and Russian" (ix). Besides, the critic also states that "Russian literature is as vast and overwhelming as the land that produced it" (ix). It means that the Russian literature is worth analyzing.

Moreover, there is a personal reason why the writer chooses Fyodor Dostoyevsky, one of Russia's greatest writers. It is due to the fact that Fyodor Dostoyevsky has a unique background of life. As a critic namely Henry Gifford writes:

What sets Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) apart from all other novelists of his day is a fearful experience: his arrest, condemnation to death, reprieve on the scaffold; then eight years of prison labour and military service in Siberia (108).

Therefore, the writer wants to show some of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's experiences that inspire his novels.

Firstly, it deals with the condition of his family. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who was born in 1821 in

Moscow, is the second of seven children of an impoverished nobleman's family. Dostoyevsky has a bitter experience in his youth because he suffers from poverty since his father is only an army doctor who attaches to the staff of a public hospital (Carey 5). Living on the hospital grounds with his family, at an early age, Dostoyevsky becomes familiar with illness, misery, and death that make him able to describe it well in his later writings (Slonim 98).

In addition, there is a tragedy in Dostoyevsky's family that makes him never free of the horrors of homicide. It is related to the event of his father's death. After Dostoyevsky's mother dies, his father then moves to the country where he has two small villages. There, he is surrounded by a harem, and he is constantly drunk. He is also cruel and brutal so that one night he is murdered by his serfs. At that time, Dostoyevsky is eighteen years old and he still attends school in St. Petersburg (Komroff x). This sudden and savage murder, of course, leaves a deep impression on the young Dostoyevsky for the rest of his life. In his last book, The Brothers Karamazov that is written forty years later, Dostoyevsky portrays the concept of his father's murder and drank

life through one of his characters, Fyodor Karamazov (x).

Secondly, Fyodor Dostoyevsky's experience in escaping from the death sentence changes his entire outlook on life. It happens when he is arrested by the government for being a member of a young socialist group and is sentenced to death (Komroff x). At the very last moment, an official comes forward and announces Tzar's clemency that his sentence has changed from death into prison and he is exiled in Siberia (Slonim 98).

During his experience of living in prison, Dostoyevsky begins to re-examine his values. Later, he formulates his well-known theories about the necessity of suffering. In Dostoyevsky's opinion, "suffering becomes the means by which a man's soul is purified and expiated all its sin. Suffering becomes the means of salvation" (Carey 6). Thus, when Dostoyevsky becomes a free man again, he writes some novels with the idea, coming from his new philosophy, such as: The House of Death (1861), Crime and Punishment (1866), and The Idiot (1868).

Eventhough Dostoyevsky publishes many important novels in his life, the writer is really anxious to

analyze The Brothers Karamazov (1880), for the novel is best known to the readers and most discussed by critic (Hingley 195). It is due to the fact that The Brothers Karamazov examines many facets of life and investigates many problems of lasting importance so that this novel is considered as one of the world's most complex novels (Carey 18). Besides, in The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoyevsky gives the whole of his thinking about "the suffering of children, destructive passions between men and women, scenes of frenzy and outrage, and the same gnawing questions and metaphysical debates" (Gifford 110).

Moreover, The Brothers Karamazov also occupies Dostoyevsky's mind of the theme and philosophy about "the fight between God and the Devil in the heart of man" (Komroff xiii). In illustrating this theme and philosophy, Dostoyevsky introduces us to the Karamazov family. This family consists of a lecherous and corrupt father named Fyodor Karamazov and his four sons. Fyodor has three legitimate sons, Dmitri who symbolizes the flesh, Ivan who represents the intellect, Alyosha as the spiritual side of man, and one illegitimate son, Smerdyakov who represents the "insulted and injured, the disinherited" (xiii). Each

of the characters must face their own fight because God and the Devil battle for possession of their soul (xiii).

Furthermore, in making the analysis of the novel, the writer does not use the original novel of The Brothers Karamazov in Russian language because the writer does not know anything about Russian language. Therefore, the writer uses the translation novel in English language that is written by Constance Garnett (1861-1946). She translates almost the entire corpus of classic Russian prose fiction into English so that it makes her as the only translator from Russian of significance into English literature (Bradbury 202). After her first volume (e.g. Turgenev's Rudin) appears in 1894, then she decides to devote herself to translation for the rest of her working life. Hence, she becomes well known for rendering all the major fiction of Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Chekov (202).

After reading The Brothers Karamazov more intensive, at last, the writer feels attracted to the touching scenes of humanity that can be found in the novel. Despite the fact that Dostoyevsky's novel is considered tragic and full of split personalities, the

writer finds that amidst the gloomy and discouraging events of the novel, there is a sense of humanity, a capability of the character to be good to other people. Because of that, the writer decides to analyze the sense of humanity that is shown through the main character named Alyosha Karamazov.

The writer wants to discuss about humanity in this thesis because according to Webster's New World Dictionary, humanity is "the quality of being humane". It means that humanity is the special quality of man as a social being. There is no doubt that a human being needs other people in his or her life. From the prehistoric times, the interaction among people exists in the society as an actual proof that man is extremely reliable on each other for survival in life. Hence, it is impossible to be humane without other human beings (Ashbrook 146).

Therefore, from the four Karamazov brothers, the writer chooses Alyosha to be analyzed because he embodies the positive actions in the novel (Murry 243). Alyosha is a person who always tries to see the best side of everyone and he never judges others (Carey 19). Besides, Alyosha is the only character that is loved so much by the author. Through the

narrator, as Fyodor Dostoyevsky's voice, the writer discovers the author's compliment for Alyosha, as exemplified in the following quotation: "Yet I must give an account of him, if only to explain one queer fact, which is that I have to introduce my hero to the reader wearing the cassock of a novice" (Garnett 27). In addition, there is another quotation to show the compliment which is given to Alyosha: "Yet I must frankly say that it would be very difficult for me to give a clear account of that strange, vague moment in the life of the young hero I love so much" (311).

The name of Alyosha, the "man of God", comes from the name of Dostoyevsky's three-year-old son, Alexey, who dies from an epileptic fit (Peace 219). The author creates Alyosha as a good character in this novel, who concerns with others' problems as seen from each chapter that illustrates Alyosha's influences (Carey 38). As Marc Slonim writes, "He is another Christ-figure. Mild and good, he rejects violence, deceit, and lust of power" (105). "Alyosha was entirely convinced of the existence of God and immortality, and that he sought truth, immediate action, and service of others", writes Peter Jones (114).

Moreover, according to J. Middleton Murry, "Alyosha is a perfect being in body, and his mind is in harmony with his body's perfection" (253). Alyosha can be such a loving person because of Father Zossima, the religious elder. Because Alyosha lives in the monastery, and he becomes a special disciple of Father Zossima so that every action of his reflects the qualities that he has learned from his elder (Carey 87).

Father Zossima is a very compassionate and devout man, with a deep love for all humanity and a strong belief in God (Carey 22). In general, Father Zossima's teachings are founded on a simplicity so basic that it consists of only two concepts: "the value of loving and the value of being honest and respecting oneself" (23). Here, the elder insists on practicing active love to mankind where every man shall love all people and all things, and shall refrain from condemning others. Only through love, Zossima believes that "you can redeem the whole world by it, and cleanse not only your own sins but the sins of others" (Garnett 57).

## **I.2. Statement of the Problem**

Dostoyevsky says that Alyosha is "simply a lover of humanity" (Garnett 27). This statement needs to be emphasized because Alyosha, in fact, comes from unhappy family. Thus, the writer wants to know how Alyosha develops his humanity from someone who does not have any sense of humanity to someone who has a strong sense of humanity.

## **I.3. Purpose of the Study**

Through out this thesis, the writer wants to find out the things that Alyosha does in order to develop his humanity toward other people.

## **I.4. Importance of the Study**

As a person who is interested in humanity, the writer finds that humanity gradually becomes sparse in the world now. Caring about others by giving time, love, and support has become a rare event nowadays. In fact, people are more concerned with their own interest and business that they tend to ignore the

suffering of others. Because of that, it is very difficult to find mercy and unselfishness in human's life. Yet, during the study of this thesis, the writer discovers that humanity still exists through Alyosha Karamazov. Although it is not easy to be like Alyosha, the writer wants to show the readers that humanity can be developed if the person follows his or her sense of humanity.

Moreover, the writer hopes that this thesis will also encourage the students of Faculty of Letters in Petra Christian University to analyze Dostoyevsky's other novels because Dostoyevsky has some qualities in making his novels. First, if someone wants to understand Russia and the Russian people, he or she must read Dostoyevsky's novels that portray the soul of Russian people. It is due to the fact that Dostoyevsky loves his country so much. As seen from his works like Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov, they always take place in his country, Russia (Komroff ix). Second, in his novels, Dostoyevsky always talks about suffering, the existence of God, love, money, suicide, and despair based on his own experiences (xiv).

### **I.5. Scope and Limitation**

In this thesis, the writer wants to limit the analysis only in discussing one of the main characters, Alyosha Karamazov. The writer also uses some other characters, such as: Fyodor Karamazov, Dmitri Karamazov, Katerina Ivanovna, Kolya Krassotkin, and Captain Snegiryov in order to show Alyosha's roles in solving their problems. Then, as the scope of this thesis, the writer discusses the development of Alyosha's humanity from his childhood to his adulthood.

### **I.6. Methodology**

At first, the methodology that the writer does in order to make the analysis is library research. For several weeks, some data about the author, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, have been collected as much as possible by searching in the library. The writer also tries to find some information from the books, critics, and essays about The Brothers Karamazov. After gathering all the data, then the writer starts to write the background of the study.

Then, literary approach is used during the writing of this thesis. The writer, here, chooses three literary theories: theory of setting, theory of characterization, and theory of conflict. The writer chooses the theory of setting because it is used to analyze the influence of Alyosha's environments in developing his humanity. Besides, to know the character traits of Alyosha in a more detailed way, the writer uses theory of characterization. Finally, the writer uses theory of conflict in order to discuss some of the conflicts that emerge during Alyosha's struggle to develop his humanity.

Furthermore, to support the discussion on setting, the writer includes the sociological theory from William M. Kephart. The writer chooses the theory about family because the writer wants to analyze the shaping of Alyosha's character based on the condition of his family. In addition, the writer also uses James B. Ashbrook's point of view about humanity because his view really helps the writer to understand more about the meaning of being humane toward other human beings that is related to the topic of this thesis.

### **I.7. Organization of the Study**

The writer divides this thesis into four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, importance of the study, scope and limitation, methodology, and organization of the study. In the second chapter, review of related literature, the writer is going to present some of the literary theories and the related theories that are related to the topic of her thesis. Here, the literary theories like theory of setting, theory of characterization, and theory of conflict are explained. For the related theories, the writer gives the information about the sociological theory and the meaning of humanity. Next, the analysis of the topic itself is discussed in the third chapter. Finally, the last chapter is the conclusion that includes the result of the analysis.