

TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF THE MAJOR CHARACTER
IN CHEKOV'S *THE BRUTE*:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The characteristic of literature lies in the fact there are two aspects in it, imaginative and reality aspects. In general, literature combines imaginative and realistic representation of life. Literature can be seen as a mirror of life, so some emotion will also be presented in the literary works such as love, hate, joy, sorrow and even confusion. These emotions also inspire the author in producing the literary work.

Literature is a comprehensive anthology of fiction, poetry, and drama designed to introduce students to the formal study of literature (Pickering, 1997: xix). In order to appreciate them, there are some approaches of analysis and they can be categorized as follows: structural approach, psychological approach, sociological approach, psychoanalytical approach and so forth. Here the writer is not going to talk about them. He is only going to concentrate on the psychoanalytic approach in analyzing one of the literary works that is drama.

The writer chooses one of Anton Chekov's dramas entitled *The Brute* in his study. The word *drama* comes from the Greek verb *drain*, meaning, "to perform". Drama is a story in dialogue performed by actors, on stage before an audience. In a more general sense it refers to the literary genre that encompasses all written plays and to the profession of writing, producing, and performing plays. It combines the use of language with representational

arts involving scenery, costuming, and the actors' physical appearance. Thus, a drama only becomes a complete work of art when it is seen on the stage, and the written text of a play is only its skeletal frame – lacking flesh blood, and a life of its own (Pickering, 1997: 1113).

Other definition about drama is it is a work of imaginative literature consisting entirely of dialogue, in prose or verse, intended for actors to speak with accompanying gestures before an audience (Steinman and Willen, 1967: 317-318). The drama differs from fiction in demanding staging and an audience. On purely literary, verbal side, it differs in consisting entirely of dialogue. Fiction has dialogue, of course; but it also has narrative and description. An interesting consequence is that, in the drama, neither the audience nor the reader is conscious of the author. The author of the drama does not and cannot speak in his own person; only characters speak in drama (Steinman and Willen, 1967: 317-318).

Anton Pavlovich Chekov is one of the famous playwrights. Anton Pavlovich Chekov was born in the old Black Sea port of Taganrog on January 17, 1860. He is a best-known literary writer, especially for short stories, drama and play. He is also better known in modern-day Russia for his several hundred short stories, many of which are considered masterpieces of the form. Yet his plays are also major influences on twentieth century drama. Chekov's four major *plays*—*The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard* are frequently revived in modern production.

Anton Chekov's mother, Yevgeniya, was an excellent storyteller, and Chekov is supposed to have acquired his own gift for narrative and to have learned to read and write from her. His father, Pavel Yegorovich Chekov, a strict disciplinarian and a religious zealot demanded from all dedication to the Eastern Orthodox Church and the family business. In 1875, facing bankruptcy, he was forced to escape from creditors to Moscow, where his two eldest sons were attending the university, and for the next several years, the family lived in poverty. Anton stayed behind in Taganrog for three more years to finish school. He made ends meet by giving private tutoring, selling off household goods, and later, and working in a clothing warehouse. In 1879, Chekov completed schooling at gymnasium and joined his family in Moscow, having gained admission to the medical school at Moscow State University.

In a bid to support his family, Chekov started writing short, humorous sketches and vignettes of contemporary Russian life, many under pseudonyms such as Antosha Chekhonte, *Man without the spleen*, and others. His first published piece appeared in the St. Petersburg weekly *Strekoza* in March 1880. It is not known how many stories Chekov wrote during this period, but his output was prodigious, and he rapidly earned a reputation as a satirical chronicler of Russian street life.

It can be safely said that Chekov revolutionized the genre of short story; his subject matter and technique influenced many short-story writers. It is often said that little action occurs in Chekov's stories and plays, but he compensates the lack of outward excitement by his original techniques for

developing internal drama. The point of typical Chekov story is most often what happens within a given character, and that is conveyed indirectly, by suggestion or by significant detail. Chekov eschews the traditional build-up of chronological detail, instead emphasizing moments of epiphanies and illumination over significantly shorter period of time. As such, his best stories have a psychological realism and concision seldom match by other writers. Tolstoy likened Chekov's technique to that of the French impressionists, who daubed canvases with paint apparently without reason, but achieved an overall effect of vivid, unchangeable artistry.

Although contemporary Russian literary critics celebrated Chekov, international fame came only after World War I with Constance Garnett's English translation. Chekov's plays were immensely popular in England in the 1920s and have become classics of the British stage. In the United States his fame came somewhat later, through the influence of Stanislavsky's technique for achieving realistic acting. American playwrights such as Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Clifford Odets have used Chekhovian techniques and few important writers of plays in the twentieth century can have escaped Chekov's influence entirely: for example, the work by British playwright C. P. Snow is often compared to that of Chekov for its focus on humorous family situations and its insights into society.

The continuously growing list of films and theatre productions based on Chekov's stories and plays includes Emil Loteanu's *My Tender and Affectionate Beast* (1978), Nikita Mikhalkov and Marcello Mastroianni's

Dark Eyes (1987), Louis Malle's *Vanya on 42nd Street* (1994), Anthony Hopkins's *August* (1996), Lanford Wilson's *The Three Sisters* (1997), among many others (Scribner, 1912: 3-10). Many of his dramas were also performed by theatre organization in some Indonesian Universities. The writer had seen the performance of *'The Brute'* by Sopo Theatre, The Science of Social and Politic Faculty of Sebelas Maret University, Solo. This is one of the reasons why he chooses Chekhov's drama, besides the story on the drama itself.

The Brute was a story about a widow earned much debt left by her dead husband. She suffered the entire burden herself and it was so difficult for her. One day, the owner of that money came to collect his money and intended to marry her, because he loved her very much. It was not easy to accept him and needed a lot of struggles to make the decision besides her trauma of losing soul mate that she deeply in love with.

The writer's going to do is analyzing the behaviors of certain character, especially the major character, Mrs. Popov, in *'The Brute'*. The approach being implemented is psychoanalytic approach; it is concerned with motivations of human thought and actions. It is as a therapeutic method, originated by Sigmund Freud, for treating mental disorders by investigating the interactions of conscious and unconscious elements of one's mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into conscious mind, using technique such as dream interpretation and free association

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_trauma).

The theory that is going to be applied in this analysis is traumatic experience in psychoanalytic view from Binghamton University Counseling Center (<http://www.aets.org/article164.htm>). Traumatic experience is an event in which an individual experiences, or witness, an actual or threatened serious injury or death. When an individual experiences trauma, there will be some reactions followed, emotional and physical reactions.

In this study, the writer analyzes the traumatic experience and the reaction of the major character, Mrs. Popov in *'The Brute'* by using the traumatic experience in psychoanalytic view from Binghamton University. Furthermore, the writer entitles his study:

Traumatic Experience of the Major Character in Chekov's *The Brute*: Psychoanalytic Approach

Previous Study

There is no Research Paper, which is similar with **Traumatic Experience of the Major Character in Chekov's *The Brute*: Psychoanalytic Approach** in the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta library. (Search result: 10/20/2008:12:00 am).

Problem Statement

Based on the above background the problem of this research is formulated as follows:

1. How is the traumatic experience reflected on the major character in Chekov's *The Brute*?
2. What are the reactions of the major character toward the traumatic experience shown in the drama?

Problem Limitation

In order to avoid the deviations in analysis, the writer focuses this research on the major character's traumatic experience and the reactions of the major character toward the trauma itself.

Research Objective

The objective of the study is to find the solution of the problem formulated in the problem statement that is to analyze the traumatic experience of the major character and the reactions of the experience in Chekov's *The Brute* by implementing the theory of traumatic experience in psychoanalytic view.

Research Benefit

1. Theoretical Benefits

- a. It will be easier for the readers to understand the real means of psychoanalytic according to Sigmund Freud by reading this research.
- b. The reader can comprehend Chekov's *The Brute* especially about the traumatic experience of the major character, Mrs. Popov, viewed from psychoanalytic approach.
- c. The readers, especially the students of English Department can be motivated to analyze this drama from various approaches.

2 Practical Benefits

The readers can understand the effect of 'trauma' so they can control and overcome their feeling.

G. Research Method

Research is the formalization of natural processes we all carry out from birth in dealing with the environment. It involves curiosity about some phenomenon and the posing of testable questions about the relationship among observed phenomena (Nunan, 1992: 20). The research should follow the most appropriate procedures, methods and technique. Research method leads the researcher on how the research is done (Nazir, 1988: 51)

This thesis uses library research since it uses books and other writing documents as the source to support the subject matter of the research.

1. Approach of the Study

There are some approaches that can be implemented in analyzing literary works. One of them is psychoanalytic approach. It means the researcher will analyze the problem based on psychoanalytic approach. The researcher will find out parallelism between psychoanalytical aspects in the library work with a certain theory of psychoanalytic. In this research, the researcher applies the complete Binghamton University Counseling Center.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the writer's study is *The Brute* by Anton Chekov, the English version by Eric Bentley (1958).

3. Type of the Data and Data Source

In this study, there are two kinds of data, namely primary data and secondary data.

1. Primary data is the data taken from the text of *The Brute* by Anton Chekov, the English version by Eric Bentley. It includes the dialogues, the conflicts, the statements and the attitudes of the characters, which have relation to the problem statement.

2. Secondary data as the supporting data are taken from Chekov's biography, books Internet and other relevant theories.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

In this research, the writer uses documentation as data collecting technique. The steps are as follows:

1. Reading the script of *The Brute* as the primary data repeatedly and the secondary data in order to understand the main theme.
2. Taking the important notes of both the primary and secondary data.
3. Quoting some important information of the drama, which is relevant to the problem.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The process of data analysis is the most important step in the research. Through analyzing process, the collected data can be interpreted to make them meaningful (Nazir, 1988: 405). The writer employs descriptive analysis or content analysis technique. He selects the correlation between the classified data with the problems; the he analyzes the major character personality by applying Freud's psychoanalysis theory about traumatic experience. The last is drawing a conclusion.

H. Research Paper Organization

This research paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is dealing with introduction, which explains background of the study, previous study, problem statement, problem limitation, research objective, research benefit, and research method and research paper organization. The second chapter is dealing with review underlying theory, notion of psychoanalysis,

structure of personality, review on traumatic experience, structural element of drama, and theoretical application. The third chapter is structural analysis of *The Brute*. The fourth chapter is psychoanalytic analysis includes traumatic experience reflected by the major character, reactions of the major character toward the traumatic experience, discussion and the last chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion.