

## **Hypocrisy in Anthon Chekov's The Bear**

**Irwan Sumarsono**

[irwan@pens.ac.id](mailto:irwan@pens.ac.id)

**PENS Language and Culture Centre, Politeknik Elektronika Negeri  
Surabaya**

**Ima Masofa**

[imamasofa@gmail.com](mailto:imamasofa@gmail.com)

**SMP Unggulan Amanatul Ummah**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted to analyze the hypocrisy of Popova's and Smirnov's in Anthon Chekov's The Bear. It is a qualitative research with psychological approach. Data were collected from the main source and the other sources before they were analyzed using the descriptive analytic techniques. The Bear was the main source of this study, and the other sources derived from books, journals and from the internet. The study focused on the factors behind the reasons why Popova and Smirnov became hypocrites, how they changed their mind and personality so suddenly. Anthon Chekov's The Bear was a criticism to its society where people wanted to get good moral value, but they were not consistent with what they said. Popova and Smirnov have shown us how hypocrisy they were. They wanted to be considered as good members of society, but what they did was different from what they said.

**Keywords:** Hypocrisy; Hypocrite; True Love

### **INTRODUCTION**

Anton Chekhov, a Russian medical doctor, wrote some short stories and plays. He was born on 29 January 1860, in Taganrog, Russia – died on 15 July 1904, Badenweiler, Germany. He was considered as one of the greatest writers in history. He started his literary career as an editor of the literary section of *Russkaya Mysl*, in 1903; Anthon Chekhov was awarded a Pushkin Prize for his collection of stories, *V sumerkakh* in 1888. He also got a Griboedov Prize, in 1899 for his *The Three Sisters: A Drama in Four Acts*).

Anthon Chekhov wrote not only short stories but also plays, novels/and articles. Some of his works that got the readers attraction are *The Boor* or *The Bear* (1881), *A Marriage Proposal* (1888), *The Seagull* (1894), *Uncle Vanya* (1899), *The Three Sisters* (1900), *The Cherry Orchard* (1903), and so on. Most of his works centered upon the themes of serfdom, the rise of the middle class, the downfall of the feudal system, etc. (Ibrahim, 2021). But he was better known for his short stories and longer plays. He is considered as a master of Russian realism of the 19th century.

The Bear is one of his popular farces, besides The Proposal, A Tragedian in Spite of Himself, and the unfinished Night before the Trial. (Gottlieb, 2010.). The Bear, sometimes translated as The Boor, is one of Anton Chekhov's minor works that was written in 1888. Chekhov's most literary income was earned through The Bear performances and some other plays. His works involve his ways to depict people, environments, and objects as in everyday life. In The Bear, he obviously displays the everyday lives of common people detailly. The Bear is about a widow, Popova, who is approached by one of the late husband's creditors, Grigory Stepanovtch Smirnov. The widow who has mourned for seven months for her dead husband has to pay for her husband's debt. In The Bear, Chekhov shows us how easily the exchange between the widow and the creditor quickly progresses from polite conversation into explosive one. The widow is annoyed by the creditor's point of view on women in general. The creditor has negative opinion on women. He generalizes that women have the same personalities that always make men disappointed. This is one of the reasons that drives the widow to argue with him. They finally agree to duel until one of them die. But the creditor cannot do it. He expresses his feeling that he begins to like her and loves her. And the plays ends in a happy ending in which both the widow and the creditor love to each other.

The express changes of her personality, from a widow who mourns for her husband for seven months and says that the death of her husband is the end of her world, becomes a woman who takes another man's love just after they argue to each other and agree to duel is something interesting for the writers to study. The study will focus on how hypocrisy she is and why she behaves such personality. The study tries to find out her motives in being a hypocrite and agree to love the creditor. To analyze this phenomena, the writers use the psychological point of view. Jung stated that human psyche is the source of all sciences and art, and to understand about it in a literary work we can used the science of psychology (Jung in Sumarsono, 2019).

To understand the character of Popava it is necessary to understand what hypocrisy is. Hypocrisy is the practice of engaging actions that contradict their stated or internal beliefs, or the failure to follow one's own expressed moral rules and principles. Alicke, Gordon and Rose states that hypocrisy involves some sort of inconsistency, and that hypocritical behaviors advance the actor's self-interests (2005). While hypocrites are defined by Alicke, Gordon and Rose, as people who implicitly or explicitly endorse principles that their behavior contradicts (2005) When someone does something that is different from what he says, then he or she can be called a hypocrite. Lonnie Lee Best defines a hypocrite as a person who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles that he or she does not actually possess, or a person who feigns some desirable or publicly approved attitude, esp. one whose private life, opinions, or statements belie his or her public statements (Best, 2021).

People falsely claim to hold fast a set principles or moral values, but what they act is different from what they say. On the other word we can say that they construct

with different faces. They break their own moral standard that they state in front of the society or not. Hypocrites are likely to gain motivation from a desire to look good, more than an internal desire to satisfy personal goals. (Whitbourne, 2016).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Previous Study**

Some writers have analyzed Anthon Chekov's *The Bear* in different perspectives and different point of views. The writers in analyzing the hypocrisy of Popova and Smirnov's also read the papers of the other writers that are derived both from journals and from the internet. Darmawan Rosadi in his paper entitled *Personality Development of Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov in The Bear Drama by Anthon Chekov (1888): An Individual Psychological Approach* states that Anthon Chekhov wants to tell that inferiority feeling influences Smirnov's personality in facing the real facts. *The Bear* represents Grigory Smirnov who shows personality development value to become good person, starting from the man who has bad attitude to be a good man after he got real woman (Rosadi, 2015).

Felix Lee in his paper entitled *An Analysis of Feminism in Anton Chekov's The Bear* states that Smirnov is a man who totally opposes feminism. He shows no respect to Popova who is still mourning for the death of her late husband. Smirnov keeps shouting at her and forces her to pay her late husband's debt although she has no money.

While Reni and Sumardi in a paper entitled "Popova and Smirnov's Sudden Change of Hearts as Seen in Anton Chekov's *The Bear*", analyze the Id, the ego, and super ego of the main characters using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. The cause of the change in Popova's character is based on her economic need. While Smirnov is based on his loneliness (Reni & Sumardi, 2018).

### **Hypocrisy**

As stated above, hypocrisy is the practice of engaging actions that contradict their stated or internal beliefs, or the failure to follow one's own expressed moral rules and principles. Alicke, Gordon and Rose states that hypocrisy involves some sort of inconsistency, and that hypocritical behaviours advance the actor's self-interests. There are some reasons why people are inconsistent, such as, they forget what they have endorsed, what they do is different from what they say; experience a weakness of will; or confront situations that evoke countervailing values (2005).

### **Hypocrite**

The people who do the action are called hypocrites. A hypocrite is a person who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles that he or she does not actually possess, or a person who feigns some desirable or publicly approved

attitude, esp. one whose private life, opinions, or statements belie his or her public statements. On the other word we can say that A hypocrite is one who acts contrary to what he or say says or what he or she believes. Alicke, Gordon and Rose define a hypocrite as people who implicitly or explicitly endorse principles that their behaviour contradicts (2005). While Best defines a hypocrite as a person who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles that he or she does not actually possess (Best, 2021).

### **True Love**

It is human nature to be attracted to other people. Every people hope to find his or her true love. Hammer states that true love accept all aspects or experiential states of oneself and other individuals. True love involves contacting the natural undivided wholeness of oneself and others. It includes either the relatively pleasant and unpleasant feelings, or the comfortable and uncomfortable experiential aspects. It needs the undivided totality of all experiential aspects of self and other individuals to whom one relates (Hammer, 2015).

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Samples**

This study used a qualitative method which was based on library research. This study is to analyze the hypocrisy of the characters in Anthon Chekhov's The Bear using psychological approach. The analysis will focus on the backgrounds that determine the behaviors of the characters, especially on the hypocrisy of Popova's and Smirnov's.

### **Instrument and Procedures**

The main data of this study is Anthon Chekhov's The Bear while the supporting data are taken from journals of literature, books, articles, and some related sources. The writers collect the data from the above sources. Then the collected data are summarized and interpreted. To describe the data that have been collected, summarized and interpreted, the writers use the descriptive method.

### **Data Analysis**

Since the focus of this study is the hypocrisy of Popova's then the study also uses the theory of psychology. Psychology has closed relationship with literature since literature is a product of human mind. Therefore psychological theories can be used to help us to understand fictions (Keesy,2002). By using the psychology, the writers try to find out the facts about Popova's and Smirnov's hypocrisy and the factors that make them a hypocrite.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are three characters in Anthon Chekhov's *The Bear*; Elena Ivanovna Popova, Grigory Stepanovtch Smirnov, and Luka. Popova is a widow whose husband passed away about seven months ago. She has been mourning for her dead husband for seven months. She locks herself and never sees anybody. She says that the death of her husband is the end of her life.

POPOVA.

*I shall never go out.... Why should I? My life is already at an end. He is in his grave, and I have buried myself between four walls.... We are both dead. (Chekov)*

Popova refuses to stop mourning her husband when Luka, her servant asks her to end her mourning and socialize with others. She wants to show to her late husband that she really loves him although she was never loved and treated well by her late husband. She does it because she also wants people to see and think that she is a very loyal wife to her late husband.

POPOVA:

*...I vowed never to the end of my days to cease to wear mourning, or to see the light.... You hear? Let his ghost see how well I love him.... Yes, I know it's no secret to you that he was often unfair to me, cruel, and... and even unfaithful, but I shall be true till death, and show him how I can love. There, beyond the grave, he will see me as I was before his death. ... (Chekov)*

She knows that her late husband was cruel, unfair and unfaithful, but she has to be faithful. She wants to show him and the other people that her love to her husband is a true love that cannot be separated by the death.

Smirnov is a landowner, a retired lieutenant of artillery who comes to Popova's house to tell her that her late husband has a debt, and she has to pay him back. He lent his 1200 rubles for buying the food for her husband horses, but Popova refuses to pay her husband loan since she does not have any money.

Both Popova and Smirnov have the same qualities of character, the same personality. Both of them are rude, romantic, quarrelsome, hot-tempered and stubborn. Both swear not to marry all their lives, after being spoiled and disappointed. Popova swears not to marry again after she is disappointed by her late husband whom she loves very much. And Smirnov swears not to marry after he was disappointed by his women.

Popova and Smirnov have different point of view on men and women. Popova does not believe that men are loyal, kind, and love their women. All men are cruel, rude, unfair and unfaithful. On the other hand, Smirnov thinks that it is the women who are not faithful and like to make men disappointed. It is the women who are unfair.

SMIRNOV

*...Tell me truthfully, have you ever seen a woman who was sincere, faithful, and constant? You haven't! Only freaks and old women are faithful and constant! You'll meet a cat with a horn or a white woodcock sooner than a constant woman! (Chekov)*

Both Popova and Smirnov are hypocrites. We can see their hypocrisy through the contradiction between the claims both Popova and Smirnov make. Popova who locks herself at home and does not want to socialize because she wants to mourn her late husband and will never love and marry to another man. She says that she does not want to see anybody. She says that the death of the husband is the end of her life.

POPOVA

*My life is already at an end. He is in his grave, and I have buried myself between four walls, we are both dead. (Chekhov)*

She says that her love is just for her husband and she wants to die with him. She says that it is impossible for her to fall in love with another man, but finally agrees to accept Smirnov's proposal. However, all what she says is all her affectation, pretension, and hypocrisy.

POPOVA.

*Yes, yes, go away!... [Yells] Where are you going? Stop...! No, go away. Oh, how angry I am! Don't come near me, don't come near me! (Chekhov)*

While Smirnov claims that he has been faithful to his women, loved them very much in the past, but all his women always let him down. He also says that he is constant and will never fall in love again.

However at the end of the play we can see obviously that both of them are hypocrites. Both of them fall in love to each other after a big quarrel and even they agree to duel until one or both them be killed.

SMIRNOV.

*I'm off my head, I'm in love like a boy, like a fool! [Snatches her hand, she screams with pain] I love you! [Kneels] I love you as I've never loved before! I've refused twelve women, nine have refused me, but I never loved one of them as I love you.... I'm weak, I'm wax, I've melted.... I'm on my knees like a fool, offering you my hand.... Shame, shame! I haven't been in love for five years, I'd taken a vow, and now all of a sudden I'm in love, like a fish out of water! I offer you my hand. Yes or no? You don't want me? Very well! [Gets up and quickly goes to the door.] (Chekhov)*

Popova's hypocrisy is derived from her goal to be judged by the society as a loyal woman who has a true love to her late husband. He pretends to love him very much. He says that the death of her husband is the end of her life too. She needs to gain good moral value from the people around her. But actually, she is a woman who needs to be loved and cared. She did not get her true love and cares from her late husband. She loves and be faithful for him, but she was be treated. She has mourned her husband for seven months. Seven months is a long time. For seven months she has been lonely. Time goes and she needs to have a change in her life. People cannot do the same things for a long time.

#### POPOVA

*... I loved him passionately with all my being, as only a young and imaginative woman can love, I gave him my youth, my happiness, my life, my fortune, I breathed in him, I worshipped him as if I were a heathen, and... and what then? This best of men shamelessly deceived me at every step! After his death I found in his desk a whole drawerful of love-letters, and when he was alive—it's an awful thing to remember!—he used to leave me alone for weeks at a time, and make love to other women and betray me.(Chekhov)*

She realizes that her husband did not deceive to be loved. She realizes that she cannot mourn him for a longer time. She will be old and not beautiful any more. There will be no men who will be attracted and fall in love with an old woman.

She also realizes that her husband does not leave her with a lot of money, but loans. She does not afford to pay back her husband 's loan when Smirnov comes to ask her to pay him 1200 rubles for the credit that her husband has. So, by agreeing to take Smirnov's proposal is the best way for her to get not only a man who loves and cares about her, but also, she does not have to pay the loans.

Smirnov's hypocrisy can be seen when he tries to like and love Popova. He says that there is no woman who is faithful and loyal to men and he will never fall in love with a woman, but finally he falls in love with Popova. This hypocrisy is derived from his goals to be seen as a strong man with his superiority in front of Popova. He wants to be respected and honored by Popova. He does not want to show others that he also needs someone to love. He has been lonely for a long time. He does not want Popova know that he is impressed by her beauty and boldness, but finally he cannot pretend anymore. He expresses his feeling that he loves her and asks her to marry him.

Rosadi in his paper entitled *Personality Development of Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov in The Bear Drama by Anthon Chekov (1888) : An Individual Psychological Approach* states that there is a personality development that both Popova and Smirnov experience. This personality development makes them inconsistent. Rosadi mentions that Smirnov can change himself from the man who has bad attitude to be a good man. In this case, the writers have different opinion with Rosadi. The writers conclude that Popova and Smirnov are hypocrites.

Felix Lee in his paper entitled *An Analysis of Feminism in Anton Chekov's The Bear* discussed about the feminism. Feminism says that both men and women are equal. They have the same right and obligation. Popova, as a woman has the same right to be treated equally. Her fight with Smirnov is a kind of her being a feminist. Smirnov is said that he is a man who opposes to feminism. For the writers, all what both the characters do is the representation of their being hypocrites.

Reni and Sumardi in analyze the id, the ego, and super ego of the main characters using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. The cause of the change in Popova's character is based on her economic need. While Smirnov is based on his loneliness. All the changes based on the psychoanalysis are caused by the id of both Popova's and Smirnov. The id has more dominant role than the ego and the superego do. This is the reason that make them become a hypocrite. The id has made them become inconsistent.

## CONCLUSION

Moral value is very important for people living in a society. People want to behave in a good moral, want to gain society judgement that they have good morality. Sometime we see that some people claim to have a good moral but they are not consistent with what they claim. What they say is different from what they act. This is what *The Bear* wants to say to its readers and audiences. There are some or may be hypocrites in our life. Popova and Smirnov are good examples of hypocrites. Their being hypocrite caused by their psychological needs. They need love and affection that they did not get before. But they cannot show them obviously to the society because society will have their own judgment based on the moral values of the society. Both Popova and Smirnov want to get good moral value from the society, on the other hand they need something that they did not get before, love, affection and social and financial security.

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