

THE REFLECTION OF ATTITUDE CHANGES IN ANTON CHEKOV'S STORY "FAT AND THIN"

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Abstract

This study aim to reveal the attitude changes that are reflected through the story character written by Anton Chekov entitled "Fat and thin". Anton Chekov with his high-level imaginative mind can use narration in criticizing human behavior, especially the vertical nature of Russian society which likes to serve itself in positions and titles which are also known as "bootlickers". Changes in attitudes like this have even become a dilemma almost shared by many people around the world. This literary criticism is then explored more deeply by using the attitude change approach in psychology from Carl Hovland supported by the balance Heider theory. The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method with data collection and analysis techniques in librarian study. The results of this research indicated that the reflection of attitude change through the behavior of the two friends who are called fat and thin in the story. The two of them are childhood friends who have not seen each other for a long time. The change in attitude was evident from Thin's attitude, who knew that Fat was his military superior with the rank of lieutenant general. Such a situation makes Thin's behavior change a form of balancing as a defense mechanism of conditions. Chekhov, through his clear naration and dialogues, displayed this behavior very strongly. There are several factors that cause this change in attitude including psychological internal factors in the form of mental discomfort and personal dissonance, as well as external factors that influence in the form of interactions, situations and targets. This story describes an inner relationship because an idealistic friendship changes in attitude due to the vertical relationship factor that places a person as a bootlicker.

Keyword: Attitude Change, bootlicker, imbalancing, Psychological Approach

1. Introduction

Every human being can experience a change in attitude due to various factors both internal psychological and environmental factors that influence it.

Attitude is an evaluative statement towards an object, person or event. It reflects one's feelings towards something. Attitude may result from

behavior but attitude is not the same as behavior. According to Fishbein in Ali and Asrori (2006) "Attitude is a learned emotional predisposition to respond consistently to an object". According to W.S Winkel in Setyorini (2017) "Attitude is a tendency to evaluate objects that are good or worthless or not good". Attitude change has the same essence as attitude formation. This means that changing attitudes is also forming attitudes. However, because there is already a previous attitude, the transition process to a new attitude uses the term attitude change.

Attitudes and behaviors have a tendency to be correlative. According to Aiken in Rahmadani (2009), "attitude is a predisposition or tendency learned from an individual to respond positively or negatively with moderate or adequate intensity to objects, situations, concepts or other people. Berkowitz in Azwar (2005) explains a person's attitude towards an object is feelings or emotions and the second factor is reaction/response or tendency to react. As a reaction, attitudes are always associated with two alternatives, namely liking or disliking, obeying and implementing or avoiding something.

Attitude Change Theory can be explored further by using the Hovland approach. According to Carl Hovland in Cangara (2007), the theory of attitude change (attitude change theory) provides an explanation of how a person's attitude is formed and how a person's attitude can change through the communication process and how that attitude can influence a person's attitude and behavior. In the theory of attitude change (attitude change

theory) states that a person will experience a process of discomfort in himself when faced with something new that is contrary to his beliefs. So it takes time to analyze so that one arrives at a belief to take it or not according to one's character (Syas, 2012).

There are several factors that cause changes in attitudes. One of the most influential is the adjustment factor for balance. This is in line with the concept of balance theory in Heider's menu behavior. Heider stated that when humans face an imbalance, there will be a feeling of tension and pressure to bring it back into balance. In Heider's concept, the level of pleasure cannot be explained in detail, a relationship can be positive or negative. The presumption which person in a balanced situation is the stable and unaffected by outside disturbances. Meanwhile, an unbalanced state occurs when conditions are unstable, causing psychological disturbances in a person. There are several factors that cause balance adjustments including psychological internal factors and external factors (Jayanti, et al, 2020).

Attitude changing and balancing sometimes do not always lead to positive attitude changes. There are also many behaviors that lead to negative actions, one of which is being pitiful to get space. The thing that is most often done is to sycophant or manipulates oneself by having many attitudes so that other people can accept their existence. Adjusting to the behavior of change based on the two theoretical concepts above, the behavior of a person who is sometimes carried out unconsciously by becoming

an appraiser is part of an adjustment attitude to get negotiative balancing like the behavior of hypocrites.

The Behavioral Psychology described in this background description is also reflected and deliberately twisted by the famous Russian writer Anton Anton Chekov. He wrote a short story entitled "Fat and thin" to describe the change in the behavior of someone who becomes a beggar for existence when the situation is vertically sloping. This story straightforwardly depicts two characters who used to be friends, but suddenly the warmth of the friendship changes after knowing that his best friend is his boss. Chekov describes straightforwardly with symbolic meanings regarding the change in attitude made by Thin when he finds out that his best friend "Fat" has a higher rank in the military. This short story is a form of criticism as well as Anton Chekov's attempt to tickle the culture of society, which applies almost everywhere.

2. Literature Review

1. Attitude Change

The attitude of self-serving towards superiors to maintain one's own position or bootlicker behavior is a psychological behavior that sometimes unconsciously becomes a habit in a person. This certainly has a correlation with many factors that influence changes in this attitude. Some important theories that emerged during this era were Carl Hovland's Attitude Change Theory which emerged in the early 1950s and Joseph Klapper's Reinforcement Theory which emerged in the 1960s.

Psychologist Carl Hovland was the founder or initiator of experimental research on communication effects. He led a group of 30 researchers at Yale University who worked with the goal of establishing a groundwork regarding the relationship between communication stimuli, audience self-inclinations, and change of opinion. The theory of attitude change provides an explanation of how a person's attitude is formed and how that attitude can change through the communication process and how that attitude can influence a person's attitude or behavior.

This attitude change theory states, among other things, that a person will experience mental discomfort if he is confronted with new information or information that is contrary to his beliefs. The attitude change theory provides an explanation of how a person's attitude is formed and how that attitude can change through the communication process. and how that attitude can influence a person's attitude or behavior. This attitude change theory states, among other things, that a person will experience mental discomfort if he is confronted with new information or information that is contrary to his beliefs.

This uncomfortable situation is called the term 'dissonance' which comes from the word dissonance which means a mismatch or discrepancy, so it is also called the theory of dissonance (dissonance theory). People will make conscious or unconscious efforts to limit or reduce this discomfort through three interconnected selective processes. This selection process will help a person to choose what information he

consumes, remembers and interprets according to his character and what he deems important. The three selective processes are selective information reception, selective memory and selective perception.

Factors that influence changes in attitude Changes in attitude will be determined by two factors, namely:

1. Internal factors (the individual himself), namely the individual's way of responding to the outside world selectively so that not all who come will be accepted or rejected.
2. External factors, namely circumstances that exist outside the individual which is a stimulus to form or change attitudes.

The hypothesis that answers why someone is willing to change their attitude towards the situation they face can be explained by citing Heider's Balance theory. Heider stated that when humans face an imbalance, there will be a feeling of tension and pressure to bring it back into balance. In Heider's concept, the level of pleasure cannot be explained in detail, a relationship can be positive or negative. The presumption that a person in a balanced situation is stable and unaffected by outside disturbances. Meanwhile, an unbalanced state occurs when conditions are unstable, causing psychological disturbances in a person.

2. Previous of the research

There are several previous studies that have examined literature using a psychological approach. Psychology in literature is of course an interconnected part because literature

actually examines social phenomena including human behavior. It is in human behavior that many psychological symptoms occur. Goh & Arianto (2009) analyzed the psychological conflict in Elsa's character in Frozen. the result of this analysis showed that there were two kinds of psychological conflict which was shown in Elsa character which were approach-avoidance conflict and avoidance-avoidance conflict and those two conflicts which gave a huge effect to Elsa's personality. Arianto & Ambalegin (2020) also add references to psychological studies using the Lacanian approach as a form of escaping life's fatigue through watching popular literature. Arianto & Ambalegin (2019) have also analyzed the work of Jhumpa Lahiri by using Maslow's psychological theory to show how important it is to fulfill the needs of love and belonging as the achievement of self-actualization. Huda & Purwanti (2019) analyze the Social Dynamics in the Novels *Penjuang Treasures* and *Five on A Hike Together*.

3. Method of the Research

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive method is research that describes or describes something, for example conditions, situations, events, activities and others (Arikunto, 2010). In other words, descriptive research is taking problems or focusing attention on topic issues as they are. This method is used to obtain an overview of the psychological conflict experienced by the main character, the factors that cause psychological conflict, and the character of the main character in

dealing with conflict. The author conducts the study by collecting data, compiling data, classifying data, analyzing data, interpreting it and draw conclusions. Primary data sources and data collection techniques rely more on in-depth participant observation and documentation. The data collection technique used in this study is the Documentation Technique. According to Ratna (2004) Documentation Techniques, it can be in the form of writing, pictures, or the works of a person. Data collection in qualitative research is carried out in natural settings (natural conditions). Data analysis techniques in this study were divided into 3 stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

4. Result and Discussion

1. Preliminary reseach "Fat and thin" karya Anton Chekov

- (a) Intrinsic Element
- (a) Exposition : Mischa (The Fat One) meets his childhood friend, Porfiry (The Skinny One) who is traveling with his wife and child at the train station
- (b) Rising action : Porfiry tells about his job which is a captain in the military and then asks about Mischa's job which turns out to be a lieutenant general, a higher rank than himself
- (c) Climax : Hearing that his friend's rank was higher than him, Porfiry suddenly started to turn pale and showed respect towards Mischa
- (d) Falling Action : Seeing the respect shown by Porfiry, Mischa immediately said to stay calm because their friendship had nothing to do with positions.

(e) Resolution : The Slenderman shook his best friend's hand tightly, then bowed deeply, laughing ridiculously. His wife also looked proud. Meanwhile Nathaniel drummed his feet on the floor and dropped his hat

(b) Character and characterizations

- a. Misha
- b. Porfiry
- c. Luise
- d. Nathaniel

(c) Latar

- a. Place : Nikolaevsky railway station
- b. time : in the night
- c. Atmosphere : Amazed, nervous
- d. Point of view: third person point of view

(d) Sinopsis :

At the train station the fat Mischa meets the thin Porfiry by chance. The slender man was traveling accompanied by his wife and child. The two old school friends greeted each other in a carefree and informal way. The following conversation follows, and it's about both of their careers as government officials. The thin one appeared to be an office chairperson with a low salary, and his wife gave music lessons.

Fat One had become the Privy Council and had greater authority than Thin One. The Thin shrank, and immediately addressed his schoolmates as "Your Highness." The Thick rejected "this honour". The thin man continued to speak formally with his old friend. Counselor Counselor was rejected by such obedience: he said goodbye and left.

2. The Attitude Change of The character

Short story Fat and thin describes a phenomenon about attitude change as a form of defense mechanism for self-defense and comfort for position stability. The two characters in this story describe an expanse of life phenomena that are often found in society. It is undeniable that there are still many people who experience psychological changes even suddenly because of the shock of the findings they face as if they were threatening or the formation of self-defense.

Changes in behavior in this context show the phenomenon of self-reflection which suddenly subordinates oneself to people who have a vertical position with the position they hold in this case work. Someone may change after knowing that the person they meet is their boss or someone who has influence over their future career. Suddenly he will position himself as respectful as possible even though the person does not necessarily expect such full respect, but rather an attitude that is real, not contrived and not a sycophant.

The story "fat and thin" describes two friends who have not seen each other for years. Thin's actions in treating his best friend like the past can also be seen from the following narration given by Anotn Chekov:

"My dear boy!" began the thin man after the kissing. "This is unexpected! This is a surprise! Come have a good look at me! Just as handsome as I used to be! Just

as great a darling and a dandy! Good gracious me! Well, and how are you? Made your fortune? Married? I am married as you see. . . . This is my wife Luise, her maiden name was Vantsenbach . . . of the Lutheran persuasion. . . . And this is my son Nafanail, a schoolboy in the third class. This is the friend of my childhood, Nafanya. We were boys at school together!"
(Chekov, 1883)

From the way of speaking done by thin does not reflect vertical speaking communication at all. He can talk straight and even spiced up with a little joke like two friends who haven't seen each other for a long time. "I Come have a good look at me! Just as handsome as I used to be!" Thin was not even shy about introducing his wife and children and showing off his job position as a military soldier. "I am married as you see. . . . This is my wife Luise, her maiden name was Vantsenbach." Anton Chekov has actually directed self-descriptions that lead to hypocrisy at the beginning of the story. The Lutheran religion is known as a denomination of the Protestant churches which is based on the theology of Martin Luther, namely the figure of church reform. Lutheranism began in 1517, when Martin Luther criticized the practice of the Roman Catholic Church by writing 95 theses which he nailed to the door of All Saints Church, Wittenberg, Germany. Thin in the narrative repeats his self-introduction to the religion his wife adheres to. Deliberately, Chekov also shows a phenomenon about a person who feels that he is the most

holy and can even insult himself to hypocrisy and sycophancy in order to gain personal comfort.

In many of his stories, Chekov also describes various criticisms of the phenomenon of Russian culture which is closely associated with hypocrisy, corruption, manipulation and sycophancy. The characters chosen by Chekov also depict in a straightforward manner two characters who have different positions vertically, for example superiors and subordinates, kings and their subordinates, holy figures and ordinary figures but are depicted in a paradox which further emphasizes the integrity of these characters. In the story, Fat and Thin are also inseparable from this. Thin is consistently portrayed in such a way as a lowly employee of small stature and far from deserving. This is seen in the quote:

The fat man had just dined in the station and his greasy lips shone like ripe cherries. He smelt of sherry and fleur d'orange. The thin man had just slipped out of the train and was laden with portmanteaus, bundles, and bandboxes. He smelt of ham and coffee grounds. A thin woman with a long chin, his wife, and a tall schoolboy with one eye screwed up came into view behind his back. (Chekov, 1883)

From the beginning of the story, Chekov has given the arbitrary position codes for the two characters from the attitude depicted. Chekov doesn't even cover up the character's psychic depiction without choosing a special name but with the title "fat and thin".

The above quote also succinctly describes the personality of thin who is far from well-being, dressed and looks shabby and smells like the body of a lower-class worker. But on the other hand, he can still boast of being a soldier with the rank of captain even though he is actually dissatisfied with the position he has. This arbitrary depiction actually increasingly shows a range that is often found in life. The sycophantic attitude that suddenly appears to show personality will be made more straightforward by this depiction of the opposite vertical relationship.

The conversation between the two continues with the self-introduction of each character in the story. Thin proudly introduces himself as a lowly paid captain.

"Your Excellency, I . . . delighted! The friend, one may say, of childhood and to have turned into such a great man! He--he!"

....

"Come, come!" the fat man frowned. "What's this tone for? You and I were friends as boys, and there is no need of this official obsequiousness!"

(Chekov, 1883)

An attitude of hypocrisy then emerged through the conversation, Hovland indicated such behavior as attitude changing. Attitude changing is influenced by two internal and external factors. Internal, in this case, leads to a personality that has become a habit, namely the "bootlicker" personality. Always be self-serving in

positions and titles, especially to superiors. Even a character like this will do anything, even insult himself or even manipulate himself to get what he's going through. External factors certainly come from outside such as circumstances that exist outside the individual which is a stimulus to form or change attitudes. One was knowing that his best friend was a superior of a much higher rank than him.

The theory of attitude change states that a person will experience mental discomfort if he is confronted with new information that contradicts his beliefs. In this position, the conditions experienced by Thin when dealing directly with his superiors, this is what triggers him to do conditioning for the mental discomfort he is experiencing:

The thin man turned pale and rigid all at once, but soon his face twisted in all directions in the broadest smile; it seemed as though sparks were flashing from his face and eyes. He squirmed, he doubled together, crumpled up. . . . His portmanteaus, bundles and cardboard boxes seemed to shrink and crumple up too. . .
(Chekov, 1883)

This change in behavior is called Hovland by way of forming behavior with conditioning or habits. This habit has become a characteristic of thin when he finds himself in a similar situation. In other words, the hypocrisy that has taken root in Thin has become a habit and will continue to show itself when he is faced with the same situation. Chekov straightforwardly describes the psychological downturn on Thin's personality which is a

reflection of criticism in society. It cannot be denied that sometimes humans are never aware that such a self-manipulative attitude will increasingly position themselves to be lower. Even in front of his best friend who actually expects warmth compared to a welcome change in attitude that shows a contrived action full of hypocrisy.

3. imbalance as an attempt of self-manipulation

The changes in behavior outlined in the previous discussion are also balanced with Heider's theoretical concepts or the behavior of imbalance as a form of manipulative negotiation. Heider believes that every human being has a tendency to balance relationships with the objects around him. That's where the balance theory comes from. Heider said that if there is an imbalance in an eating relationship, motivation will arise to restore it to balance.

In this short story, the attempt to restore balance is more than a change in behavior to manipulate oneself as a "bootlicker". Bootlicker is a person who likes to do things for face. Lickers are people who will not hesitate to do anything to get closer to parties they feel are beneficial, such as superiors or certain people. Thin's behavior is inseparable from sycophantic behavior which suddenly turns very polite and makes his best friend very distant. Of course this is not a form of respect because this change in attitude is immediately carried out as well as the behavior followed by his wife who becomes very stiff and distant from

her best friend who turns out to be her boss.

5. Conclusion

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, or better known as the Russian King of Short Stories (short stories) was born in Taganrog City. Stories written by Chekhov in general, contain funny stories. However, these stories are actually a form of mockery of the trivialities of life (satire). Chekhov was even able to write a hundred stories a year. While the stories expose pettiness and licentiousness, they also devote attention to the most vital and pressing contemporary problems. Similarly, in the short story "Fat and Thin" the depiction of the vertical relationship phenomenon has become an icon in the stories. This study focuses more on the character of thin, besides being described as a lowly soldier in the military, he is also described as a hypocrite and even reflects "bootlicker" behavior. This behavior can be revealed by tracing through the concept of attitude change and balancing theory. The reflection of the change in attitude towards the thin character is the embodiment of an effort to balance in certain situations. Efforts to balance is an unconscious effort that has become a habit that has been done so far. It is this habit that actually identifies hypocritical behavior and Bootlicker behavior. This story, although short and concise, is very sharp in criticizing

people's lives. This phenomenon is still commonly found in various parts of the world, even in the world of work.

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