

Previous, Present and Future Characters in “Cherry Orchard” play

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Abstract: Chekhov’s heroes criticize the situation, mock at themselves and at the others. Chekhov describes the past, present and the future of humans. His heroes have difficulties connected to save their estate. They cannot plan their life and even in the end of the play we hear the noise of tree cutting, which is the witness of destruction of estate. Chekhov put a mirror in front of humans for them to see their problems and solve them. His heroes are ordinary, credulous people.

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1. Introduction

Heroes of Chekhov are from different classes of society: ordinary people, aristocrats and generally representatives of upper class. The main idea is coming from ordinary people’s life but the purpose is to show the painful events which have occurred from life changing results. The play “The cherry orchard” by Chekhov is not just a comedy which makes you laugh. The scene and actors are in a kind of position that the audience appears between controversial situation of laugh and pain.

Chekhov with his sharp satire makes audience to be awake and attract their attentiveness. This is coming from the inner requirements of satire and people’s conditions which are coming from the political and social situations are simply visible in Chekhov’s works. Chekhov shows the life using the easiest language.

In Mikhalkov’s opinion “audience has never felt the distance between themselves and Chekhov’s works, because his works are true to life.”[1]

The most important factors in this piece are eating, drinking and gossiping. In Chekhov’s view, life becomes more perfect by means of these factors. In his works there aren’t any signs of murdering, suiciding (in an exception is Treplyov’s son of Irina Nikolayevna in the play “The seagull”) and marriage etc.. Chekhov always tends to present the usual events, behavior and morality, which can happen in every human life. According to this, Chekhov says “I want the actor to be attractive as in real life, because not every minute they are being shot or hanged out, never promise eternal love or do not express gorgeous thoughts. These people are eating, drinking, walking and gossiping so much that these ones should be presented on the stage. We should write that kind of piece where people are going and coming, having dinner, talking about the weather, playing cards. These are not the author’s ideas;

actually life itself is such kind. Life should be like this, people should be like this, because in fact life and humans are like that, but of course not with their awful sight. [2]

Chekhov didn’t write about ideal personalities. Heroes of his pieces and short stories have generally positive characters: neither angels nor evils.

2. Materials and Methods

For analyzing “The cherry orchard” piece we have chosen the following heroes: Lyubov Andreievna Ranevskaya, Anya, Yermolai Alexeievitch Lopakhin, and Peter Sergeievich Trofimov. We have presented the heroes according to the list written under the line. Separation of era (previous, new, future) used in dissertation are not just automatic separations of acting heroes’ age qualifications but also folk method of author used by fictional time. Heroes acting in new era and regard to their motives of psychological feelings correspond to time impersonating and making it subjective. In Chekhov’s play “The cherry orchard” some of the acting heroes live with the **previous** memory and change the process of life back, but some of them live with the hope to reach happy **future** and change the time before. There are heroes who live and create in present and work in present effectively implementing their decisions. By means of these folk tricks Chekhov is a unique wrighter in Russian history of dramaturgy.

3. Results and Discussions

A-Previous era

Lyubov Andreievna, Gayev and of course Firs are the representatives of last generation. Even though if Lyubov Andreievna in the beginning of the play is a positive hero in the last parts her real character is becoming to be revealed plus numerous

negative aspects. Lopakhin in the beginning describes her positive aspects in this way;

Lopakhin: ... Lyubov Andreievna has been living abroad for five years; I don't know what she'll be like now...She is a good person. An uncomplicated and easy going kind of person. I remember when I was just a lad, fifteen or so, my late father-he kept a little shop here in town-he hit me in the face with a fist, and the blood just gushed from my nose... We had come here for some reason, my father was drunk. Lyubov Andreievna, I remember it as clear as if it were yesterday, still so young, slender. She let me over to the washstand right here, right in this room, in the nursery. "Don't cry, little man, it will be all right in time for your wedding...". (Act one)

Lyubov Andreievna is an extremely generous person and this character always has been concerning her family. She sells her apartment in Paris and returns to estate, while without any income in the restaurant she gives each of the waiters a whole ruble as a tip, she borrows money from Lopakhin in Moscow, but at the same time she gives gold piece the beggars. Varya, her adoptee, said with frightened voice;

Varya: I'm leaving... I'm leaving...Oh, Mummy-dear, the servants at home have nothing to eat, and you just gave the beggar a gold piece. (Act two)

Lyubov Andreievna loves people around her, she hugs them, kisses them, talks with them tenderly, she doesn't deny any request from them, she is an innumerable spending kind of woman which is the main reason of bankruptcy. Gayev is feckless kind of person, being fifty years old he is leaving relying on attendant Firs. He is just playing billiard and nothing else. it is just wasting time. Anya, Darya and Andreievna always reproach him as the way that they think as less he talks; as a consequence their difficulties will become less. Andreievna to her brother Gayev;

Lyubov Andreievna: ...Why drink so much, Lyona? Why eat so much? Why speak so much? Today, at the restaurant you went on and on again and all of it was inappropriate, about the seventies and decadents. And with whom? To discuss about the decadents with waiters! (Act two)

Gayev himself accepts that he is incorrigible and says:

Gayev: (waves his hand dismissively) I am evidently incorrigible... (Act two)

Lyubov Andreievna and Gayev are light-minded and epicurean. After selling the cherry garden the conversation between them is very interesting.-

Gayev: (Cheerly) ... Absolutely right, everything is just fine now. All that time before cherry orchard was sold we were in a state of stress, suffering, but then,

once it was over and the matter had been settled once, and there could be no going back, we all calmed down and even became cheerful...And you Lyuba, you can't deny it, you're looking better now, without any doubt.

Lyubov Andreievna: Yes. My nerves are better it's true. (Act four)

"Actually there is a double metonymic shift here, for not just Gaev's speech but Gaev's very figure is a device. The speech is not a marginal poking of fun at the nincompoop Gaev. It is the *key* to the figure of Gaev which, in turn, is a key to the equivocal language of the text. The very functional justification of the figure of Gaev in the economy of Chekhovian dramatic dialogue lies in his giving cues, in his "incidental" references to literature, which can alert the spectator to the undercurrents, to the travesty of the literary context and Chekhov's own place in it surreptitiously put forward." [3]

In fact this dialogue reveals that they are not serious. Both of them are lazy and dumb. Even though they find it hard to make decision for saving their life. Both of them are sensitive and vulnerable. In their life they have moral bankruptcy and material bankruptcy. Andreievna lives in present, but she is still fascinated with memory of her childhood and youth. They are admired with their "full life of the past"; in fact they don't have a future. Here is Lopakhin's idea.

Lopakhin: Forgive me, but such irresponsible people, as you, sir, as you madam, such unbusinesslike, such strange people, are new to my experience. I have never come across this type before. I am telling you, in plain Russian: your estate is being sold. And you act as if you don't understand in the least. (Act two)

Lopakhin: ...And how many people are there in Russia, and nobody knows why those people are existing. Whatever, but the circulation of job is not that? They say that Leonid Andreieivitch have accepted the case, it will be in the bank, six thousand per year... But that is not the remainder, he is very lazy...(Act four)

Andreievna and Gayev became the imitation of their ancestors. Aristocrats who are tired of themselves and cannot change their situation, their financial ability is exhausted, but Andreievna still talks about her aristocratic class and status. When there have been found a suitable job for her brother Gayev she says "It is nonsense, your honor is higher than this". Gayev knows his sister character and that is why he even doesn't ask an advice, as he knows her position. The feckless and the relation to the old tradition of Andreievna and Gayev keeps them away from new initiatives. One of the Chekhov's skills is in different types of satire to discover personages like

Gayev, who is lazy and phlegmatic. These personages instead of paying heed to the real life's issues are just talking idly. Their feelings and counteraction about the life phenomena doesn't meet the requirements of reality. Their silence is also the symbol of impatience and despair. They are alienated from reality, but even knowing it they continue their feckless life with the same way. They appear in their personal problems and feel sorry for their loss. The sister and brother just because of this mentality they seem ridiculous and because of escaping from reality they received compassion from people's side. Considerably when realism and social psychology are combined with each other they will be moving together along and gently. The reality and imagination as brilliant contradictions are successfully represented in Chekhov's pieces.

B- Present era

Coming back to Lopakhin's personage we can assume that he is a representative of a new generation, he is an enthusiastic, busy person and filled with eagerness to work. He says about himself in this way;

Lopakhin: You know, I'm up at five in the morning, I work from morning until late at night, and I am constantly putting my own and other people's money to use, and, well, I see what kind of people there are out there. All it takes is for you to start doing something productive, and it immediately becomes clear, how few honest, decent people there actually are. Sometimes, when I can't sleep, I think: "Lord, You have given us these vast forests, these endless fields, these vanishing horizons, and, living here, we ourselves ought by rights to be giant..." (Act two).

Lopakhin as the other personages in the play has positive and negative character. According to this Trofimov's idea is essential:

Trofimov: What I think, Yermolai Alekseyich, is this the: you are wealthy man. You will soon be a millionaire. As with natural metabolism there is a need for the beast of prey to exist, who gorge everything that comes his way, so that's you. (Act two). Then he continues.

Trofimov: Whatever, I love you in spite of everything. You have the slender, delicate fingers of an artist, an artist's slender, delicate soul... (Act four) Chekhov in his letter to Russian actor and producer Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky explained about Lopakhin's character: "When I was writing the role for Lopakhin I was thinking about that this concerned exactly to you... It is true that, Lopakhin is trader, but he is conscientious and ambitious kind of person, and he should have positive behavior... He is not a simple one, he is intellectual and he is not a liar that is why he is the main hero of the play." [4]

Sometimes "The cherry orchard" is considered to be the clash of collapsing class of aristocrats and development of bourgeoisie in the same way as Lopakhin shows. On the other hand commentators think that Chekhov's dramas are far from of this collapses and event they are penetrating to psychological inner world. In fact the play "The cherry orchard" after the entrance of actors becomes a comedy and the interesting act is Lopakhin's personage, who tries to save Andreievna's and Gayev's estate, but they reject whole is proposals. The thinking way of Lopakhin's is clear: to divide the garden into small pieces and sell them twenty-five thousand ruble per piece, but no Gayev and Andreievna reject it.

After these whole Lopakhin was despaired, he tries to describe his plan with enthusiasm and even he is ready to congratulate them to have such kind success and the expected brilliant future. But Andreievna's answer and Gayev's evaluation about the cherry garden, he told that the name of this garden is even mentioned in "Knowledge base", so this is the main reason of their rejection, and Lopakhin's all efforts are in vain.

"The play as a whole demonstrates shifts in class identities and social relationships (Lopakhin is the first main character from the merchant class in Chekhov's plays) and the increasing redundancy of a social order where the upper classes do not work and are served by a vast, impoverished peasantry"[5]

Lopakhin tries to solve the problems of this family using his methods, but there is a deadlock and in the end he gets the estate. This is remarkable symbol of absurdity which is characteristic to Chekhov's works. Lopakhin is successful in earning money, but in love and expressing his feelings he is weak. He fell in love with Varya, but his mind is in another region.

G-Future era

Anya and Trofimov belong to the future. Trofimov is an eternal student, thinker and lives in world which promises him a good future. His dream is to have freedom and a better future, but like the other hero he also has positive and negative characters, so he fails in some cases and that is why he gets some grid from surrounding him people.

Lopakhin: He'll be fifty years old tomorrow, but he's still studying away. (Act two)

Chekhov greatly respects the ideas of young people and explains his opinions through Trofimov's language.

Trofimov: Mankind marches forward, perfecting its strengths. Everything that is unattainable today shall someday become accessible, familiar, intimately known... All that is necessary is to toil away, to help those who are searching for the truth with all the

strength we can master. Here in Russia, very few actually toil at this time. The overwhelming preponderance of that intelligentsia, of the educated upper and middle classes that I know, is not searching for anything at all, and are incapable of any kind of productive work as of yet. They call themselves educated and enlightened, but they still address their servants using the informal you, they treat the peasants as if they were animals, they fail in school, they read nothing serious, they do nothing of any value whatsoever, they only speak of the sciences, they understand very little about art. They are all serious; everyone wears a stern expression on their talks only of important matters, philosophizes, and at the same time, the overwhelming preponderance of us, ninety-nine out of every hundred, lives like savages. The least little thing sets them off, they're at each other's throats, knocking out teeth, cursing, eating revolting meals, sleeping in filth, in stifling houses, with bedbugs everywhere, and foul smells, and dampness, immorality, impurity...And, evidently, all our heart conversations are just a device to draw attention away from ourselves, and to distract others. Show me, where are our child care institutions for the people, the reading rooms we keep talking about? These are only details in fashionable novels; they don't exist at all in real life. All that does exist is filth, vulgarity, an Asiatic mentality and customs... I fear and I feel an antipathy towards very serious faces. So let's don't talk! (Act two)

"Trofimov's 'mangy' appearance, his premature loss of hair and beard that refuses to grow are at comical odds with his heroic utterances, and his priggish assertion that he is 'above love' is deservedly ridiculed by Ranevskaya; yet his assessment of Lopakhin is both affectionate and shrewd, so that we are inclined to agree with him that Lopakhin's grandiose plans for the estate's transformation are little more than 'arm-waving.'" [6]

Trofimov is very kind personage and he cannot withstand in difficult situations. He classifies himself beyond love.

Trofimov: Varya is afraid we will fell in love, and so she spends all her time, every day, keeping us company. She can't get it through her narrow head that we are beyond love. The goal and purpose of our life together is circumventing any fleeting, picayune illusions that interfere with personal liberty and personal happiness. We go forward! We march on, relentlessly, towards that bright star that burns up head in the distance! Nothing and no one can keep up from going further and further! We cannot be controlled! We keep on going! Keep up with us, friends! (Act two)

After hearing these whole Lyubov Andreievna with sarcastic tone told:

Lyubov Andreievna: You do nothing all day long, you are not really working, you just let fate toss you around from point to point, and it's so strange to watch...that is truth, though isn't it? And really, you must do something about that bread of yours, if you are trying to grow one, somehow... (Laughs) You are so funny! (Act three)

Anya, she is also simple and ordinary girl who is affected by Trofimov's ideas. Trofimov has taken from her the sweet memories of her past;

Anya: What have you done to me, Petya...Why is it I can no longer love the cherry orchard the way I used to before. I used to love it with such tenderness. It seemed to me as if there couldn't be a finer place anywhere on earth, than our orchard. (Act two)

The person who shows the end of beautiful sunset and the aristocrats' sin, and when he is going to his beloved girl he strangulates her with slogans. Slogans which are the results of simple-mind are inspiring the girl. Here are debating the lack of experience, persistence and youth, these are partly natural, gentle and passionate search. One of these inexperienced personages is Anya, who eager for future and perfection by her romanticism (mother, daughter and Trofimov live in two different non-real and mythological conditions, that is "future" and "childhood" where they express their inexperience and suffering). This is a common phenomenon. In this piece even there are shown minor differences and disagreements of the history of twilight life.

The genre of the play "The cherry orchard" is a comedy, but not that kind of comedy which makes the audience to laugh. The heroes of this piece are either feckless or have positive characters and as a consequence this is totally fit for the personages of satirical dramas.

The main problems of the heroes' life of Chekhov are related to each other. Their silence also considered to be concession which comes from impatience, lost of hope and shows their alienation from reality. They see the destruction of their past life but escaping from reality they don't want to believe in it. In his pieces Chekhov skillfully presents the difficulties and problems of his personages and meantime having a doubt about the possibilities of continuation of such life he strongly intend the destruction of old society. He presents his ideas very gently and with deep knowledge. In Chekhov's characters the resistance against rejection of last life and the regret of dissipated life in past, passivity, sad murmuring and even gleams of hope, which makes the audience to think are clearly evidence.

The piece "The cherry orchard" is swan song of intelligence and the prelude of radical changes of

society from that period of time in Russia. In this piece Lopakhin represent a category who want to replace another disappearing from society class which is lead by Andreievna, and the actions going on outside the piece have their own deep effects on events.

"In 1903, two years before revolution (1905) Anton Pavlovich Chekhov wrote the play "The cherry orchard". In that period of time he used to feel the necessity to write it. This play is a symbol of previous and new era: nowadays, which is the collision moment of yesterday and today for human being. The base of the play is taken from the flow of time, which is moving forward permanently, apart from, the author of the pending case tries to open space for his heroes to enact also in a future, because the future belongs to new generation. Playwright's aim is to show the movement of historical background of heroes and events' relations using that relations and time category. He has chosen his heroes according to his own experience and necessity of life. Chekhov has collected them in an exhibition to show them in a future one by one." [7]

According to history the play "The cherry orchard" is more close to Russian revolution and has powerful prevision of internal force. There is not any other work where Chekhov's feelings about the fall of capitalistic world could be expressed in such way. In this drama time is passing so slowly and just the pauses between the dialogs of personages fulfill it. Pauses which represent different periods and the author don't let their completion to be in pretended way. Here also the differences between "The cherry orchard" and "Three sisters" are obvious. In "The cherry orchard" the idea of to be depending from materialism doesn't spread all over whole personages, meanwhile in piece "Three sisters" is not so. Andreievna and Gayev are two bankrupted aristocrats who defend their estate badly, and businessman Lopakhin is not so hurry to uproot the trees. He seeks to convince Andreievna and Gayev, helps them to defend their rights and even he doesn't rapidly remind them about the commitment fifteen thousand rubles.

Is Chekhov optimistic or pessimistic is an old argument, but in fact Chekhov is pessimistic against past but optimistic against future. In reality he is considered to be optimistic. Chekhov doesn't find a remedial prescription for old Russia, because even the sad situations for him became an optimistic comedy. He sees himself in the future and that is so even the clash of brutal interests loses its sadness. Thus Chekhov's sad pieces become happy and satiric and this is "The cherry orchard" act three. An important day the cherry estate is going to be sold or it is already sold. The orchestra is playing, guests are dancing, and Charlotta was busy with buffoonery.

Certainly for showing these whole there is a significant reason as well, and this is the irregular and disorganized conditions at Andreievskaia's house. The important thing is to reach the goal, and if we will look further so why we shouldn't be happy for cherry orchard's sale?

In the piece "The cherry orchard" the heroes demonstrate some contradictory dialogue and behavior. Lyubov Andreievna feels sorry to have nothing, but she still gives presents. Gayev is working for Lopakhin pretending to be responsible person, but he doesn't give up the billiards for starting to think about another things. Trofimov thinks that he demonstrates the young generation of society, but his behavior during the piece gives an opportunity for the others to make fun of him and even they told him sarcastically.-

Varya: (Angry) Miserable sir. (Act three)

And Trofimov to Varya again sarcastically.-

Trofimov: (speak ironically) Misses Lopakhin Misses Lopakhin... (Act three)

Chekhov consciously creates contradictory situation in the play "The cherry orchard". These situations are not just external contradictions but also internal and these are the results of heroes' characters. Chekhov created its specific comedy. Even if he thought that "The cherry orchard" is a comedy, but Stanislavsky had different idea; he wrote: "in my idea "The cherry orchard" is your best piece, I like it even more than "The seagull", and it is neither comedy nor tragedy it is dram." [8]

Well-known dramaturge doesn't peache an ideology he shows the simple events, feeling and satire of life: personages who are weak-willed and ask a compassion from us. What is the main target of Chekhov in this play? To make noise about the upcoming revolution, hundreds of "Hamlets" embarrassment and morbid suspicions, or to respond to "Prometheus's suffering which tries to rescue the others by bearing their pains? It is beyond the doubts, that Chekhov doesn't like the characters of his piece; he doesn't consider them to be heroes and has doubts that after the social changes they will survive. With rude irony He explained his personages that they "don't know how to live.

Chekhov's definition about the comedy genre, is the same as definition of Russian famous writer Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin: "The base of good comedy is not just laugh, but also it is somehow a tragedy which is based on the heroes characters." [9]

The percept itself is clear, simple and has satire and deep meaning. This is for those who don't know the secret of living happy, when they meet funny situations in their life but they cannot find the right path of their life. This is also the main reason of

Chekhov's satire and sympathy and the reason of lack positive personages as well.

In Chekhov's opinion this is the mission of theatre and this was the main reason that Chekhov is famous as a talented writer, writer who haven't thought to create personages but created the piece through internal contradictions and attracting the audience. Chekhov's pieces such as "The cherry orchard", "The seagull", "Three sisters" found their places in audience life who need reality. This has happened when Chekhov was alive and saw interlocutor response.

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