

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Uncle Vanya is a play written with a full portrayal of intense conflicts within which we shall grasp an exploration of human emotion, which becomes the most striking aspect to reveal. The conflicts develop owing to the hardship that the main characters namely Vanya, Astrov and Sonya must confront. Such hardship is caused by suppressed conditions of being a member of Russian primary and secondary group. In order to accomplish the analysis of the significance of human emotion, the writer would trace back the sociological background of the setting, which takes place in Russian community precisely during the late nineteenth century. Such background delivers a prominent contribution to the further psychological analysis since it inevitably predominates over the emergence of characters' emotion.

A. Sociological Approach.

In order to equip the study with a better explanation, the writer employs the sociological background since literature is a social institution using as its medium language, a social creation. Literature "represents" "life" and is in large measure, a social reality even though the natural

world and the inner or subjective world of individual have also been objects of literary "imitation" (Wellek and Warren 94). Most the common approach to the relations is the study of works of literature as social documents as assumed pictures of social reality (Wellek and Warren 102). Thus, by taking sociological approach into account, the analysis can be broadly elaborated since the social conditions as represented in *Uncle Vanya* are significant in the sense that they give rise to the alteration of characters' emotional states.

In this analysis, the writer mainly concentrates on a man in society who has to be in conformity with the implied sets of rules. Man is a social being obliged by nature to live with others as a member of society and he tends to be a creature of habit and powerfully influenced by the social counterpart of habit, namely custom (Lanski 25-32). The behavior of individuals is brought into conformity by primary group controls and secondary group controls. Thus, all societies and enduring social groups, regardless their political persuasions, are based on substantial amounts of conformity and obedience (Levin 89). Therefore, cultural values, norms and sanctions must be transferred to the personalities of the individuals (Levin 125).

Through sociological approach, it is applied to seek the correlation between conditions affecting the emergence of Vanya's, Astrov's and Sonya's emotions and how a man lives in the society imposing such

conditions. There are two influential sociological aspects implied in the Russian society, which stimulates Vanya's, Astrov's and Sonya's emotion, they are the system of patriarchal family and the condition of Russian bureaucracy.

A.1. The System of Patriarchal Family in Russian Community.

The composition of Russian family consists of a joint family; grandparents and their descendants or of a number of married brothers their wives and descendants, together with some incorporated persons - - such as adopted husbands or children of a widow married to a member of the household. This family collective is ruled by its eldest male member as the *bolshak* ("the great man"). The power of the *bolshak* is lifelong. All the property: land, farm implements, cattle, buildings, household furniture and utensils are considered common property of all household members, particularly male adults. The powers of the Great-Russian household are an important check on the authority of the *bolshak*. Thus, related to this play, the father as the eldest male member becomes the absolute master of the family. As a result, all family members become economically and personally dependent upon the father and as long as his power is supported by the state and the Church, they are expected to submit unconditionally to his will; there is no appeal against his arbitrariness, favoritism, and even misbehavior (Tomasic 77 - 80).

In the patriarchal family, in their relations to the father, all family members are expected to accept his rule with fear and awe and with humility. They have to show absolute submission and blind obedience as well as love and gratitude. Emphasis on fear and awe, obedience and gratitude is very outstanding in the Great-Russian patriarchal family relations. These feelings and attitudes have supernatural sanction. As a result of the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, it is considered that any disobedience or disrespect of the father's will is mercilessly punished by God who brings life-long misery and misfortune for such unfilial behavior. Such family relations cause intense family antagonisms and animosities and it is manifested in the relations between husband and wife, father and sons, between the siblings and between the in-laws (Tomasic 88 - 89).

A.2. The System of Russian Bureaucracy in the Late Nineteenth Century

Hierarchical relations of strict superordination and subordination in the military and bureaucratic ranks might foster feelings of identification with the mighty and powerful (Tomasic 75). What matters in Russia's bureaucratic system is obedience to one's superiors. That is the primary criterion of judgment of the fitness of a civil servant, not his ability or personal integrity. In such a system excess in zeal is often rewarded. On the other hand, initiative and originality, if not successful, are fraught with

great personal risks. Such situation often demands self-abasing. Careerism prevailed over loyalty. In other words, people who acquire office or any other position of trust would take personal advantage of the situation (Tomasic 72-73).

All the sociological aspects above are to be imposed strictly since it has been the conformity in which individuals must obey. And positively, these suppressed conditions elicit some unpleasant and incredulous reactions since the conformity is nowhere absolute.

B. Psychological Approach

One of psychology studies is the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature (Wellek and Warren 81). Characters in plays and novels are judged by us to be "psychologically true". Situations are praised and plots accepted because of this same quality. Sometimes a psychological theory, held either consciously or dimly by an author, seems to fit a figure or a situation. In some cases, to be sure, psychological insight seems to enhance artistic value, those of complexity and coherence (Wellek and Warren 91-91).

Thus, in order to accomplish a deep explanation about human emotion, which is unquestionably the most striking psychological aspect within the play that the writer would like to reveal, the writer will employ

another psychological theory focusing on James Lange's Theory of Emotion.

Emotion refers to positive or negative feelings that are produced by particular situations. Emotion consists of physiological responses and species - typical behaviors. In humans these responses are accompanied by feeling (Zimbardo 285). Emotions are usually aroused by external stimuli and that emotional expression is directed toward the stimuli in the environment that arouse it (Hilgard 329). Emotional experiences range in intensity of feeling. The greater the intensity, the greater the tendency for the entire self to be involved, to be in the "grip" of the emotion (Krech 521). Emotional experiences vary widely in level of tension. Tension refers to the impulse toward action. Active emotion may involve impulses to action, such as attack.

As James-Lange stated in the Theory of Emotion:

My theory ...is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion (Krech 607) "

Emotion-producing situations elicit an appropriate set of physiological responses, such as trembling, sweating and increased heart rate. The situations also elicit behaviors, such as clenching of the fists or fighting. James-Lange suggested that the physiological and behavioral reactions to emotion-producing situations were perceived by people as

states of emotion, and that the emotional states were not the causes of these reactions (Zimbardo 281). People experience different emotions as a result of specific physiological changes that act as behavioral cues.

Our emotional responses are designed primarily to cope with short-term events. The physiological responses that accompany the negative emotions prepare us to threaten rival or fight them or to run away from dangerous situations (Zimbardo 282).

S I S K R I P S I

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