

BRIEF PSYCHOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON FAT AND THIN: LONELINESS AND ALIENATION IN CHEKHOV'S WORK

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to offer some psychological reflections on the work of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, physician and renowned writer, one of the leading figures in European theatre at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Our work will, which draws on the Fusco method, focus in particular on the short story *Fat and Thin*, first published in 1883 and followed by a second version published in 1886, analysing how the themes of loneliness and alienation, recurrent throughout Chekhov's work, reflect the human and social condition of contemporary man. The title itself, *Fat and Thin*, does not merely outline the characters, but anticipates a difference that goes beyond physical appearance, revealing their personalities and, at the same time, their hierarchical status, a crucial element in the evolution and conclusion of the short story. Through a careful and peculiar discursive analysis of the two protagonists, the writer, with the precision and attention of a caricaturist, captures their flaws and, at the same time, their most disturbing aspects. The narrative culminates in the defeat of authentic human values, showing how their relationship is corrupted by a petty, opportunistic society corrupted by power. Chekhov frighteningly portrays contemporary society in its distortions and limitations.

Keywords: Anton Chekhov, Psychology, Literature, Loneliness, Alienation

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to offer the reader some psychological considerations regarding the writer Anton Chekhov and his literary production, with particular reference to the short story written by the Russian author entitled *Fat and Thin*. In the course of this investigation, which fundamentally analyses the psychological, psychoanalytical, philosophical, artistic and literary spheres, brief psychological reflections on the aforementioned story will be carried out, focusing on the protagonists themselves, the environment and the historical and cultural context in which the story is set [14].

The analysis conducted requires a thorough knowledge of all the author's works, as well as an exhaustive knowledge of his biography and the social and cultural environment in which he was raised. The short story is a clear pretext for the writer to make a harsh denunciation and profound social criticism of Tsarist Russia at the end of the 19th century, which had a rigid social division that greatly affected every aspect of life, especially human relationships and, therefore, daily interactions between people. It is precisely through this device that Chekhov's mastery can be observed and understood. Through a simple, everyday action, such as a meeting between two long-time friends, the author shows how bureaucratic power and a rigid social structure can destroy a sincere, authentic and lasting relationship in an instant [5].