

Extended Abstract

The First of Three Sins of Anton Chekhov (Tobacco Products in Writer-Physician's Letters)

Introduction

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) did not live quite long. Though his physical appearance seems good, he has been exposed to abdominal pain from the age of ten. In high school years, he was diagnosed with peritoneal tuberculosis. His disease relapsed at the age of 19 while he studied medicine in Moscow. Chekhov graduated from the university in 1884 and he received a doctor's diploma. He immediately hung the name of "Doctor A. P. Chekhov" on the door of his house and started accepting patients. In the same year, he suffered from occasionally right lung bleeding. In the early 1890s, Anton Chekhov had a great literary fame and soon reached financial prosperity. Despite this, he did not leave the profession of medicine and he practiced as a medical doctor during most of his life. Chekhov summarized his situation thus: "Medicine is my lawful wife, literature is my mistress. When I get tired of one I spend the night with the other". After a severe lung hemorrhage on March 25, 1897, he was hospitalized in the hospital of Professor A. A. Ostroumov. As a result of the physicians' warnings, he moved to the Crimea in 1898, which has more suitable climate conditions in terms of health, and devoted himself to his literary activities.

Methods

The biggest collection of Anton Chekhov's works were known as "A. P. Chekhov. Collected Works and Letters in 30 volumes" were published between 1974 and 1982. Between volumes 19-30 of this anthology there are approximately 4,500 letters written by Chekhov to different people and annotations made to these letters. The important part of these letters is that they reflect the cultural, social and political structure of Tsarist Russia at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The essence of this study is the habit of using tobacco products, which occupy a large place in the letters of the author. In this research on tobacco products, Chekhov's above-mentioned collection of letters was fundamental, and all letters and annotations were examined through the discursive analysis method. For this purpose, tobacco, cigarettes, cigars, smoking pipes and snuffing cases were examined.

Results and Discussion

Within the scope of this research the findings from this study are discussed under two sub-headings: 1) "tobacco in daily life", 2) "tobacco as an enemy".

- Tobacco in Daily life

- Tobacco use in Russia
- Tobacco products in the life of Anton Chekhov
- Tobacco product as an indicator of status and financial situation
- Comparison of tobacco products
- Tobacco product as a gift object
- Tobacco as an enemy
 - Trying to get rid of tobacco addiction
 - Passive smoking
 - Advice on quitting tobacco
 - Tobacco-related diseases and symptoms

Conclusion

The reasons for the use of tobacco products have different characteristics according to the communities using them. In Russian society, the art and literature community showed great interest in these products at the beginning. This situation can be interpreted as the fact that these products were seen as providing concentration and relieving mental fatigue. However, as in the example of Anton Chekhov, it is understood that users started this habit at a very early age, probably due to the attitude of crowded family members and the surrounding users, and this was mostly due to wannabe and unconsciousness. Chekhov, who was known for being a good physician in addition to his identity as a writer, personally witnessed the damage caused by these habits to his body and made a great effort to get out from this habit. Ultimately, he succeeded in this effort. However, despite this success, he died at an early age due to the fact that when he was younger he did not prevent the progression of tuberculosis, neglecting his health and probably due to the consequences of his habits.