

# EQUUS A STUDY OF CHARACTERS IN SHAFFER'S PLAY



By  
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirement for the Sarjana Degree  
At the Faculty of Letters  
Hasanuddin University

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UNIVERSITAS HASANUDDIN  
FAKULTAS SASTRA

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Makassar, 25 November 2002

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Kepada Panitia Ujian Skripsi  
u.b. Ketua Jurusan Sastra Inggris



Drs. M. Amir P, M.Hum

**UNIVERSITAS HASANUDDIN**  
**FAKULTAS SASTRA**

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**" EQUUS A STUDY OF CHARACTERS IN SHAFFER'S PLAY "**

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## ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini berjudul "Equus a Study of Characters in Shaffer's Play (Studi karakter dalam drama Equus Peter Shaffer)". Tujuan penulisan ini adalah untuk menjelaskan sifat-sifat dan efek psikologis pada tokoh utama dalam drama tersebut.

Dalam penyusunan skripsi ini, penulis menggunakan penelitian pustaka, yakni membaca sejumlah buku-buku yang relevan dengan topik pembahasan. Selanjutnya, penulis mencatat data yang diperlukan kemudian diklasifikasikan dan dianalisis berdasarkan pendekatan struktural dan tinjauan psikologi.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan teologis sangat berpengaruh terhadap kejiwaan Alan Strang. Perbedaan pandangan atau ideologi kedua orang tua Alan Strang terutama dari segi pendidikan teologis sangat berpengaruh terhadap perkembangan mental anaknya. Hal ini terbukti bahwa Alan Strang menderita Schizophrenia yang disebabkan oleh perbedaan pandangan tersebut.

Karena itu dalam mendidik anak, orang tua harus memiliki visi yang sama sehingga seorang anak tidak kesulitan dalam melaksanakan ajaran yang diberikan.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

Literature provides amusement and happiness to its readers. One may feel happy and amused after having read a literary work. Literary work is an art and contains element of beauty that may bring great effects to the soul of its reader. This effect causes various effects in his/her emotion and personality.

Literature cannot exist without language, because language is a device of literary work. An author must express her/his experience, thought and feeling through language so by understanding the language used, one can gain information, knowledge and entertainment.

In the field of literature, we learn about different kinds of literary work, both in spoken and written form. Drama as one of the literary genres has some differences from poetry and prose because drama emphasizes dialogue and action in expressing human activity.

Generally, there are three conventional patterns in the structure of a play, they are *plot, character, and dialogue*. Plot refers to the events leading from one condition in the beginning, and through the middle until the end of the play. Character is one who performs the action or to whom the action happens. Dialogue is the main way through which character and action are revealed. There is an obvious dialogue consisting of what the character say, but there is also a dialogue of what they do on a stage.

The word "*drama*" literally means to do or act. A play in verse or prose intends to portray life or character to tell story, which involves conflict and emotions through action and dialogue; A play is typically designed for theatrical performance. There are two basic types of drama: tragedy and comedy.

A Play is an interesting object to be studied because it is presented through dialogue and action where readers can easily catch the idea of the text. A Play can give a stronger emotional effect and will be stick in the audiences' mind when they directly watch it or read it. Readers or spectators can relate their experience of life through the story they read or watch since the story is similar with their experience. A good play always presents a

conflict of human life because it can provoke and exploit emotion and thought. A play can expose human life in the past, present and the future. Therefore drama is a literary work that reflects a social community life where the author lives.

Based on the description above, the writer deliberately chooses *Equus*, a play by Peter Shaffer as the object of the research.

Some students of English Department, Letter Faculty Hasanuddin University, objectively have analyzed this play. While the writer focuses her analysis on the study of character viewed from psychological approach.

## **1.2 Identification of Problem**

There are many problems the writer found in this play. Those are:

1. Dora Strang, Alan's mother dominated his religion education since he was child meanwhile his father, Frank Strang is an atheist.
2. The relationship between Alan's and his father is not close as his mother because his father too conservative in whole aspects.
3. The effect of circle family is very important for Alan's mental development.



4. Alan loves animal especially horses; he even states horse as God.
5. Dr. Dysart, Alan's psychiatrist belief that a person is born into a world where alienation awaits.

### **1.3 The scope of problem**

In this thesis, the writer focuses her analysis on the study of characters in Equus, a play was written Peter Shaffer. The character will be studied are Alan Strang, Dora Strang, Frank Strang, and Martin Dysart.

In analyze, in these characters the writer adapted psychology analysis approach proposed by Carl Jung. This approach is applied to know the character development seen through psychology aspect.

### **1.4 Formulation of Problem**

In explaining the topic above, the writer proposes some problems, they are:

1. What kinds of personality do the characters display?
2. What factors caused psychological effect on the characters?

## 1.5 Objectives of writing

As an analysis, of course the writer has some purpose want to reach, they are:

1. To describe the characters' traits
2. To reveal the psychological effect on the characters

## 1.6 Sequence of Presentation

Chapter one is introduction that consists of background of writing, identification of problem, the scope of problem, formulation of problem, objectives of writing. Chapter two contains of literature review, Peter Shaffer and his works and synopsis of the play. Chapter three is methodology that the writer uses in analyzing this play. Chapter four presents analysis of some aspects. This chapter is the central analysis of this thesis. Chapter five contains of conclusion and suggestion. In this chapter the writer concludes all things have discussed then gives some suggestions connect with the analysis of this play. Bibliography, in this part we can find some references which support the analysis of this thesis.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Structural Approach

Structural Approach is one of the approaches, which is used for analyzing the literary work. In the matter of this, Atmazaki (1990:53-54) quotes Ferdinand de Saussure's opinion as follow:

“Sejak awal abad XX memperkenalkan teori struktural dibidang Linguistik dan meneliti karya sastra sebagai suatu struktur. Dengan diperkenalkannya teori struktur maka para pakar sastra membagi atas dua bagian yaitu Strukturalisme Perancis (Strukturalisme Klasik) dan Strukturalis Amerika (New Criticism). Strukturalisme Perancis dalam analisis lebih banyak menekankan deskripsi bahasa dalam teks sastra, sedangkan strukturalisme Amerika meskipun berorientasi pada struktur totalitasnya, lebih banyak berorientasi pada isi, baik terhadap adanya ambiguitas, ironi, maupun kajian yang berusaha menerapkan ilmu bahasa dan ilmu sastra dalam rangka melaksanakan telaah sastra”.

Released from the quotation above, the writer would like to describe the origin of the approach itself. As a structure, it has some aspect or element that can't be separated. As Pradopo says:

“Satu konsep dasar yang menjadi ciri khas teori struktural adalah adanya anggapan bahwa dalam dirinya sendiri, karya sastra merupakan suatu struktur yang otonom yang dapat dipahami sebagai



satu kesatuan yang bulat dengan unsur-unsur pembangunnya yang saling berjalani (Pradopo, Tirta. 1994:71)

Structural analysis tries to find the contribution of all aspects of the literary work in getting the totally meaning; the elements are connected and supported each other. For examples, some aspects form play; they are plot, character, setting, theme and so on. If the researcher wants to know the sense of play, he or she has to analyze all the aspects that build the play. Then, he connects one aspect to another to express the meaning of the play perfectly. As Teeuw (1893:123-136) says:

“Karya sastra merupakan keseluruhan yang bagian-bagiannya atau anasirnya masing-masing berjalani untuk mendapatkan makna yang sepenuhnya dan sebenarnya dalam keseluruhan karya sastra tersebut”.

Basically, a method that is used has an excess and lack. This structural approach from a certain side brings brief results; an attempt to understand and analyze the literary work based on the structure, which compels the researcher to be free from other concept of method and technique.

This study analyzes the character in a play entitle *Equus* by using the structural approach, since the study relates to character's behavior will be analyzed by no means taking aside that psychological approach.



## 2.2 Characterization in a play

Characters, to begin with, are fictitious creations and thus the dramatist and the novelist may both be judged with regard to their ability in the art of characterization. All the characterization must be presented through dialogue. Characters speak about each other and characters speak about themselves- particularly of course about their central emotions, such as love and hate.

The combinations of speeches and actions throughout a play, the small asides and jokes, the short angry speeches, the lengthy diatribes, all add up to produce in our minds an understanding of the characters in a drama as people who might really exist.

### 2.2.1 Devices of Characterization

Every dramatist has at his fingertips a relatively large galaxy of differing devices of characterization. Some of these devices follow:

1. The appearance of the character: in the prologue or in the stage directions the playwright often describes the character in the physical sense. In other words, in the mere appearance of character we locate our first understanding of him.

2. Asides and soliloquies: All of the further characterization is of course established through dialogue. We learn about ~~the~~ characters as they speak. And specifically, we are apt to understand the characters best when they speak in short asides or in longer soliloquies. On these occasions the characters is in effect, telling the audience of his specific characteristics.
3. Language: It cannot be emphasized too many times that the language of any given character is extremely central to his personality attributes.

### 2.3 Psychological point of view

Of all critical approaches to literature, this approach perhaps the most controversial. Yet, for all the difficulties involved in its proper application to interpretive analysis, they also can be fascinated and rewarded. As a conclusion, this approach can be used to interpret and value the literary work.

In operating the psychological approach, there are four different directions in which the analysis will go. The first is to analyze the author's psychology as a type or an individual. The second is to analyze the creativity

process. The third—which is used in this study—is to analyze the psychological types or rules implied in the literary works. And the fourth is to analyze the impact Christian belief to the play (reader's psychology). (Trans. Wellek & Warren, 90:1989).

The chosen analysis is the study of the main character in the play—the other analysis concern the authors and the readers. Moreover, the analysis has the strength to search through the in—depth part of the play to possibly reveal the psychological truth.

Dalam karya sastra kebenaran psikologis baru mempunyai nilai artistik jika ia menambah koherensi dan kompleksitas karya. Dengan kata lain, jika kebenaran psikologis itu sendiri merupakan suatu karya (Wellek & Warren, 108:1989)

Based on the objective of the writing, this study uses psychological approach. Therefore, some types in psychology are used in order to interpret this literary work. Specifically, this analysis focuses on the character with its personality disorder. The writer tries to describe its disorder by combining psychological view and the play describing. Then to

apply an approach we need to understand the psychology itself that will be useful for this writing.

### 2.3.1 Psychology

The term "Psychology" comes from two Greek words: "psyche" which means soul, mind, or spirit; and "logos" meaning study or discuss. Basically, "*Psychology*" means study of the mind, mental, physical and emotional aspects of life.

So, the definition of psychology, which literally means study of the mind or soul, was once in great dispute. Today, it's generally defined as the study of behavior, and recognized as overlapping with social, behavioral and biological sciences. Behavior is what organism doing: how they act, what they experience. The term of behavior refers both to overt, observable action and to covert unobservable (internal) mental processes and states such as perception, thought reasoning, problem solving, emotion and feelings.

Human being is the object of psychology. Psychology divides into general psychology and specific psychology. General psychology observes

and studies the mental activities that are presented by behavior. In general, while specific psychology observes and studies the mental activities of human in specific, for example the things that deviated.

Furthermore, there are some branches of specific psychology. Prof. Dr. Bimo Walgito divides them as follow:

1. Developmental Psychology, which investigates mental of man from baby until grows older. It divides also as follow; Psychology of children, psychology of adolescent, psychology of adult, psychology of old man.
2. Social Psychology, which only talks about the activities of human being, related to social.
3. Psychology of education, which talks about the activities of man, related to the education.
4. Personality psychology studies about personality of men, with their types.
5. Criminal Psychology refers to criminality.
6. Psychopathology analyzes the abnormal behavior.
7. Psychology of business refers to the problems of business.

The writer deals with the psychological development as a means to analyze this play. Psychological Development deals with the processes of growth and development through the whole life cycle.

#### 2.4 The Author's Life and His Works

Peter Shaffer and his twin brother Anthony were born on May 15, 1926, in Liverpool, England, where Shaffer latter attended prep school.

In 1936 his family moved to London, where Shaffer attended Hall School and St. Paul's School.

From 1944 to 1947, Shaffer worked in the Chislet coalmine; having been conscripted as one of the "Bevin Boys". Essential workers in service to the country, organized by Ernest Bevin, Chirchill's Minister of Labor. Shaffer found coal mining an arduous occupation that, he states, gave him great sympathy for the way many people are forced to spend their lives.

Shaffer then attended Trinity College in Cambridge, where he and Anthony co-edited the student magazine *Grantha*; he received a B.A. in History in 1950.



During the following year, Shaffer, under the pseudonym Peter Anthony, penned *The Woman in the Wardrobe*, the first of his three detective novels. He co-authored the second and third *how doth the Little Crocodile?* (1952) And *Withered Murder* (1955) with Anthony, who went on to write the enormously successful mystery *Sleuth*. It is interesting to note that Peter Shaffer's reverence for the structure and characters of the detective novel is apparent in many of plays, *Equus* included.

From 1951 to 1954, Shaffer lived in New York and worked a variety of jobs: at Doubleday's Book Shop, an airline terminal, Grand Central Station, Lord and Taylors department store, and the New York Public Library.

Shaffer states that for years he labored under the impression that the passion he had developed for theatre could only be used as a past time and that his daily profession had to be something "respectable".

He found his year's worth of work in the Public Library's acquisitions department acutely boring, but he still resisted the urge to devote himself to playwriting until he spent two years in London, working for Boosey and Hawkes music publishers.

In 1955, Shaffer wrote the television play *The Salt Land*; the following year, he quit Boosey and Hawkes and decided to "live now on his literary wits".

From 1956 to 1957, Shaffer worked as a literary critic for the weekly review *Truth*; his *Balance of Terror* appeared on television, and *The Prodigal Father* was broadcast on the radio.

In 1958 marked the production of Shaffer's first stage play, *Five Finger Exercise*, directed by John Gielgud in very successful runs in both London and New York City; the play won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for the best foreign play of the 1959-1960 season, thereby relieving him of the necessity of working in other stores or offices.

From 1961 to 1962 Shaffer incorporated his love for music (which, not incidentally, surfaces in such plays as *Five Finger Exercise* and *Amadeus*) into a stint as music critic for London's *Time and Tide*.

In 1962, a double-bill on Shaffer's high comedies *The Private Ear* and *The Public Eye* was staged in London. A year later, he wrote a screenplay for William Golding's *The Lord of The Flies* with British director Peter Brook.



*The Royal Hunt of The Sun* premiered at the Chicester Festival in 1964 before moving to London's National Theatre; Sir Laurence Olivier then commissioned *Black Comedy* for the National Theatre's 1965 repertoire.

At this time, Shaffer began dividing his time between living in Manhattan and England, and in 1967 *White Lies* (one year later revised as *White Liars*) opened with the U.S. premier of *Black Comedy* in New York.

Shaffer wrote three major stage plays in the 1970s: *The Battle of Shrivings* (1970), *Equus* (1973), and *Amadeus* (1979). Including among the numerous awards for Best Play for *Equus*, as well as the 1981 Tony and 1981 Outer Critics' Circle Award for Best Play for *Amadeus*.

For his film adaptation of *Amadeus* in 1984, Shaffer won the 1985 Oscar for Best Screenplay. Following the success of *Amadeus*.

Shaffer biblical epic *Yonadab* premiered at London's National Theatre in 1985. In 1987, Shaffer was awarded the prestigious honorary title of Commander, order of The British Empire.

That same year, Shaffer wrote the comedy *Lettice and Lovage* for actress Maggie Smith: a Revised Version was produced in London in 1988 and New York in 1990.

Shaffer returned to the radio in 1989 with the BBC-aired play *whom Do I Have the Honor of Addressing?* Shaffer's most recent stage play was *The Gift of the Gordon*, produced in London in 1992, the same year in which he won the William Inge Award for distinguished Achievement in the American Theatre.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Method of Writing

In this chapter, the writer explains the method that is used in analyzing the work of Peter Shaffer, entitled *Equus*. There are three methods that used in this writing, namely Data Collecting, Data Analyzing, and Procedure of Research. Each of those methods will be explained as follow:

##### 3.1. 1 Method of Data Collection

In getting, some information to support the analysis. The writer uses library research and the Internet media to find some relevant data to the objective of writing. Moreover, there are to form of data collection, which are very useful for the research, there are primary data and secondary data.

Primary data was gathered from Peter Shaffer's *Equus*. The writer reads the play repeatedly to understand the idea of the work and the writer notes the significant problems related to the objective of writing. Secondary



data are derived from other printed works such as books, critics, magazines and Internet media.

The primary data and the secondary data are classified based on the objective of problem.

### **3.1.2 Method of Data Analysis**

In analyzing data, the writer uses descriptive analysis to show the personality traits and a psychological effect on the characters. The analysis is done based on the intrinsic approach and extrinsic approach.

### **3.2 Procedure of Research**

The writer follows the procedure in doing the research as follow:

1. Read the play carefully.
2. Identify of Characters.
3. Write the dialogue along with personality trait that shows the characteristic of character.
4. Write the problems that relate to personality disorder.
5. Write the internal conflict of the main character.
6. Classified the collected data based on the objective of the writing.

7. Analyze the data and answered all the problems that have been state before.
8. Write the conclusion of the analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Characters' Traits

According to the scope of problem, the writer focuses on the character traits seen through psychology approach. The writer will describe main character in equus play. They are: Alan Strang, Dr. Martin Dysart, Mr. Frank Strang and Mrs. Dora Strang.

##### 4.1.1 Alan Strang

Alan Strang is seventeen-year-old and he has mental disorder namely schizophrenia. He is son of couples Frank Strang and Dora Strang. He loves animal too much especially horses. This animal played such a central part in Alan's life. In fact, all the key moments in his development mental were marked by encounter with horses.

His first unforgettable experience occurred at the age of six, when he was at seashore with his parents. As he describes the incident to Dr. Dysart: he was building sandcastles on the beach when a young man rode up, galloping through the surf and almost running over boy. Stopping just in

time, the rider pulls Alan ups onto the saddle and teaches him the magic words "come on, Trojan-bear me away". Their wild and glorious ride is brought to an abrupt halt by Alan's alarmed parents. This father pulls him off the horse and he falls to the ground but before the rider charges off again Alan hears the horse speak to him, and tell him that the bit in his mouth hurts desperately (Shaffer, 1975:46).

When Alan is about seven or eight years old, his favorite bedtime story is about horse named *Prince*, a faithful and proud horse who would let no one but his young master ride him. Alan has his mother read him the same story over and over again from Bible. His father, Frank Strang gave him a photograph of a beautiful white horse looking over a gate hanging in his bedroom when he is twelve-year-old.

Finally, when he turn seventeen-years-old, Alan contact with horses becomes real when he takes a job at local stable, grooming the horses and cleaning out their stalls. As stable owner told Dysart: He was bloody good. He'd spend hours with the horses, cleaning and grooming them. Way over the call of duty, "strangely, though, the boy seemed to have no desire to actually ride the horses" (Shaffer, 1975:54).

All his experiences about horses cause him Schizophrenic symptoms. In psychological, Schizophrenic symptoms divided into two types: Positive and negative. Positive symptoms are not positive in the sense of "good", but rather indicate an excess or distortion of normal functions. Positive symptoms include Hallucinations, Delusions, or a Formal Thought Disorder. And Negative symptoms reflect a reduction in normal functioning. Negative symptoms include Alogia, Affective Flattening, Anhedonia (lack of pleasure), Apathy (not interested in anything) and difficulty in paying attention to anything. They may also demonstrate catatonic-like behaviors.

Alan has positive and negative symptoms, such as he always hallucinated by Equus in all of his life and apathy in everything.

#### 4.1.2 Dr. Martin Dysart

He is Alan Strang's psychiatrist who tried to make Alan back to a normal social life. Martin is using a hypnosis technique to cure Alan. The function of hypnosis technique can be altered, including the alertness of the subject, sensitivity to temperature or pain, and the efficiency of memory



because many memories not usually available to the conscious mind can be brought up under hypnosis.

Martin has a wife, and her profession as a dentist. Both of them are busy with their activities there's not communication one each other then make them seem like a stranger.

#### 4.1.2 Frank Strang

He is Alan's father who conservative to his son. He is a printer who printed calendars and posters. He is an atheist; a man does not believe in religion and therefore completely disagrees with his wife's fanatical indoctrination of their son. The relationship between he and his son is practically nonexistent. However, Mr. Strang makes no effort to do anything about this situation. In fact, instead of trying to free Alan from his mother's grip, Mr. Strang causes Alan shame and lowers his self-esteem.

He suggest Alan to read a book than watching the television because it's just take a time and useless. One night, Mr.Strang once again caused Alan a sense of shame, Alan found his father watching a pornographic film in the cinema. Alan thought that his father is a good one but in fact, he is not a good father and husband to his wife.

### 4.1.3 Dora Strang

Dora Strang is Alan's mother and She is a religious person even excessively so. She has been the dominant provider of theology education throughout Alan's childhood. She comes from horsy family and her always read chanting from Bible to Alan especially about the story of Prince, the horse.

Dora loves her son too much and the dominant figure for Alan to look ups and seeks guidance from his life. She ever told Alan of the moral side of sex since he was child.

In fact, the important things in Alan life, he did not get a real education even though his mother as an ex-school teacher.

## 4.2 The Psychological Effect To the Characters

### 4.2.1 Alan Strang

The psychological effect on Alan Strang comes from the circle family are his mother, Dora Strang and his father, Frank Strang. Alan's parents have the different ideology to look up and seek guidance in a formal

education and theology. The writer describes the influence of circle family which will shows Alan's mental development.

#### 4.2.1.1 The influence of his mother, Dora Strang

Alan mother's name is Dora Strang, she is a religious person. As a mother usually, she loves Alan much and she do everything which could make her son happy.

During Alan's childhood training, his mother always read a Bible to him and she told about the Christ. The religious education which was taught by his mother make her husband mad because he is an atheist, a man does not believe in religion.

Frank: Well, look at yourself. A boy spend night after night having this stuff read into him: an innocent man tortured to death-thorns driven into his ribs. It can mark anyone for life, that kind thing...(Shaffer, 1975:39).

Beginning in his early years, Alan's mother would read him aloud by his bedside nightly. Alan's ears were frequently drilled with the story of horses namely, *Prine* taken from Bible, a book of job "...and when he was 7 or 8, I used to read him the same book over and over all about horses (Shaffer, 1975:35).

Alan's mother who comes from a horsey family, and she taught his son a word "*Equitation*", Latin word for Horse and in Alan's mind, it is name of God.

Alan: [trying the word] *Equitation*....

Dora: I remember I told him how that come from *Equus*, the Latin word for horse, Alan was fascinated by the word. I know, I suppose because he'd never come across one with two Us' together before (Shaffer, 1975:37)

The world of "*Equitation*" consists of a one-sided demonstration of the rider's ability to control his horse. But in Alan's mind, horse and rider must become one-like a Centaur who is initially for God by the Incas.

In the formal education view, she does not care a lot about Alan's needs for education which in contrasts with her profession as an ex-school teacher, for example she does not realize that Alan's can write his own name. Frank Strang explains to Dr. Dysart.

Frank: How do we know? He's never really tried his mother indulged him. She does not care if he can hardly write his own name, and she an ex-school teacher that want just as long as he's happy, she says...(Shaffer, 1975:35)

Mrs. Strang allows Alan to watch television all the time rather than read books, meanwhile his father will not allow him to watch television. She

used to let Alan slip and watching television in friend's house, if her husband does not stay at home.

Dora: And then we saw an awful lot of Western on TV, he couldn't have enough of house.

Dysart: But surely you don't have a set, do you? I understand Mr.Strang doesn't approve.

Dora: He doesn't. I used to let him slip off in the afternoon to a friend next door.

Dysart: [smiling] You mean without his father's knowledge?

Dora: What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over, does it? Anyway, Western are harmless enough, surely (Shaffer, 1975:37)

Furthermore, she taught Alan a little about sex education, which she claims to be not only biological facts, but also a wondrous spiritual unification as willed by God. Hence, His task as declared by his mother, was to prepare himself for this monumental event and afterwards, he might find the ultimate love.

Dora: Well, I spoke a little, yes. I hold to, I've been a teacher, Doctor and I know what happens if you don't. They find out through magazines and dirty books.

Dysart: What sort of thing did you tell him? I'm sorry if this is embarrassing.

Dora: I told him the biological fact. But I also told him what I believed. That sex is not just a biological matter but spritual as well. That if God willed, he would fall in love one day, that his task to prepare himself for the most important happening of his life. And often that, if he was lucky, he might come to know a

higher love still....I simply...don't understand....Alan! (Shaffer, 1975:40)

The writer quoted shaffer's word about religion and sex that he is fascinated by the historical interrelations between sex and religion, and the awe of early religion before the mysteries of fertility and reproduction, which offers to make sex a central part of their ritual.

Mrs. Strang always talks about a biblical genealogy for Equus while she is reads Alan a story about horses, so Alan prepares a biblical genealogy for Equus, "*so-and-so begat*" ending in "*behold-I give you Equus, my only begotten son!*" and Alan apparently derives the concept of "*becoming one*" with Equus from something his mother told him: When Christian cavalry first appeared in the New World, the pagans thought horse and rider was one person (Shaffer, 1975:36).

The possible confusion in a child's mind and imagination between the word "*Cavalry*" and "*Calvary*". The concept of "*becoming one*" can also be related to the mystical concepts of the Holy trinity as one God, man's union with God in death, and man and woman's becoming one in marriage.

In Mrs. Strang minds, the problem that happens to her son is caused by his own self. His parents already given him affection and love though his father is conservative in all aspects. "Our home was loveless. I know about privacy too-not invading a child's privacy. All right, frank may be at fault there-he digs into him too much. But nothing in excess. He's not bully (gravely) no, Doctor" (Shaffer, 1975:90). Alan was a disappointed victim of his parents, and his disappointment reaches its climax when he sees his father watching a pornographic film at the cinema. Alan thought what his father is doing its caused by his mother, who does not give him anything.

Alan: [grappling with it] I mean, what else has he got it?...He's got mum, of course, but well-she-she-she...

Jill: She doesn't give him anything

Alan: That's right. I bet you...she doesn't give him anything. That's right...that's really right!...she likes ladies and gentlemen. Do you understand what I mean?

Jill: [michievously] Ladies and gentlemen aren't naked?

Alan: That's right! Never!...never! That would be disguting! She'd have put bowler hats on them...Jodhpurs (Shaffer, 1975:110)

Mrs.Strang, herself has sense this condemnation and becomes defensive but her defensiveness, being emotionally charged and confused make her thinks that Alan's confusion is the result of his environment-

namely "Christianity". So his mother causes Alan "a positive schizophrenic symptom", that is hallucination and delusion to horse Equus as God.

#### 4.2.1.2 The influence of his father, Frank Strang

Mr. Strang as the head of family should be responsible for his wife and his son. A father is the important person to develop the mental personality of his children. Alan's father is a conservative person and has a contrast ideology with his wife in seeking and guiding their son. Because he is an atheist, he does not believe in any religion.

As for education view, Mr. Strang cares about Alan needs and he hopes that Alan will have a better future rather than he himself. He suggests that the good thing Alan should do in his life is to read books rather than watching television. Mr. Strang will not allow to watching television because it will cause him mental disorder.

Frank: [to Alan] It may not look like that, but's what it is. Absolutely fatal mentally, if you receive my meaning.

Dora: That's a little extreme, dear, isn't it?

Frank: you sit in front of that thing long enough you'll become stupid for like most of the population. [to Alan] the thing is, it's swiz. It seems to be offering you something, but actually it's taking something away. Your intelligence and concentration, every minute you watch it. That's true swiz, do you? (Shaffer, 1975:32)



Mr. Strang who is working in printing company advises his son to read books. He think that if people in the world are like Alan so they will loose their job; but Alan ignore this regard and keep watching television when his father is not at home.

"I don't want to sound like a spoilsport, old chum but there really is no substitute for reading, what's the matter! Don't you like it?"

Alan: It's alright

Frank: I know you think it's none of my own beeswax, but it really is you know...actually, it's a disgrace when you come to think of it. You the son of a printer, and never opening a book! If all the world was like you, I'd be out of job, if you receive my meaning!  
(Shaffer, 1975:32)

Mr. Strang does not really care about theological view and completely disagrees with his wife's fanatical indoctrination to their son.

Dysart: your wife is religious?

Frank: some might say excessively so. Mind you that's her business. But when it comes to dosing it down the boy's throat-well of course, that's the funny thing about religious. People they always think their susceptibilities are more important than non-religious.

Dysart: And you're non-religious, I take it?

Frank: I'm an atheist, and I don't mind admitting it...(Shaffer, 1975:39)

However, Mr. Strang makes no effort to do change the situation: in fact, instead of trying to free Alan from his mother's grips, Mr. Strang causes Alan inferiority complex. He tore down an admittedly macabre picture of Christ, which was hanging over Alan's bed. This gruesome rendering of the martyred Jesus on the road to Calvary is replaced with a poster of a horse.

Dora: He stood it for a while, but one day we had one our tiff about religion, and he went straight upstairs tore it off the boys wall and threw it in the dust bin. Alan went quite hysterical, he cried for days without stopping and he was not a crier, you know?

Dysart: But he recovered when he was given the photograph of the horse in its place.

Dora: He certainly seemed to. At least, he hung it n exactly the same position, and we had no more of that awful weeping (Shaffer, 1975:52)

This the prime example of Mr. Strang's introduce on something, which Alan enjoys, occurs on a very significant day; this the day when Alan first experiences with a horse.

Another example of Mr. Strang ruining something Alan enjoys occurs in the movie theatre, when Alan is watching a pornographic film with Jill, and his father walks in and sees him. Once again, Mr. Strang causes Alan shame.

Frank: Alan!

Alan: God!

Jill: What is it?

Alan: Dad!

Jill: Where?


Alan: at the back! He saw me! (Shaffer, 1975:106)

Mr. Strang bad relation with Alan, strengthens the "Odiepal tie" between Alan and his mother, and gives her power over him. Moreover, the influence of his father cause Alan inferiority complex and suffer "a Negative schizophrenic symptom, or anhedonia (lack of pleasure), apathy and difficulty in paying attention to anything because his own mind always focuses on Equus, the photograph which his father has given him.

#### 4.2.1.3 Alan's Internal Struggle

Alan is clearly suffering from a deep-seated neurosis, which manifests itself in typical symptoms: divided personality, alienated personality and emasculated personality.

As a salesman in a small store, Alan is bored. At home he refuses to read books, in revolt against a paternal tyranny which forbids television in the house.



To work weekends as a groom is for Alan more than an opportunity of escaping the conflicts of home. On the surface, it serves to satisfy his love of horses. In depth, it assuages his religious cravings. Since an adolescent love for horses is often related to the awakening of sexuality. It is possible, because in the midnight horseback rides, which Alan enjoys alone and naked on Saturday nights, produce in him a wild form of orgasmic satisfaction.

It is true, Alan carries on a love affair with a particular horse, called nugget, He embraces. But, Dr, Dysart is quick to discern this emotional involvement with its sexual overtones, goes far beyond pubescent sensuality. The psychiatrist asks, "what desire could that be? The bits of confessional intropection, which he elicits from his patient, show that the search is metaphysical. Alan is looking for a mystical union with infinity. When he was a child, his mother had him memorize from the Book of Job 39:19-25, the poem about the horse:

Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed  
His neck with thunder?...  
He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage  
He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha..

Alan's mother also read to him from the Apocalypse of St. John the vision of the white horse, Faithful and True, which gallops through the world with eyes as a flame of fire (Revelation, 19:11-12). These and other images became associated in his infant psyche with the picture of Jesus—not the healer who forgives sinners, but the divine judge.

In his early years, Alan had briefly delighted in a wondrous horseback ride on a beach, but his father had abruptly curtailed that thrilling canter as too dangerous. At a later date, Mr. Strang had torn down from his son's bedroom wall a lurid chrome representing Jesus on the way to Golgotha. Eventually, the empty spot was filled with the picture of a horse. All these images feed Alan's resentment against his father's "*despotic behavior*" and his mother's "*pietism*".

The White horse in Revelations. He that sat upon him was called faithful and true. His eyes were as flames of fire, no one ever says to cowboys. The ambivalence of Alan toward the person of Jesus appears when he unwittingly identifies Equus with Christ. The stable is his "Temple", his Holy of Holies. He calls Equus a mean bugger, but add, Ride or fall, that's Straw Law. Dr. Dysart inquires Straw Law and the boy

explains He was born in the straw, and this is his law. He recites a parody of the biblical begats which ends with the phrase Behold-I give you Equus, my only begotten son!. He keeps in reserve a lump of sugar to give his favorite horse for his Last Supper. Dr. Dysart misses the reference and asks, last for what? And Alan only answer is the short from the poem of Job, Ha Ha. There upon he shrieks Take my sins. Eat them for my sake, He always does.

Like a medieval mystic who tries to lose himself within Christ, Alan rides Equus at midnight. He exclaims, soon out of breath:

Alan: The King ride out on Equus, mightest of horses...His neck comes out of my body. It lifts in the dark, Equus, my Godslave!...Now the King commands you. Tonight, we ride against them all.

[He whips Nugget]

And Equus the Mighty horse againts all!

His enemies scatter, his enemies fall!

My mane, stiff in the wind!

My flanks! My hooves!

Mane on my legs, on my flanks, like whips!

Raw!

Raw!

I'm raw! Raw!

Feel me on you! On you! On you! On you!

I want to be in you!

I want to BE you forever and ever!

Equus, I love you!

Now!

Bear me away!

Make us One person!  
[He rides Equus frantically]  
One person! One person! One person!  
[He rises up on the horse's back, and calls like a trumpet]  
HA-HA! HA-HA! HA-HA! HA-HA! HA-HA!  
[He twists like a flame. Silence...Slowly, the boy drops off the  
horse's back]  
AMEN! (Shaffer, 1975:85)

The midnight ride is a sacrificing means of identification with Christ who tramples his enemies. Several fantasists, which haunt Alan's mind, are blended in skillful gradual hostilities, self-punishment, erotic desires and religious needs. The prepositional phrase "On you" becomes "In you" and leads to direct transference: I want to Be you forever and ever....Amen. Alan wants to transcend both himself and time. The repeated phrase "One phrase" accentuates the search for ontological security.

Alan seeks to rediscover his alienated self. His girl friend, Jill takes him to watch a pornographic film. In the theatre, he sees his own father and is seen by him. The simultaneity of this double shame is unbearable. Caught by paternal authority, he discovers that this authority is pure sham. Jill tenderly seeks to comfort him. She leads him back to the stable where she hopes he will make love to her.

Jill: What is it?

Alan: Nothing!

Jill: [gently] Take your sweater off

Alan: What?

Jill: I will, if you will (Shaffer, 1975: 116)

As they both undress, they reveal only their helplessness and their destitution. The nude scene is not, as in some other plays of our decade, a gesture of conformity to current fad. It is intrinsic to the plot, for Alan and Jill expose themselves spiritually more than physically. Their innocence is poignantly made manifest.

Alan is impotent. His shame at having found out that his father is a phony now compounds itself with the still deeper shame of this psychological "*emasculation*". Indeed, the failure of his maleness is due not only to his filial trauma but also to the belief that he is being watched by Equus, the all-seeing Eye of a moralistic Deity. Alan throws the girl out. To relieve his guilt, he seizes a metal spike and blinds the horses. The sadomasochistic act covers his need to obliterate his judge and to crucify his Christ.



#### 4.2.2 Dr. Dysart


Dr. Martin Dysart is a well-known psychiatrist, but he suffers like the youth he is trying to cure, from a split personality, an alienated personality and an emasculated personality. Dr. Dysart as the representative of social norms, has no choice but to excise this part of Alan's existence and banish Equus from his mind. But this is not done without deep regrets. Describing his own achievement, Dr. Dysart proclaims "He'll be delivered from madness, what then? Do you think feelings like his can simply re-attached like band-aids? My desire might be to make this boy an ardent husband-a caring citizen-a worshipper of an abstract and unifying God. My achievement, however, is more likely to make a ghost! Let me tell you exactly what I'm going to do to him! When that's done, I'll set him on a metal scooter and send him pattering off into the concrete world and he'll never touch hide again! Passion, you see, can be destroyed by a doctor. It can not be created (Shaffer, 1975:123)

As it is so often the case with dramas involving psychiatrists, it turns out that while the patient is the object of the psychiatrist's analysis, the psychiatrist is the primary object of the author's analysis. It seems that

Dysart is undergoing what he himself describes as professional menopause and is unable to free himself from his own nightmares. In a disturbing dream, he finds himself a chief priest in Homeric Greece. He is wearing a wide gold mask, all noble and bearded, like the so called Mask of Agamemnon found at Mycenae and holding a sharp knife. He realizes he is officiating at some immensely important ritual sacrifice (Shaffer, 1975:29).

In the middle of the play, as act II opens, he finds that when he lights his dim torch into the black cave of the psyche, he is confronted by a mocking Equus who asks do you really imagine you can account For Me? Totally, Infallibly, Inevitably account For Me? Poor Doctor Dysart! That ME is the unique individuality of each human being.

As Dr. Dysart realizes, a child is born into a world of phenomena all equals in their power to enslave. It sniffs-it suck-it stroke its eyes over the whole untouchable range. Suddenly one strikes, why? Moments snap together like magnets, forging a chain of shackles, why? I can trace them. I can even, with time, pull them apart again. But why at the start they were ever magnetized at all just those particular moments of experience and no others- I do not know. And nor does anybody else. (Shaffer, 1975:88).



The basic psychological question, the writer quoted from Dr.R.D.Laing's, *The Politics of Experience*, published in 1967. In this work, Laing debates who should and should not be cured of individualizing personality traits. He questions the value and justice of curing many of those individuals society considers insane. It is his belief that "a person born into the world where alienation waits and that the diseases psychiatrists purport to cure are in fact perpetuated when an individual is regarded as an "object-to-be-changed" rather than "a person-to-be-accepted". Laing also objects to the degeneration and dehumanization. The patient suffers from being subjected to the process of psychiatric examination, diagnosis and treatment.

Above psychiatric processes, show when dr.Dysart says the normal is the good smile in a child's eyes but it is also the dead stare in a million adult. It is also the Average made Lethal. The normal is the indispensable, murderous god of health, and I am his priest I have honestly assisted children in this room. I have talked away terrors and relieved many agonies. But also-beyond question-I has cut from them part of individuality repugnant to his God. (Shaffer, 1975:74)

Dr. Dysart's doubts also reflect "Jung theory that the more complicated and sophisticated we become, the more we lose the ability to act own passions upon instincts. In his efforts to re-establish contact with his own passions and instincts, Dr. Dysart also turns to what he calls the vast intuitive culture of Doric temples with clouds tearing through their pillars, eagles bearing prophecies out the sky, and sacred Creatan acrobats who leap through the horns of running bulls.

His dream is to be able to travel to Greece with one instinctive person who will understand when he stands before a shrine or scared stream and declares look! Life is only comprehensible through a thousand local Gods. And not just the old dead ones with names like Zeus-no, but living Geniuses of place and person! And not just Greece but modern England! The important thing is that people should worship as many as they can see-because then more will appear. The worst thing that he can imagine is that a person should be worshipless. (Shaffer, 1975:71).

Dysart's profound envy of Alan's ability to worship primitively and passionately, is the source of the play's tragic conflict. Shaffer has commented that "Tragedy obviously does not lie in a conflict of right and

wrong, but in a collision between two different kinds of right: in this case between Dr.Dysart's professional obligation to treat a terrified boy who has committed a dreadful crime and Alan's passionate capacity for worship.

Dysart has to do what he does. Yet in proceeding by his best and honorable lights, the doctor can not but know that he is in some clear sense the destroyer of a passion he must forever and rightly, envy.

#### 4.2.3 Frank Strang

Mr. Strang, Alan's father is an atheist. He views religion as the enemy of health, culture and civilisation. Mr. Strang misses the biblical mystery of God who suffers for human kind. He does not mind admitting ponderously that the Bible is responsible for his son's aberrant behavior. He says to the psychiatrist:

Frank: A boy spends night after night having this stuff read into him: an innocent man tortured to death-thorns driven into his head-nails into his hands- a spear jammed through his ribs. It can mark anyone for life, that kind of thing....bloody religion-it's our only real problem in this house, but it's insuperable (Shaffer, 1975:39)

Religion is for him a source of conflict within himself, between him and his wife and between him and his son. Mr. Strang completely disagrees with his wife's fanatical indoctrination to their son.

Dysart: Your wife is religious?

Frank: Some might say excessively so. Mind you that's her business. But when it comes to dosing it down the boy's throat-well of course, that's the funny thing about religious. People they always think their susceptibilities are more important than non-religious (Shaffer, 1975:39).

One day, Mr. Strang and his wife had one of their tiffs about religion because his wife interfering too much with their son and he tore down an admittedly macabre picture of Christ, which hanging over Alan's bed.

Dora: He stood it for a while, but one day we had one of our tiffs about religion, and he went straight upstairs, tore it of the boy's wall and threw it in the dustbin (Shaffer, 1975:52).

While Mr. Strang threw the picture of Christ in the dustbin, it causes Alan sad and cried. It makes his mother confuse because Alan is not a crier. After that, Mr. Strang replaced the picture of Christ with the picture of horses and hung in the same position.

The reason Mr. Strang replaced the picture of Christ, it because his wife interfering his son in theology too much and in his mind's, religion is

opium which danger for human being and the Bible that's responsible for Alan disorder personality. Beside that his background of life is an atheist, the man does not believe in any religion.

A puritanical streak compensates for Mr.Strang's loss of Transcendence. But despite the high ideals he preaches, he goes out alone in the evening to watch pornographic movies but he is doing defense mechanism when he sees his son there and he is looking for the reason that he come to the theatre for a business purpose.

Frank: [stiffly] I'd like you to know something. Both of you. I come here tonight to see the Manager. He asked me to call on him for business purpose. I happen to be a printer, Miss A. picture house needs posters. While I was waiting I happened to glance in, that's all. I can only say I'm going to explain to the council. I had a no Idea they showed film like this. I'm certainly going to refuse my service. (Shaffer, 1975:108)

Another form of his defense mechanism is a moral. He thought that his God is a moral and is unable to incarnate. In fact his moral is lower.

#### 4.2.4 Dora Strang

Mrs. Strang is Alan's mother, she is a religious person but the mother's god is likewise false, for her obsessive piety makes her judgmentally harsh and fails to produce harmony in her existence.

She teaches his son about the moral side of sex and related to religion while Alan is eight years old.

Dora: I told him the biological facts. But I also told him what I believed. That sex is not just a biological matter, but spiritual as well. That if God willed, he would fall in love one day. That his task was to prepare himself for the most important happening in his life. And after that, if he was lucky, he might come to know a higher love still...I simply...don't understand ....Alan! (Shaffer, 1975:40)

Though Mr. Strang seems well intentioned, it is obvious that Shaffer intends to display anyone who holds her beliefs as mentally and emotionally unstable. This instability is passed along to Alan in the form of saturating him with her beliefs, implicating Christianity.

When the crisis comes, Mrs. Strang is vindictive toward both her husband and her son. In a scene of unexpected violence, she slaps the youth in his hospital room because she cannot endure his silent stare, and the nurse expels her. Thereupon, she pours abuse upon the psychiatrist,





maintaining that her little Alan was a good boy until "the Devil came." She rebukes Dr. Dysart: "If you knew God, Doctor, you would know about the Devil. . . ." Unable to share guilt with her husband, baffled by her son's criminal behavior, she finds refuge in that old trick of religionists accusing the devil.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. Conclusion

Equus is a modern classic play. When we see beyond the nudity, stabbing horses' eyes, and child psychology of the play to the striking metaphor of horse-as-god, and to the mysterious archetypal and sexual see things which are linked to a genuine yearning for transcendence, we begin to grasp this play's importance to universal concerns of human life.

What is more, the play make a striking comment upon society by viewing longings of soul and body, of worship and sexuality, in position to corporation, parent, profession, and conventional religion which conspire subtly to thwart all mystery and ecstasy in modern life.

The writer finds that Shaffer's point is that worship and sexuality, sharing the common ground of the ecstatic, together oppose the chains of restraint seen in parental taboos and in the other norms of a society that would like to deny both sexuality and the urge toward transcendence.

He sees *conventional religion* as one of several elements in contemporary English home and culture which render both worship and sexual expression problematic, thus throwing Alan back on himself, and out of the archetypal depths of his own creates Equus, his horse-god.

Since Christianity is the only *religion* represented in the play, namely by Alan's mother, Dora Strang, Christianity is the conventional religion implicated. What Alan does not find in the conventional institution of what is being called *Christianity* in the play, he finds in his secular, "*primitive invention of worship*".

Whatever ecstasy Dr. Martin Dysart fails to find in his conventional institution of marriage, he finds in his secular, "*primitive Greek mythological books*". What Frank Strang, (Alan's atheist father) fails to find with his wife, he gets through in his secular, "*porn films*".

## 5.2. Suggestion

The writer realizes this thesis is not perfect. It's because of her limitation as human being. The writer hopes, in the next research is more

accurate to analyze Equus play by Peter Shaffer with the same approaches and different aspects.

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## APPENDIX

### Synopsis of the play

Dr. Martin Dysart repents his meeting with Hester Salomon, his friend, which bring a new patient. His new patient name's Alan Strang who got psyche problem. He blinding six horses with metal spike at Dalton' stable, that's why he is being presented to Dr. Dysart. Hesther Salomon though Dr. Dysart is the one who cures Alan out from his pains.

One day in Rokeby Psychiatric Hospital in Southern England, Dr. Dysart asked some questions to Alan but his just keep silent and suddenly he sing a commercial jingles that made Dr. Dysart angry. After few days Dr. Dysart ask him about his nightmare and a word "Equus" that he is often said in his dream.

Dr. Dysart doping investigation to get some information from Alan's parents. His parents say that Alan loves animals especially horses even he has a photograph of on e in his bedroom. A beautiful white one, looking over a gate. His father gave it to him and his mother used to have to read him the same book over and over, all about a horse.

Dr. Dysart tried to know Alan's background family. He got some information from Alan's mother that his father, Frank Strang is an atheist who does not believe in religion and he does not like all about religion things and though the religion is opium of the peoples. Sometimes, both of them always stiff about religion, and he said that the Bible that's responsible for Alan's problems. In contrast his mother, Dora Strang is a religious person.

One day, in Dr. Dysart clinic, he hypnotizes and give Alan's a harm pill so that he tells all about his experiences. Alan began his first experience, occurred at the age of six, when he was at the seashore with his parents. He was building sandcastles on the beach when a young man rode up, galloping through the surf and almost running over him. Stopping just in time, the rider pulls him up onto he saddle and teaches him the magic words "*come on, Trojan-bear me away*". Until when he turns 17-year-old, Alan's contact with horses becomes real when he takes a job at a local stable, grooming the horses and cleaning out their stalls. In this stable, he has friend names Jill Manson which take attention to him a lot.



One day, Jill invited Alan to watch porn films in the cinema. At the same place they are meet Alan's father, Frank Strang then his father ask them to going home but Alan refused and they are going to Dalton stable to make a love there.

Alan felt that Equus the Godslave seen and laughing what he was doing with Jill. Suddenly Alan felt sins and very repented with his attitudes and asked repetition of mercy from Equus and promises that he will never do it again. And suddenly he takes a metal spike and blinding six horses in the stable.

That's all Alan experiences and Dr. Dysart promises that Alan will have no more bad dreams, no more awful night and take him back into a normal life again.