

# The cherry orchard characters critical thinking

[Life](#), [Love](#)



The Cherry Orchard is a play by Anton Chekhov which was produced in the 1994, immediately after Chekhov's death. The author is famous for writing short plays and plays in the Moscow Art Theatre. The Orchard presents an aristocratic family in Russia that is forced to give out its ancestral estate (Cherry Orchard) as a compensation for failure to pay mortgage. The family has options to prevent the estate from being taken away, but it does not consider any of the options. All the events that take place until the cutting down of the orchard makes an interesting play. Chekhov uses a style that works interchangeably between a comedy and tragedy to provide a play that is relevant and great to date. The work is characterized detailed characterization which makes Chekhov a wonderful play writer. This paper addresses some of the play's characters, taking note of the contradictions within each character as revealed in speech and actions.

## **Gayev**

Gayev is the brother of Mrs. Madame Lyubov Andreievna Ranevskaya who is characterized by fascinating verbal habits. He talks a lot and defines the moments of comedy in the play. He says, " This bookcase was manufactured exactly one hundred years ago. How about that? Eh? Why, we could celebrate its centenary, you know (Chekhov 15). He starts rhetorical speeches and Anya, her nephew, has to warn him now and then.

Gayev struggles to save the family orchard; the aristocratic life he lives bars him from realizing the goals of his struggles. He plays billiards and is so much addicted to them hence unable to adopt change. This deprives him of the motivation to eventually save their estate.

## **Lopakhin**

Lopakhin's energy and hence action, keeps the play going on till the end more than any other character. He is a capitalist described by several detailed plans of action. He tells Dunyasha that, "I'm rich, I have a lot of money" (Chekhov 5). He highlights a plan that is dedicated to Mrs. Ranevsky in an effort to stop the auctioning of the firm. He is willing to give her a loan and eventually acquires the estate. He is confused between Mrs. Ranevsky's past kindness and his bitterness towards her look down upon him for the humble background.

He is a wealthy character, but who was brought up in a lower social status. The way he enjoys life is completely different from his background. He dresses so fine and looks nice in a white suit. This is something that someone from his background is not expected to do. He works hard to stop the auctioning of the Orchard despite his middle class status but his is unfruitful. The middle class is considered as a threat to the aristocratic life, but still, Chekhov presents as working to save the aristocratic family.

## **Anya**

Anya is a daughter to Lyubov who is a principled as well as a strong lady. She purposefully goes to Paris to get her mum out of a desperate moment. She falls in love with Trofimov. She listens to his great ideas, but only pursues those that she deems right. Every one admires her, and for that everyone likes her referring to her using words like, pretty, darling. She thinks about the garden while on a journey if the following morning, she will get up and run into the garden and promises her that if she could sleep she could not do it at all" (Chekhov 8).

## **Varya**

Varya is defined by her religious values supplemented by seriousness and hence forms a greater part of the mysteries in Chekhov's work. Varya appears to be in the control of other characters like she questions why did Ranyevskaya adopt her, is she the illegitimate child of her gone husband or is she the bastard daughter of Gayev? (Chekhov 13). Despite her great morals she ends up in an unpleasant relationship with Lopakhin. No one refers to her using words such as darling like it is the case for Anya who receives much praise: ' Dear, darling, pretty'. She loves him so much so much, but he cannot reciprocate the love.

## **Trofimov**

Peter Trofimov is a student who has also romantically attracted Anya. He is also as presented as a wandering student who is interested in politics. He says, " I'm destined to be a student forever, it must be" (Chekhov 19). He is depicted as reformist in the political arena of Russia. Trofimov makes a major move to work hard for the place of reforms in an aristocratic background nation. However, a new, more equitable economic order fails to take its place, because it exists only in the minds, visions, and words of intellectuals like Trofimov.

He idealizes much of his ideas and makes the search for the truth for the Russian peasants impossible. Ranevsky views the Cherry Orchard as a profitable estate while Trofimov sees it as an oppression source for the slaves that caused dehumanizing conditions for several families. However, he fails to make his views practical and fight for the oppression of the

people. He fails to intervene into Ranenvsky's institution of serfdom which dehumanizes the people.

## **Yepikhodov**

He is a clerk at Gayev's estate who contributes to the comic party of the play. His comic moments in the play are as a result of the insults he endures, arising from his unfortunate state that is supplemented by awkwardness in the farthest. He claims that his boots squeak; "they squeak so relentlessly that what should I use to grease the squeak out? (Chekhov 5).

He has been branded "Twenty Two Calamities out of his misfortunes.

Amazingly he claims to have fallen in love with Dunyasha and even proposes to her. He completes the comedy part of the play so well. People consider and refer to him as "simple Simon" and mock him as being a hopeless lover resolving into suicide whenever he is faced with a challenging love scenario.

## **Yasha**

He is a servant who is depicted as unpleasant character of the generation.

He describes what an upcoming Russian society entails. He is not corrupted as the rest of the society, and hates the old habits setting the base for revolution. Even, though he is ruthless and predatory. He finds himself in a disagreement with Yepikhodov over their love interests in Dunyasha. Yasha is seen toying with the feelings Yepikhodov has for the lady, yet he is opposed to the Russian old ways.

He is displayed comparing the life in France with that in Russia after he accompanies Ranevsky to France. He views Russia to be uncivilized relatively and yet himself has his roots in Russia. He takes advantages of

Dunyasha's love for him. He uses her to for his own pleasures and he is described as obnoxious. When Dunyasha asks him if he remembers her, he replies, " Hmm Ripe for the plucking!" (Chekhov 10).

## **Dunyasha**

Dunyasha is a house help who comes from a lower social class as compared to the aristocratic family she is working for, but still manages to dress decently like a lady of the time. She values attention and hence initiates huge scenes that she uses to boast. She is seen flirting with the men who are servants in Gayev's estate though she has fallen in love with Yasha. " You know, Yermolai Alekseyich, I must warn you, Yepikhodov's proposed to me" (Chekhov 6). She symbolizes the impotence of the aristocratic class. Considering her low social class, as a maid she would not have the right to dress like a lady and flirt with men.

## **Simeonov-Pishchik**

He is an aristocratic who owns land, and has the old ways to his heart. His estate has also been challenged by the difficulty economic times. He spends time talking about the coming up business ventures that would get him out of the difficulty times. He explains that he is facing hard times; " I'm doomed, doomed I say lock, stock, and barrel, what's the point! (Chekhov 13). To the contrast of the aristocracy in Russia, he forgets about the hard economies of the time and spends time socializing and having a rest alongside the Gayevs.

## **Charlotta**

Charlotte is a governess to Anya who is considered to be so much eccentric. She moves from one town to another doing tricks like “ the dive of death” as a young girl. Gayev believes Charlotta is the best governess he found for his niece, Anya. She is displayed working out tricks that mock others as well as their occupations like Yopakhin and Ranevsky. LO asks her for a magic trick: “ Not my lucky day, is it? Charlotte Ivanovna, show us a magic trick” (Chekhov 17).

## **Firs**

He is a servant who spends quality time discussing how better the past used to be. He narrates how the estate used to have good income remembering the master going to Paris by carriage, instead of by train. She laughs out that, “ The master, he went to Paris to in his fay on horseback” (Chekhov 11). He mumbles a lot about the life before the serfs were given freedom. He glorifies the past much unlike the rest who struggle to find out the way out the present difficulty times.

In conclusion, Chekhov has presented a detailed characterization of The Cherry Orchard using both comedy and tragedy to make the play interesting. Gayev is determined to stop the auctioning of the Orchard, but is deprived of the motivation to do so by playing billiards. To the contrast of the aristocracy in Russia, he forgets about the hard economies of the time and spends time socializing and having a rest alongside the Gayevs. Dunyasha is a house help who comes from a lower social class as compared to the aristocratic family she is working for, but still manages to dress decently like a lady of the time. Trimov idealizes much of his ideas, but fails to make them practical. He is a

wealthy character, but who was brought up in a lower social status, and enjoys life which is completely different from his background. The tragedy that the characters of the play face makes them to mumble contradicting statements and actions as opposed to their backgrounds and values. The comic moments combined with the tragedies make the play great work.

## **Work Cited**

Chekhov, Anton P. *The Cherry Orchard*. New York: Dover Publications, 2000. Print.