

Comentary on three sisters by anton chekhov



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The above passage is a dialog extracted from the third act of Chekhov's play The Three Sisters. The work was written in Russia in the year 1900. This was during the final years of the Russian Empire, where the small portion of upper-class families would live in luxury and languor, while the peasants in the countryside had a limited routine consisting mainly of labor and faced poverty.

Chekhov's work illustrated how an aristocratic family from Moscow deals with the simplicity and dullness of a small town and how the life and people there agitate them. In the beginning of the drama, the brother in the family (Andrei) falls in love with a local villager (Natalya), a very ignorant and provincial girl, who he later marries. His three sisters never approve or trust her because of her background and manners. During Act Two the viewer/reader is transferred into the same house in the small village, however four years later, when Natalya and Andrei have gotten married and the former peasant girl now believes she is the true "woman of the house". Furthermore, in Act Three we see how the different characters have changed in their attitude and philosophies. The chosen passage demonstrates Chekhov's use of characterization and irony to embody the themes Provinciality, hypocrisy, and matriarchy. It is a dialogue between Natalya and Andrei's oldest sister Olga and is dealing with Natalya's despotic behavior towards the three sisters' beloved nanny, Anfisa.

Natalya's speech about Anfisa conveys complete irony, because at the beginning of the play she was a shy villager with no social skills for the high society, and now, demands that the nanny should be "sent away", as "she's a peasant, she shouldn't be in the house. She should be in the country

somewhere. " It is as if the poor " Natasha" with the tasteless green belt from Act 1 has entirely disappeared and now feeling comfortable with her new higher class status and subjected husband she controls, she can be a hypocrite and patronize all other peasants. Additionally Anfisa was probably a more respected village woman than her as she was a nanny to an aristocratic family, which was regarded a great honor. This makes Natalya's actions are even more duplicitous.

Further on, the new sister-in-law tries to sound like a house-wife from the big city as she says that " a house must run in order. Like a machine" This is a simile which alludes to the working style of an urban, industrialized area, unlike the small town Natalya grew up with, where all she undertook was doubtlessly only manual labor. When addressing Olga, her tone changes decisively to make her sound more polite and delicate, however, the fact that she calls her " Olyetchka" and " dear", patronizing her, proves that she cannot be freed from her disrespectful, provincial manners. Chekhov has used character development to emphasize on how much Natalya has changed in four years, also revealing her hidden intentions to marry Andrei so as to receive a higher social status and become the matriarch of the house. The previous woman whose words were determining was Olga. The chosen passage serves as a verbal duel between those two strong females who have developed differently throughout the course of the play.

Natalya has become domineering and rude, while Olga has given up and tried to deal with her sister-in-law with calm disapproval. This is where the difference between the bringing up of a peasant and the behavioral education of a citizen from a metropolis is displayed. The provincial woman

has become so powerful that she has even managed to make Olga doubt her standards, as the older woman says that “ we, if you would understand have been brought up strangely. It’s true, but I cannot bear, bear to see such treatment.

” In Natalya’s final words, she in a way wins the battle over the position of the matriarch in the family, as she also she tries to convince Olga that she in charge now because Olga is too occupied with being a headmistress and is not at home. The power in the house, and the influence over Andrei , is transferred from Olga to Natalya, but still in the Hands of a female. This passage is essential for the course of the play as through the dialogue, Chekhov emphasizes on three of the play’s most important themes: Provinciality, Hypocrisy and Matriarchy. He does that by contrasting Natalya’s behavior to Olga’s, the way the characters have developed through Acts One to Three, and the use of Irony of Situation.