

Free critical thinking on play analysis three sisters

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Although the atmosphere that reveals from the play is a relaxed one, allowing engaging discussions and enabling funny, romantic or dramatic scenes, shared between the three sisters (Olga, Irina and Masha) and their family or friends, the circularity of Chekov's *mes en scene* and the discourse filled with French expressions generates the impression of sadness, of an unfulfilled dream, of giving up hope, while illustrating the Moravians of a changing society.

Solitude and Sorrow over a Lost Ideal

The play succeeds in expressing the solemnity of the solitude of the main characters (the three sisters and their brother) who have been living together for 11 years in a provincial town after moving away from Moscow. Olga, Irina and Masha together with their brother Andrey have a routinely existence, carrying on the lives of their death mother and father, being accompanied by their old family friends, and the house's staff or their new families (Masha and Andrey were married) as their entourage. Despite the repetitiveness of their actions (Irina receives the same book with the occasion of her name day that she received at Easter from Kuligin, Masha's husband), they seem to enjoy spending their time together, and the company of each other seems to be a panacea for their solitude. Although the pain (their solitude) will always be a part of them, living together and sharing ideas and plans help them attenuate the pain. Behind the engaging discussions, vivacious arguments and philosophies debated, there is the sadness that breaks through and dominates their speech. As such,

regardless of the topic of discussion, the sisters seem to be permanently weeping “ Olga [crying] I understand you Masha” (Chekhov 16), and such gestures that accompany their speech are visible throughout the play. Likewise, behind the laughs that color the household of Prozorov family, there can be easily read the hysteria, and the laughter is simply a form of expressing the characters’ sorrow for their unfulfilled lives (“[Laughs] We go there in June, and before June there’s still February, March, April”, Chekhov 39). This statement holds an intrinsic function of indicating the distress, the impatience of reaching there – which stands for Moscow. The laughter that accompanies this remark strengthens the tension, emphasizing the anxiety and indicates the characters’ hysteria, which hides sorrow and intense pressure, waiting for something to happen, while understanding in their subconscious that it never will occur.

Russian Society Moravians

This peaceful existence, where not much ever happens and everything seems to look similar to the previous years, is suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the army troops in the province town, event that gives hope to the Prozorov family for moving back to Moscow, where they imagine to live an ideal life, being invited to the sophisticated salons, in the most selective circles of the Moscow’s aristocratic society, where they can put at use their knowledge of foreign languages, French especially, which was extremely popular those days. Chekhov introduced this particular element (the entrance of the troops in the provincial town) for placing the play in a certain context and for illustrating the image of the Russian family in that time. This makes Prozorov family a reflection of the society they lived in, representative

for the status – quo and the social Moravians of those times. Using French language for expressing usual, even banal ideas, while addressing to Russian – speaking people, indicates an air of snobbism, of wanting to be elsewhere, wanting to be doing something else, with somebody else: “ In parait que mon Bobik deja ne dort pas” (Chekhov 45) this is what Natasha (Andrey’s wife) tells to Andrey, wanting to sound more imposing and more meaningful.

Elements that Announce Change

Another element that creates a special – effect is Natasha’s announcement of cutting down of the fir trees and the maple tree. This symbolizes the change that is about to occur in Prozorov family. The fir and the maple are solid trees, with strong, resistant wood, in specific cultures, strong trees are the symbol of family unity. The announced intention of cutting – down these trees puts a threat over Prozorov family. Moreover, the disunion of this Russian family is prescribed when Andrey announces that he has mortgaged the house to cover for his gambling debts: “[Pause] In the third place, I have still this to say that I have mortgaged the house without obtaining your permission ”. In addition to this, there is also indicated the dismissal of the several of the household’s staff, among which Anfisa, who has been in that family for thirty years, when Natasha addresses brutally to her, indicating to Olga that she holds the household since she got married to Andrey. This also indicates stability that is about to break, because of the changes that are planned. The way the actors were playing during these scenes transmitted the tension and generated an expectancy feeling, of waiting for something to happen, to outburst. The moments of pause increased the suspense and the

tension, engaging the audience in the game of waiting for something big to happen, a change to be announced.

Conclusion

Characteristic to the Russian dramatic style, the play mingles dramatic elements, with humoristic moments. The dramatic elements are defining the sorrow, solitude, hysteria, or the tension of the characters that become obvious as they reveal themselves, through their actions, through their speeches, through the story of their lives. The humoristic elements also reside in their speeches, and represent the masks the characters put on to hide their sadness and the desolation of knowing that they will not be able to reach their ideal of moving back to Moscow or living the life they dreamed of.

Works Cited

Chekhov, Anton. *The Three Sisters*. London. Sovereign. 2012 edition. Print.