

ACQUIRING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STABILITY IN CHEKHOV'S A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

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Abstract

A Marriage Proposal is one of Anton Chekhov's famous short plays. It was written in 1889 and performed for the first time in 1890. In this play, Chekhov criticized the nineteenth-century Russian society especially the landowners or the wealthy classes who got married to a woman or a man from the same class in the society, driven not by their true love or affection, but by money to acquire economically and keep their social stability. This study analyzed how the characters of the play think and see the marriage institution. The study is qualitative research with a sociological approach. The approach was used to understand the work by comparing the content of the work with the society where the play was written using social sciences. Data were collected from the main source and the other sources before they were analyzed using the descriptive-analytic techniques. A Marriage Proposal was the main source of this study, and the other sources were derived from books, journals, and the internet.

Keywords: proposal, marriage, social stability, true love, affection

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INTRODUCTION

The motif and characters of Chekhov's stories are from Russia but the themes are universal for they encompass all the aspects of human life. Chekhov has excelled everybody in writing short stories and has become a benchmark in the literary world. No other writer is as extensive, sharp, and prying as he in decoding the human character. His stories are mirrors of the then-Russian society. He saw the peak of Russian exuberance during his life. He was saturated with heavy thought but blurted out little due to his unprovocative nature (Udin, and Alam, 2019).

Anton Chekhov, who was born in 1860, was one of the greatest Russian playwrights and the master of modern short stories. He began his career when he started to work for humorous journals where he wrote some anecdotes. To support his family life, he wrote and sold a lot of humorous stories about contemporary Russian

life. When he was twenty-six, he had published than four hundred short stories and sketches. He got his medical degree in 1884, but he chose to write than practice as a doctor. His works influenced some authors such as Flannery O'Connor, Tennessee Williams, William Somerset Maugham, and John Cheever. Ibrahim in Sumarsono stated that most of Chekhov's works centered upon the themes of serfdom, the rise of the middle class, the downfall of the feudal system, etc (Sumarsono, 2021).

Anton Chekov is well-known as a playwright, especially for his *A Marriage Proposal*, *The Bear*, *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Cherry Orchard*. *A Marriage Proposal* was one of his comical stories and farces that made him famous quickly. For him, humour is an essential ingredient in all his works. *A Marriage Proposal* was written in 1888 – 1889 and performed on the stage for the first time in 1890. *A Marriage Proposal* takes place on a

country estate in the late 19th century Russia. The characters of this one act farce are members of the privileged class of society in Russia. They are wealthy landowners who employed peasants to work in their fields. The peasants made them able to enjoy the leisure of life. In *A Marriage Proposal*, Anton Chekhov criticized this class who tend to marry for economic reasons rather than for love and affection.

During the 19th century, Russia was considered a place of economic and social turmoil, when people in Russia were afflicted by fundamental issues like poverty and famine. In this situation the romantic ego was not the main consideration, it was yielded unanimously to satisfy the real ego. For example, marriage, especially for the upper-middle class, had become a means of acquiring economic and social stability. Marriage was not a portrayal of true love and affection anymore. In Russia at that time, the landowners tended to marry a member of the same class of society. A man from this class would get married to a woman or girl from the same class to gain economic and social stability. Marriage between different classes of people in Russia was not permitted to take place. And they got married when they were still young when they were 18 – 21 years old, in which the husband was older than the wife. A girl who was more than these ages and still single was considered a burden for her family. Bruford mentioned that the landowner's girls were expected to marry men from their own social stratum. To be left an old maid was a great misfortune. The old maid of a household waited anxiously for a marriage proposal (Bruford, 1947).

A man from this high class was forbidden to marry a woman from the lower class because it would influence the family's financial life. That is what Anton Chekhov wrote in his *A Marriage Proposal*. He wanted to display the reality that he saw in his society at that time. Anton Chekhov successfully captures this phenomenon.

A Marriage Proposal has three characters, namely; Stepan Stepanovitch Chubukov, his daughter, Natalya Stepanovna, and his neighbor, Ivan Vassiliyitch Lomov. Both of them are the landowners on their estate, and they live as neighbors. Anton Chekhov used these three

characters to criticize this class of society who tend to marry not to get love and affection but for economic and social stability reasons.

A Marriage Proposal starts when Lomov (35 years old), wearing a formal dress, visits his neighbor and friend, Chubukov. Chubukov coldly welcomes Lomov, because he thinks that Lomov comes to borrow him money. But when he knows that Lomov comes to propose to his daughter, Natalya Stepanovna, he turns his attitude drastically. He is so worried about his daughter who has not gotten married yet although she is 25 years old. He thinks that his single daughter is his burden. That is why he becomes so happy when Lomov pronounces that his coming to his house is because he wants to marry her daughter. He knows very well when his daughter gets married to Lomov, he will lose his burden, besides their marriage will put his family in a better economic and social condition, since he knows that Lomov has some properties and comes from the same class of society. Even after the quarrels between Lomov and Natalya, immediately after Lomov regains consciousness, Chubukov insists they get married, although he does not see any portrayal of love and affection between Lomov and Natalya.

All the three characters of *A Marriage Proposal* tend to consider marriage to be to acquire their economic and social stability rather than to get true love and affection. Love is a set of emotions and behaviors characterized by intimacy, passion, and commitment. It involves care, closeness, protectiveness, attraction, affection, and trust (Cherry, 2020). Both Lomov and Natasya do not have such emotions and behaviors.

Hammer in Sumarsono states that true love involves contacting the natural undivided wholeness of oneself and others. It includes either the relatively pleasant and unpleasant feelings, or the comfortable and uncomfortable experiential aspects. It needs the undivided totality of all experiential aspects of self and other individuals to whom one relates (Sumarsono, 2021). It does not consider the property, the money, and the social class. The objective is to accept each other to be united as soulmates.

According to the triangular theory of love developed by psychologist Robert Sternberg, the three components of love are intimacy, passion, and commitment (Sternberg, 1998). Love should have feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness, and bondedness. Love must have passion for both limerance and sexual attraction. Love also has both short and long commitments in which both the lovers have the decision to remain with one another, and share achievements and plans that they make together.

It is almost similar to Chekov who said that the most important thing in family life is love, sexual desire, and one flesh: everything else is unimportant and boring, however clever your calculations might be (Rayfield, 2000)

RESEARCH METHOD

To analyze this study, the writer uses the sociological approach in which the writer compares the social condition of the Russian during the 19th century when the play was written by Anton Chekhov to the theme of the play, *A Marriage Proposal*. To understand literature, we can compare and contrast the content of the literary works with the society where the works were written using the social sciences as stated by Dick Schram and Gerard Steen in their book *The Psychology and Sociology of Literature* that literature may be compared and contrasted with other forms of discourse and culture and their treatment by the social sciences (Schram, and Steen, 2001).

The study tries to find any relationship between the theme of the play with the social condition of the Russian in the 19th century, especially related to marriages among the Russian, from the lower until the high class of the society. The study tries to prove the reality that the high-class people of Russia tended to marry not based on the reason to get true love and affection but rather to get economic and social stability. The study sees the phenomenon of the trends people in Russia at that time by analyzing what the characters of *A Marriage Proposal* do in the play.

The writer uses library research by collecting some sources, interpreting, and summarizing. The play, *A Marriage Proposal*, is the main source of

data that the writer uses in this study. The writer tries to find anything from the play that displays the objective of people in Russia in getting married, especially among the middle high-class ones. The study compares what the characters think about marriages to what the Russians thought about marriages in the 19th century. The methodology used in this study is the descriptive method. The description gives the readers a clear explanation of the problems that are analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Marriage as the Way to Acquire Economic Stability

Economic stability is very important in marriage since marriage needs financial support to make the marriage stable. A married couple in which the husband or both the husband and the wife have financial income will make their marriage stable economically. By having economic stability, the couple can earn their living and will strengthen their marriage. But when they do not have economic stability, it will be dangerous because it can make them not able to maintain their marriage. Economic instability can make the couple get divorced. Economic stability is very important, but true love and affection are more important for a couple to start a marital relationship. Marriage should be based on true love and affection, not with the interest to gain economic stability. When someone wants to get married, he or she must do it because he or she loves her or him, not because he or she wants to be wealthier or richer.

Anton Chekov's *Marriage Proposal* displays how the Russian in the 19th century, especially the upper-class people, saw the marriage institution. Marriage among the Russian during the 19th century tended to be carried out based on the interest to acquire economic and social stability, in which people from the same class had to get married to the others one who came from the same class of society. People from the upper class could not get married to the people who came from the lower class. Love and affection were not so important to them. The most important thing for them was how to make them wealthier than

before and still held their social status as the upper class of society.

Marriage should be life-long bondage based on true love and affection, not a sort of relationship between a man and a woman that keeps persisting when both of the party are able to get a mutual benefit. When marriage is not life-long bondage based on true love and affection anymore, it will make those united in the family have an unhappy life. True love is the most important factor in a marital relationship that a couple must possess. When the pairs neglect this important factor, it will make their marriage like a jigsaw puzzle that will bring a tragedy to the family.

Since marriage is one of the most important moments in human life, that is why it is important to consider some conditions before people get married. There are some considerations that people take before they decide to get married, such as the personal quality of the candidate husband/wife, the appearance or looks, attitudes and beliefs, sense of humor, value system, compassion and kindness, tolerance, ambition, attitude to money and wealth, and education and professional background.

When marriage is corrupted into something such as acquiring economic and social stability, marriage will lose its real meaning. This phenomenon that took place among the Russian landowners in the 19th century was captured by Anton Chekhov in his play entitled *A Marriage Proposal*.

The marriage Proposal' starts when Lomov a visit his neighbor, Chubukov, in order to propose to his daughter, Natalya, to be his wife. Chubukov, who has been worried about the marriage of his daughter for a long time, is very happy to hear the news. Chubukov calls Natalya to the living room and has a conversation with Lomov, but unfortunately, they do not talk about the marriage proposal. They have an argument about the ownership of Oxen Meadows, a piece of land between Lomov & Tschubukov territory. This condition becomes a serious conflict between both the families and makes Lomov leave them. Knowing that Lomov actually comes to propose to her, makes her very frustrated, and asks Chubukov

to bring Lomov back to the house. When Chubukov succeeds in bringing Lomov back to their house, Natalia and Lomov get involved in a second argument about the superiority of their dogs. The second argument makes Lomov collapse. When Lomov gains consciousness, Chubukov bonds Lomov and Natalia by making them kiss each other.

Although Anthon Chekhov set the primary setting of his *Marriage Proposal* in Russia, the setting can be anywhere in the world. In Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal* economic security is more important than romance and love. All the three characters in the play namely, Lomov, Chubukovs, and Natasya are representing any man or any family in the world. It is the way how Anton Chekhov criticized his society.

The characters of the play are two neighbors, Lomov and Chubukovs. Lomov, the main character, is described as a wealthy landowner, 35 years old, has some health problems, and does not have high self-confidence. He lives close to Chubukovs and is accepted as a member of the class. He has been Chubukovs's neighbor for a long time, perhaps since Lomov was born. Chubucov is surprised when he sees Lomov coming to visit him to propose to his daughter, Natalya.

Natalya is described as a single woman, 25 years old, too old to stay single or unmarried at her age in the Russian society at that time since the Russians got married when they were still young, 18 – 21 years old. Chubukov is not really happy to welcome him. He thinks that Lomov visits him because he wants to borrow his money. But when Lomov announces that he comes to propose to his daughter, Natalya, Chubukov changes his attitude so suddenly. He becomes so friendly and happily welcomes him because he knows that Lomov is wealthy and comes from the same class as him. It is very clear here that what makes Chubukov very friendly and happy to welcome Lomov is his interest to make him his son-in-law.

The marriage proposal made by Lomov has some different motifs, depending on the interest of the stakeholders in the play. The motifs can be the efforts of the characters in acquiring economic stability. Lomov comes to propose to Natalya

because he knows that Natalya comes from the same class as his. He wants to marry her to strengthen his economic stability. He wants to be wealthier than before. On the other hand, Chubukov also has the same aim to accept Lomov's proposal. He wants to acquire his economic stability too. He wants to be wealthier by accepting Lomov's marriage proposal. He does not care both Lomov and Natalya love each other or not. He even never asks Natalya's opinion about the proposal, but he has given Lomov an answer that Natalya will agree with his marriage proposal.

Using *Marriage Proposal*, Anton Chekhov displayed the real condition of the culture practiced during the 19th century in Russia when the upper classes tried to maintain their economic stability by possessing as many properties as possible. This aspect can be seen clearly through the argument between Lomov and Chubukov and his daughter regarding the possession of the Oxen Meadows. They have a serious argument on something that is not really the main thing to argue. They are busier arguing who owns the Oxen Meadows than discussing the marriage proposal. Who is the owner of the Oxen Meadows is a more interesting topic to discuss than the marriage proposal itself.

It is obvious that their economic stability is something that is so important for them in their life. Marriage for them is one of the ways to gain economic benefits in their society. The proposal made by Lomov can have a different meaning for each of the characters in the play, but it is also possible that they have the same meaning. The Russian marriage as displayed by Chekhov in his *Marriage Proposal* can be the reality that took place in the Russian society at that time, in which marriage is the way to gain economic stability, especially among the upper class of the society.

Acquiring economic stability is the motif of all the characters in the play, starting from Lomov, Chubukov, and Natalya. Lomov and Chubukov are from the same class of society. Both of them have some properties. They want to hold their properties and become richer, for Lomov by proposing to Natalya, and for Chubukov and Natalya of course by accepting the marriage proposal made by Lomov. By proposing Natalya to

be his wife, Lomov can maintain his properties and on the other hand, he can also gain economic stability since Natalya also comes from the same class of the society. After he can get married to Natalya, he can have more stability economically. He will inherit what Chubukov has since he will be the husband of Natalya's.

CHUBUKOV. Oh my dear boy... I'm so glad, and so on.... Yes, indeed, and all that sort of thing. (Embraces and kisses LOMOV) I've been hoping for this for a long time. You have always been like a son to me. God bless you both and so on and all that. Look at me, I'm blabbering like an idiot! Such happiness! (Squeezes Lomov's cheeks)! Oh, you rascal! ... I'll go and call Natasha, and all that. (Chekhov, 1889)

Chubukovs knows that by permitting Lomov to get married to his daughter, Natalya will strengthen his economic condition since his daughter will get married to a man who comes from the same upper class. Everything that belongs to Lomov will belong to Natalya, too. He believes that it will make his position in society will be more stable economically or socially.

Chubukov never thinks about whether Natalya is in love with Lomov or not. For him, love and affection are not important, even though he thinks that it is not necessary to ask Natalya's opinion about the proposal, but he says that Natalya will absolutely agree to accept Lomov's proposal.

It is very clear that both of them care very much about what they have. They care very much about the properties that they have. It can be seen when Lomov and Natalya have a conflict. They have an argument about who is the owner of Oxen Meadows. Their properties are very important to protect from other people's interest to possess them. It is obvious that they do not really have a close and good relationship both as neighbors and the proposal suitor and the one who is proposed. In a marriage proposal, both the parties should talk seriously about what they will do to make the proposal run well and how they can bring it to the wedding party. But since they do not have love

and affection, so they then forget something important to discuss. They tend to have arguments about something that is not really important.

LOMOV. *I shall try to be brief. You must know, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, that I have long, since my childhood, in fact, had the privilege of knowing your family. My late aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited my land, always had the greatest respect for your father and your late mother. The Lomovs and the Chubukovs have always had the friendliest, and I might almost say the most affectionate, regard for each other. We are close neighbours. Of course you already know this! My land borders yours! My Oxen Meadows touch your birchwoods.*

NATALYA STEPANOVNA. *One moment, please forgive the interruption, but you said, "My Oxen Meadows..." But are they yours?*

LOMOV. *Yes, they are mine.*

NATALYA STEPANOVNA. *(Laughing) What are you talking about? Oxen Meadows are ours, not yours! (Chekhov, 1889).*

Lomov who comes to propose to Natalya cannot deliver his words. He does not talk directly to Natalya that he wants to propose to her, but he starts talking about his property and his family ties. He does not want to talk about love, romance, marriage, or something else that stimulates a woman. Until finally he enters the prohibited zone, the Oxen meadows, which leads them into a big fight. Natalya is upset to hear that Lomov says that Oxen Meadows belongs to his family. Natalya believes that it belongs to her family. Lomov is angry with Natalya and his father by referring to the Oxen meadows and getting involved in a very unpleasant argument with Natasha and Chubukov. This arguing makes his condition become worse. The pains in his body increase. Instead of trying to prove that the meadows belong to his family, Lomov starts insulting them. When the condition is becoming worse for him, both physically and mentally, he leaves the stage after being ordered by Chubukov not to come there again. Natalya and Lomov involve in the

conflict because Natalya is intolerant of those who appear to be a threat to her claims for her family's property, and it is a serious matter to her class identity.

It is not different from the motif of Lomov, Natalya also has her own motifs to agree to accept Lomov's marriage proposal. She also uses marriage as her way to gain economic and social stability. She agrees to accept Lomov's marriage proposal because Lomov comes from the upper class like her. She knows that she does not have a love relationship with him before. It is very clear when she has an argument with Lomov about who owns the Oxen Meadows and whose dog is superior. The topics of their argument are more important to discuss than the topic of the marriage proposal. A couple who will get married will talk about their plan who to hold the wedding party, and how to build their life after they get married, not arguing about something unimportant.

Marriage as the Way to Acquire the Social Stability

Acquiring social status was one of the important interests in getting married for the Russian middle and upper class in the 19th century. This is the reason that made the middle and upper-class Russian had to get married to the same class of society. They were forbidden to get married to different class people. Acquiring social status sometimes made them forget to consider something that is more important than the social status itself in marriage, namely true love and affection. True love and affection are the ones that will make their marriage stable beside the economic stability that they built after they got married. So, it is not wise if someone wants to marry a woman or a man because he or she comes from a rich family or because he or she has higher social status. Marriage should be based on true love and affection. But sometimes it takes place in the society that someone gets married because of the wealth and the social status that they will get after they get married. This kind of marriage that took place among the middle and upper class of people in Russian during the 19th century is reflected in Anton Chekhov's *Marriage Proposal*.

The reason that Lomov wants to propose to Natalya is not that he really loves her. Lomov proposes her besides gaining economic stability, he also wants to gain his social status in his society. Both Lomov and Natalya, although they are neighbors, they do not really have a love relationship before. Lomov is 35 years old while Natalya is 25 years old. If they really had had a love relationship before, they would have got married when they were still younger. Lomov comes to propose to her when he has been 35 years old. It was too late for a man to marry at the age of 35 years old at that time. Lomov proposes to her because he wants to have a normal life. He realizes that 35 years old is a critical age to stay single. He needs someone to care about him. He does not want to see society thinks negatively since he is still not married. He does not have any time anymore to look for an ideal wife and real love. He thinks that Natalya is deceived him. Marrying Natalya who he thinks is a good housekeeper, not bad looking, and well educated is good enough for him. He does not need to consider the other aspects. For him, true love is not so important to start a married family. And he chooses to propose to Natalya, besides she is in the same class as him, Natalya is 25 years old. It is too old to get married in Russian society in the 19th century. He believes that Natalya agrees to marry him.

LOMOV. *It's cold... I'm trembling all over.... I must resolve myself. I need steely determination. If I hesitate, I'm finished. If I take time to look for an ideal wife, or for real love, then I'll never get married.... (Shivers)... It's so cold! Natalya Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper. She's not bad-looking... and she went to school!....What more do I want? Oh I'm getting that ringing in my ears again!. (Drinks) In any event, I need to marry. It's a simple as that. I'm already 35— I ought to lead a quiet and regular life with no upsets (Chekhov, 1889).*

Chubukov also has the same motif in letting Lomov get married to Natalya. He wants to make his social status stable. In his society, he will be judged by the people that as a father he fails to be

a good father since he cannot get a husband for his daughter. Having a daughter who stays unmarried at the age of 25 is a burden. He wants to lose his burden as a father who has a daughter who has not gotten married yet although she has been 25 years old. In Russian society at that time, it was too late to get married to a girl at the age of 25, since at that time, girls got married when they were 18 – 21 years old. Chubukov realizes that he has that burden socially and economically. By agreeing with Lomov to get married to Natalya, we can see that Chubukov really wants his daughter to get married. A girl who stayed single until the age of 25 was a burden for a family in Russia in the 19th century. It is very clear from the moment when he is asked by Natalya to bring Lomov back. Chubukov is really embarrassed after driving Lomov away from his house. This implies how frustrated he is about his daughter's status. Chubukov fails to respect the marital institution that marriage is sacred and it needs love and affection to build a good and harmonious marriage. Again, for Chubukov, marriage is a way to gain economic and social stability, to gain wealth, and social status. It is embarrassing for being a father whose daughter has not gotten married yet although she is 25 years old. He does not want his daughter, Natalya, to be an old maid.

CHUBUKOV. *(Yells) He's coming, I told you! Oh, what a burden, Lord, to be the father of a grown-up daughter! I'll cut my throat! I will, indeed! We cursed him, we abused him and drove him out, and it's all your doing... yours! (Chekhov, 1889)*

He even guarantees Lomov that Natalya agrees to marry him although he has never asked Natalya before. He knows that when Lomov marries Natalya, it will make his family in a better social condition. So, what motivates him to agree with Lomov who wants to marry Natalya is not because they both love each other, but because of social reasons, besides the economic reasons.

Natalya also has the motif to acquire social stability. Natalya realizes that she has been 25 years old. It is too old for a girl at the age of 25 years old but stays unmarried. It is a kind of social

burden for both the daughter and the father. Natalya actually wants to get married soon. She hopes that there is a man who will propose to her. That is why she is very shocked and frustrated when she knows that Lomov actually comes to propose her, after she makes him leave her home.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA. *He came to propose to me? Oh my God! (Falls into a chair and wails) Bring him back! Oh my God! Get him back. Oh my God! Please make him come back! (Chekhov, 1889).*

For Natalya, marriage has two functions, namely to gain economic stability and social status. Natalya has been 25 years old, a frustrating age for a girl who has not married yet at this age in a society that has a custom that girls must get married at the age of 18 – 21 years old. Being an old maid is embarrassing. We can see from the quotation above how frustrated Natalya is for living so long as an unmarried woman. She starts moaning and pressing her father to bring Lomov back after she is told by her father that Lomov came to make a proposal to her. She regretted very much why she could have an argument with him. She tries to reconcile herself with Lomov. She apologizes for her claim that the Oxen meadows are hers. The argument between Lomov and Natalya on something that is not really important shows us that there is no special relationship between Natalya and Lomov. They never have a serious relationship as man and woman, or as lovers. It is true that they are neighbors, but it is clear that they never had a love relationship before Lomov proposes to Natalya. A marriage suitor must talk seriously about how they can build a good and happy marriage. Marriage must be based on true love, affection, trust, and care. How they can build a good and happy marriage if they have an argument on something that is not really important such as who owns the Oxen Meadows and whose dog is superior to the other.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA. *Forgive us, Ivan Vassilevitch, we were all a little heated... I remember now: Oxen Meadows really are yours (Chekhov, 1889).*

They try to make the situation clear to have a fresh conversation, but Lomov who cannot talk to the point makes another mistake. This takes place may be caused by the fact that he is not educated properly besides because he does not have a high self-confidence. Lomov starts talking about his dog. He says that his dog is the best one in the neighborhood Natalya loses her temper when Lomov praises his dog. She begins to talk high. Lomov just adds straw to a burning fire. This confrontation makes Lomov collapse. Seeing him collapses does not make her stop arguing and abusing him. She starts sobbing and laughing hysterically when she thinks that Lomov is dead. She realizes that she will lose him forever. Here the readers can see how frustrated she is about becoming too old for marriage.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA. *You can't even ride a horse properly! (Looks at LOMOV) Papa, what's the matter with him? Papa! Look, papa! (Screams) Ivan Vassilevitch!.... He's dead!*
CHUBUKOV. *Oh... What is it? What's the matter?*
NATALYA STEPANOVNA. *(Wails) He's dead... dead! (Chekhov, 1889).*

The conflicts between Lomov and Natalya take place because they do not have immaturity in solving a conflict. Chubukov's immaturity as a father also has a role in making the situation get worse. When he has Lomov visits his family, Chubukov does not tell her daughter why Lomov comes. He does not tell her that Lomov comes to propose to her to marry him. Instead of telling her about the marriage proposal, he tells her that a merchant come for his goods. It leads to ambiguity and makes both of them in a serious conflict. As a good and mature father, he should have told Natalya why Lomov visited them. He should have told her that Lomov came to propose to her. If he did so, there would be an argument between Lomov and Natalya.

NATALYA STEPANOVNA. *Well, hello there! It's only you! Papa said, "Go inside there's a merchant come by to collect his goods." How*

have you been, Ivan Vassilevitch? (Chekhov, 1889).

Considering a suitor as a merchant who comes for his goods is describing that Chubukov as a father is not mature at his age. It describes that he does not respect the marriage institution. He reduces the concept of marriage to purchasing goods. It is the stereotype of the social value of 19th-century Russian society that the play wants to capture. This ambiguity leads to the misunderstanding between Natalya and Lomov. If Natalya knew that Lomov came to propose to her, she would help Lomov to talk to the point. But because she does not know that Lomov comes to propose to her, she does not ask Lomov directly what makes him come.

Realizing that he can lose his burden and frustration as a father by letting Natalya marry Lomov, makes him press Lomov to marry her when Lomov gets consciousness. He does not think about whether Natalya really loves Lomov or not. And it is clear that the relationship between Lomov and Natalya tends to lead to a serious problem since they have a big argument on the day of the marriage proposal. For him, conformism, banality, pride, and aggressiveness are the most important things for him, just as what the Russian did in the 19th century. It was their family tradition. They can respect even the bad things in their class. That is why Chubukov presses Lomov to marry Natalya after he gets sober from his death because of the fight with Natalya. For Chubukov it does not matter that Lomov has some weaknesses such as he cannot talk to the point, does not have high self-confidence, and has a physical and psychological problems. He does not care that both Lomov and Natalya have some differences. He does not care that Lomov and Natalya start their relationship with a big fight on a silly problem that they actually do not need to argue. For him, their marriage will help him to lose his burden and his frustration as a father with a mature daughter who has not gotten married yet.

CHUBUKOV. *Now listen, just hurry up and get married (He puts LOMOV'S hand into his daughter's) She's willing and all that and soon. I give you my blessing but please just*

leave me in peace! (Chekhov, 1889).

All the three characters in the play Marriage Proposal have the same objectives with the proposal. The three characters besides they want to acquire economic stability, also want to have social stability. Lomov does not want to be an unmarried man all his life. He is 35 years old and unmarried. It is a burden for him in a society that sees people from their economic and social status. Chubukov also wants to have a son-in-law. He hopes that his daughter will get married soon in order that he can lose his burden as a father. Having a daughter who has not married yet at the age of 25 is embarrassing. He does not want his daughter to be an old maid. He has been frustrated as a father. That is why, he is very happy when he knows that Lomov comes to propose to his daughter, Natalya. He does not care that both Lomov and Natalya never fall in love with each other. He neglects the marriage institution. Marriage should be based on true love and affection, not as a way to acquire economic and social stability. When marriage is corrupted with the intention to acquire economic and social stability, it will be to risk that they will have a serious problem in their marriage. True love and affection are two things that can make the marriage last forever. If they don't base their married on true love and affection, it is possible that they will not able to manage their marriage which will lead to a divorce.

CONCLUSION

Anton Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal* has a close relationship with the condition of the society when the play was written. It has successfully captured the tendency of the Russian in the 19th century, especially the landowners to get married to maintain or gain their economic and social stability rather than to get true love and affection as displayed by the characters of the play.

The characters of the play, Lomov, Chubukov and Natalya tend to put their pride in their family the first place than the other things. They get upset easily when their pride and their family ties are disturbed or abused by others.

Marriage institution for them is just like a way to unify the wealth of the two families. They do not really think and consider the other factors to starting a marriage such as true love and affection, the personal quality of the husband/wife, the appearance or looks, attitudes and beliefs, sense of humor, value system, compassion, and kindness, tolerance, ambition, attitude to money and wealth, and education and professional background.

For Lomov, marriage besides being a means to gain economic and social stability is the only way for him to put him in a secure position as he is 35 years old and has some psychological and psychical problems. By marrying Natalya, there will be someone to care about him and save his destiny from being an old unmarried man.

For Natalya, marriage is not different from what Lomov thinks. Marriage is the solution for her to make her free herself from her father and her society. By marrying Lomov she can be free from her frustration of being an old man.

For Chubukov the marriage of Lomov and Natalya makes him lose his burden and his frustration as a father who has a daughter who is still unmarried at the age of 25 years old, an uncommon situation in Chekhov's time. So, *A Marriage Proposal* is successfully used by the author as a satire to criticize the middle class's attitude and point of view on the marriage institution.

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