

Realism on Setting of Chekhov's Drama

The research is about the compatibility between setting and theme of *The Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov. The setting of the play, from the heart of Prozorovs' house in the first act to the last act, the backyard of the same house gives the thematic meaning to the play. The play is about clash between old aristocracy and the recently neo-rich people. The proposed goal of the researcher is to hypothesize that Chekhov's play *The Three Sisters* represents the reality of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Russian socio-economic-cultural transformation through the changing setting of act I to act IV. The change in setting reflects the meaning.

In Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, the first act begins in the drawing-room. It asserts the real life of aristocrat and of the then Russia. Their grand-party begins in the first act. The party shows that the three sisters live through feudal culture. The second act takes to the bed-sitting room. The third is in the bedroom of Olga and Irina. Natasha captures Irina's room. So, Olga and Irina share one bedroom with two beds with curtain around. The last act is in the backyard of the house. It takes three sisters far from Prozorovs' house. It means the changing settings reflect the social, cultural, economic, physical, and mental setting of Russia. The three sisters seem mature by age. Irina is in 20 in the beginning of the play. After four year, her beauty is no more with her. In the same way, Olga is 28 in the act I. Olga and Irina plea to go to Moscow. But they are tied to their place. Though they dream of past and future, they live in the present. They admit life by work though they have no beauty of blood and flesh. So, *The Three Sisters* concocts to represent the reality of life through shifting setting. All the characters seem affected from the transformations of Russia.

The setting of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* reflects the changes. The changes take place in the life of the characters. From the obstacles of life, they learn to live on reality that visualizes the life of common audience as well. To expend the feature of play the

researcher will take help of realism, analyzed by David Rush as a theoretical insight in this research work. How do the different settings of acts differentiate the characters' life and establish compatibility between setting and meaning? Realism is the philosophy of window through which we see the world of real, natural, cultural, social, economical, and historical pictures that match with common audience of the world. David Rush defines "realism" as a style that "attempts to depict life on stage as it is actually lived by the members of the audience" (11). For Rush, realism shows so-called everyday events happening to people's life as logical and believable. Rush clarifies that "realism is to examine the world as a scientific phenomenon ... concerned with the effect a person's environment has upon characters' development" (200).

Indian philosopher Dharmendra Nath Shastri defines realism as lived by the world.

Shastri denotes:

Realism holds as already noted, that the mind apprehends an external object which exists irrespective of its being apprehended by the mind. It is not created in any way by the mind, nor is it modified by its act of perceiving. It is common to all perceiving minds. It exists even when it is not perceived.

Moreover, the perception of it is direct and immediate, and not through the mediacy of an idea or sensum as the representationist holds. (39-40)

Shastri cleverly explains about realism. Realism is base for elaborating Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. *The Three Sisters* is direct reflection of Russian transformations of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Researcher Yubaraj Subedi quotes that Chekhov himself clearly says "everything on the stage be just as complicated and at the same time as simple as it is in life" (7). Subedi discusses Chekhov's statement that drama "should be written in which people arrive, go away, have dinner talk about the weather and play cards" as exact life "as it is" (7). Subedi elaborates realistic drama focusing Henry, Joice E. is well crafted of existing

ordinary people “in a particular time and place” (7). Such point is applicable to find out co-existing meaning of setting of *The Three Sisters*.

Setting is the overall environment created for the drama to give the meaning. Lee A. Jacobus clarifies that “setting is all details of time, location, and environment relating to a play” (1801). Setting is the backbone of the drama. So, it is very important to explore the meaning of the drama. For Jacobus, the setting of a play should include first, time and place. Second, the scenery as the physical elements that appear on stage to vivify the authors stage direction. Characters are the living figures to move on the play. Jacobus in *The Bedford Introduction to Drama* defines character as “any person appearing in a drama or narrative” (1796). Theme is the main idea of the drama the dramatist sprays through the play. Jacobus considers theme of a play as central concerned message. Language is used for dialogue. Realist plays’ dialogue is simple used by ordinary people. The researcher discerns on those elements but tries to differentiate meaning of the settings.

Drama becomes meaningful with unity of time, place and action. Hazard Adams simplifies the Greek philosopher Aristotle’s *Poetics* that emphasizes “unities of action, time, and place” (205). For him, Aristotle gets three unity of drama as one plot, one setting and covered the action of one day. Aristotle defines reality as “the process by which a form manifests itself through the concrete and by which the concrete takes on meaning working in accordance with ordered principles” (49).

Different ages have different setting of play. In *Elements of Drama* Robert Scholes et al. eds. establish that Shakespeare’s plays were performed in “open-air structure without sets or lights of any kind. Thus the spectators of Shakespeare’s time could not have witnessed the “realistic” illusion of midnight street scene...” (778). In this way, Raymond William clarifies the setting of Elizabethan period. It seems “the banks of a canal in Venice with houses built upon either side” (40). Elizabethan stage “was a theater of powerful effect, and contemporary

diaries indicate that the audiences delighted in it”(Jacobus, 8). In this way Restoration, Neo-classical, Realistic dramas’ setting have advanced abroad. David Rush discusses about setting of realism, expressionism, absurdism and so forth in brief in *A Student Guide to Play Analysis*. Rush concerns on idea of hallucinations and distortions of central character’s mind is the setting in expressionism. The world of cold, inhumanity, and fear take place. On the comparison of other ‘isms’, absurdism dismisses the setting as “vague and superficially unspecific” (237). Mainly setting explores the meaning of the absurdist drama that behind the curtain the world is illogical and overwhelming. However, the researcher chooses realism to focus on the compatibility between setting and meaning.

Since the audience believe on play as realistic. Jacobus adduces that the Russian Anton Chekhov cultivates realistic plays. Jacobus accepts:

The Russian Anton Chekhov’s plays *Three Sisters*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Cherry Orchard* written at the turn of the twentieth century, are realistic as well, but... patient examinations of character rather than primarily problem plays.... Chekhov is aware of social change in Russia, especially the changes that revealed a hitherto repressed class of peasants evolving into landowners and merchants. *The Cherry Orchard* is suffered with an overpowering sense of inevitability through which Chekhov depicts the conflict between the necessity for change and a nostalgia for the past. (10-1)

In *The Three Sisters* such conflicts depict the setting’s compatible meaning. Jacobus convinces us that Chekhov’s dramas are complicated as life itself. There is difficulty to find out who are the heroes and villains.

Anton Chekhov begins *The Three Sisters* at 12 o’clock at midday of fifth May. In *Three Sisters*, there is grand-party on the occasion of name-day of the youngest sister Irina of Prozorov sisters. The first act is also the day of the first anniversary of their father’s death.

Prozorovs sisters seem in the heart of the house. They remember their late father. Battery commander, lieutenants, captain and other guests present in the party. It represents the reality of feudal culture. In the second act, entrance of Natasha in the Prozorovs' family disguises their feudality. Time setting is 8 o'clock in the evening means invitation of capitalism captured by individuals. In the bed-sitting room action takes place with presentation of few characters because of Natasha's interfairness. Natasha captures the rule of Prozorov's house. The third act compiles at cubicle at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. The Province town gets fire. It declares that aristocracy is burning. Lastly the act four once again holds at 12 o'clock in midday but at the backyard of the house. The setting is the transformation of closeness to furtherness. Tuzenbakh's death on offstage duel reflects the reality of birth, life, and further death. Soldiers shift from the county town. With the help of Andrew's mortgaging the house, Natasha grabs key of rule among Prozorov sisters. The researcher analyses the reality by differentiating the setting of acts.

Views of Critics on *The Three Sisters*

Numerous critics have examined Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* from different perspectives. Rush clarifies the setting of *The Three Sisters* in *A Student Guide to Play Analysis* in terms of realism:

You'll notice in Anton Chekhov's play *The Three Sisters* that the first act is in a drawing room, the second act in a bed-sitting room, the third in a cubicle, and the last in the backyard.... each act shows how the fortunes of the Prozorov sisters grow lower and lower, as their increasingly narrow world is gradually taken away from them by the conniving woman who marries their brother. When you put these two ideas together, you can see that they are gradually moving away from the "heart" of their house, until they wind up being forced "outside" it. (8)

David Rush argues that the setting of the play is not fixed on departure of physical location. Rush means setting also "refers to the culture and society in which the play occurs"(9). Rush asserts that "the three sisters are living in a time when Russia has undergone large social changes. The time when old ways were giving way to new, and newly rich people were encroaching on the lives of the old wealthy. Determination of the characters' behaviours depends on large social changes. Behaviours are more than the actual rooms themselves.

Setting is imaginary. The characters on setting create their art not by own. They perform on the basis of writer or producers' direction. David Magarshak says about reality that:

While tangible reality and tangible truth, in which man could not help believing, existed, the creative work of the actor could not be said to have began. But when the creative 'if', that is, the would-be, imaginary truth make its appearance, the actor discovered that he was able to believe in it as sincerely, it not with even greater enthusiasm, as real truth. (227)

Characters have identity of other as dramatist sets. They perform acts on the stage written or visual as guided by writer. So, their own mind work on by others. Though this performance links reality as Magarshak discusses.

Chekhov by the three Sisters in a county town gives meaning of rising social and economic transformation. The three sisters seem unable of warming their social and economic status. Natasha covers on these status with middle class power. Rush clarifies about the performance on the stage and play in the text form. For Rush, setting of the writer is different of performing actors. Chekhov's play is in the video form at 136 East 13th Street, East village directed by Auslin Pendleton. Ben Brantley argues in "Russian Ennui, American Iliad" that video's running time of whole performance takes 3 hours, whereas Chekhov's this

play is of four years. Realism represents the setting of play as people live. In three hours movie completes actual events of particular life of people. Movie takes major scenes. Motion pictures moves through technology. So, the settings of play and movie seem different. Movie covers vast area wheather the earth or sky whereas play takes particular time and place.

Following Bertolt Brecht dramatic theory of epic theatre, Rush clarifies that epic play takes place over a long period of time with long performance through varieties of locations. However, certain scenes with particular crisis show to the audiences. In *The Three Sisters*, the play begins in the snow falls. The second act begins after 18 months. Natasha has married and has a baby of Andrew. In the third act in May shows the big fire destroys the town socially and economically. The last act is in autumn means the departure of colonels. Three sisters have tragi-comic lives once again. They live on hope of no any dream but for reality.

For F.L. Lucas, Chekhov's play is matched with Horace Walpole's wise saying that a comedy is to think whereas a tragedy is to feel. Chekhov's play is tragi-comedy. The three sisters seem drops of tears in their eyes. Anfisa cheers of finding room with Headmistress Olga though she is poor-old character in the play.

The three sisters are longing for Moscow means expectations of past setting. Lucas explores that "the youngest sisters, Irina is just celebrating her twentieth 'nameday', which is also the first anniversary of their father's death" (83). Lucas states that they seem unhappy as poor Ovid when banished by Augustus to Tomi on the Black Sea two thousand years before. In the same way, three sisters dream to return the beloved Moscow. Because Moscow means "Jerusalem, a Mecca, an Eldorado, a lost Eden" (83). They seek lost happiness and childhood security of Moscow is expecting of feudalism society.

Transformation of economic situation takes place in this play *The Three Sisters*.

Researcher Babu Ram Neupane examines Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* on the perspective of

the crisis of socio-political transformation in Russia. *The Three Sisters* gives the meaning of crisis on socio-political changes.

Combination of different cultural backgrounds invite transformation. Researcher Dinesh Kumar Bhandhaki argues about decadence of aristocracy from the perspective of Marxism. As settings of *The Three Sisters* gradually change through acts shows the downfall of aristocrats and rise of middle class people.

Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* highlights the struggle of characters. Researcher Yubraj Subedi discusses this drama as a journey of existential suffering to social salvation. Subedi emphasizes the characters awareness of life:

To achieve the meaningful existence they[characters] have only one option left that is to have faith and they conclude that their suffering will turn into joy for those who come after them, there will be peace and happiness upon earth and those who live now will be remembered kindly and blessed. (1)

As setting shifts, characters' eternal and external maturity clarifies this play as realistic. For Subedi, characters are centered on achieving their goal meanwhile the researcher comments on setting to explore compatible meaning with setting.

Setting of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* changes through acts. It makes characters alone, heterogeneity, self-reflexive, celebration of fragmentation, frustration, and so on. Researcher Krishna Kumar Shrestha discusses about anticipating postmodernism in Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. Shrestha comments on meaningful life of people. Shrestha argues about the issues of postmodernism found in this play:

This [play] depicts the condition of the contemporary Russian people. All the characters in *Three Sisters* have a dream to go to Moscow and want to make their lives better, but they can't because they are dream driven characters; they can't do anything significant.... issues of contemporary Russian like

fragmented, frustrated or alienated to each other, the social transformations, individual significance and so on. (abstract)

Shrestha examines the societal and individual problems of moving Russia in course of time. Chekhov's depiction of reality identifies most of the issues of 'isms'.

However, Chekhov's *Three Sisters* touches multi-perspectives. The researcher's intention is to find out worthy meaning of the setting of the play with reflection of realism as David Rush analyses. In terms of realist drama, Jacobus in *The Bedford Introduction to Drama* defines "Drama is the illusion of reality. Different ages have different approaches to represent the reality onstage" (2).

Realism on drama's setting refers psychic space. For Rose Wheyman, "the stage is not just a literal space; it's a psychic space, as well" (144). Setting shows the hidden meaning of psychology that changes characters through changing setting.

Chekhov's *Three Sisters* evaluates deeper meaning. Savely Senderovich underlines "what looks incidental in Chekhov is incidental only on the surface but actually is an invitation to step into the region of deeper meaning" (10). Senderovich conveys us that incidental details are superdetermined in regard to the motives of the surface events. The Chekhov's incidental is the most non-incidental that can be in a work of literary art. Senderovich adds that the proof is in the pudding.

Chekhov's setting of *Three Sisters* broadens meaning. Stuart Young argues that "Aronson's understanding is symptomatic of a more general inclination to read the entire scenography of *Three Sisters*—its sequence of changing settings—somewhat in the Ibsenian manner as a direct, physical correlation of the sisters' story" (158). Young asserts that Hence Hahn's reason is:

[T]he sisters' "gradual loss of power in their own house is externalized in the visual details" of these settings: in the darkening, more ominous mood as the

action shifts from the sunny daylight of Act One, first to the winter evening of Act Two and then the deepest night of Act Three, and from the grand, spacious interior of the first two acts—the drawing-room and adjoining ballroom—to the rather claustrophobic bedroom shared by Olga and Irina. The sense of increasing despair is also apparently emphasized by the fire raging in the town, visually represented by the red glow at a window visible through a doorway. Accordingly the outdoor setting of Act Four, with only the terrace of the house visible on the right, is commonly interpreted as making literal the sisters' effective expulsion from the house. (158)

The acts take different time and place of the same Prozorovs' house to backyard of the play show the gradual changes. The backyard provides meaning of sadness. Young clarifies Hahn's idea that “receding perspectives of the long avenue of firs, the river and the forest” means the expression of the profound sadness that characterizes the play. They “give more the feeling of a crisis being over than of anything being solved” (158).

The Three Sisters is realistic play of Chekhov. Chekhov has used common characters in this play. Raymond William conforms that Chekhov's work is “really lifelike and free from any tiresome moralizing” (144-5). William emphasizes reality on Chekhov's play.

Oliver Taplin generates ideas of realism that “if the events are ugly, they should be seen in their ugliness—this is true to life” (145). Taplin confirms reality as it is. The declining feudality may be boredom for supporters. Though the reality shows the true life.

The researcher gets the idea that setting is the important element of drama in which the compatible meaning ties. Observing all those ideas of scholars, the researcher finds no relevant enquiry that analyzes the setting of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* to fulfill the necessity of meaning enquiry. So, the researcher explores the compatibility between setting and meaning in this field. The main point is to explore the answers of given questions. How

does the play give compatibility between setting and meaning? Why do different setting of four acts have different meaning? Does setting have compatible meaning of setting? These questions are unanswerable in above researches. So, the researcher needs to find out those answers in this research.

The next section is analysis of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* from the perspective of realism as David Rush discusses in *A Student Guide to Play Analysis*. The researcher will analyze the compatibility between setting and meaning of Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*.

Co-existential Meaning of Setting in Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*

Realist drama takes particular time, place, person that represent reality of intended audience. Anton Chekhov's second last play *The Three Sisters* elaborates the changes of the then Russian life of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The changes demonstrate through settings that open compatible meaning with setting. The setting of *The Three Sisters* declares the reality of past as fossils that represent feudal society, culture, economy, history, and so on. Moscow is the setting of past for the three sisters. They live on the changing setting. The dream world is easy to dream whereas it is very difficult to grab that world. It brings us on the reality in which world we live. Through the changing setting, the three sisters consider their real life.

The changing settings cultivate the characters' mental, physical, cultural, social, and economic status that fit for the newly observed world. The first act has environment of aristocracy. In the drawing-room, feudal based characters enjoy on the youngest sister Irina's name-day party. Natasha fiancée of Andrew, later wife feels insulted in that party. As setting changes in act two, she enters in Prozorovs' family. She has a baby Bobik. She cancels carnival party. She captures Irina's healthy room to dismiss feudal status. She brings her middle class culture. She has extra-marital affair with Protopopov, boss of her husband. Midday of fifth May shows the reality of feudality whereas evening at 8 o'clock in the second act invites bourgeoisie rule. Feudality seems in downfall. Capitalism seems to rise on. Masha mistreats her husband Kuligin. Her affection towards a battery commander Vershinin degenerates high social strata of feudal culture. In the act three, the fire catches the county town. Olga and Irina share a room with two beds. All characters seem asleep at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. Natasha gets out Anfisa, an old nurse from the Prozorovs' house. She avoids poor. Capitalism gives chances to labourers. Anfisa of 80 has outdated for that house. The third act shows the burning feudal belief. The last act in the backyard in midday, characters

change life. They live on reality. They leave dreaming of imaginary world. Soldiers leave the provincial town. Solyony kills Tuzenbakh offstage in duel. Irina's dream of marrying with Tuzenbakh and return to Moscow ends. She changes herself. She becomes teacher in that town. Andrew mortgages house. Natasha grabs money. Three sisters get no share of Prozorovs' house though they have right to get. They seem deprived of their brother's love. So the last act declares the changes as complete. The character's life seems changed. That's why different settings of different acts give different meaning. This reflects different real life of common people. People change mentally and physically through changing real setting.

Realism shows different reality of setting that where and when drama written.

Realism declares various meaning of changing setting. For improvement, the researcher analyses David Rush's argument. Rush means reality of different settings are:

If we're looking at a world governed by the laws of cause and effect, clearly important causes are [place and time]. A woman born in a London slum in the nineteenth century will turn out very different than a woman born in a mansion in New York City in the twentieth; and realistic play will be likely to make full use of these differences. Therefore, the specific environment needs to be examined very carefully. (200)

Russia changes reality of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century focused in Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. Three sisters and other characters are from feudal culture. On the other hand, Natasha is of middle class. Their settings of social, political, economic, cultural perspective are different. So meeting of those perspectives brings crisis. The new reality wins the changing reality. It means changes take the new setting with different meaning. Natasha grabs all the rights of Prozorovs' family. Three sisters get outside of that house. So, changes in reality of Russian life seems in this play. Leaving dream world, feudal characters accept work for real living.

The first act seems gloomy with feudal culture. Social gathering in Irina's name-day party. From drawing-room ballroom is seen. The description of setting shows the blooming life of Irina. Time and place setting is well-furnished "Prozorovs' house ... a ballroom [T]he sun is shining cheerfully. A table ...being laid for lunch" (Act I 191).

Setting covers wearings of characters. The wearings admit culture through setting. Three sisters' dress-up represent feudal culture as expensive rituals. Their economic condition seems strong with giving grand party. Their politics show feudal society as top among others.

[Olga], wearing the regulation dark blue... high-school teacher, carries on correcting... exercise books, standing up or walking about.... Masha, in a black dress, sits with her hat on lap reading a book. Irina, in a white dress, stands lost in thought. (Act I 191)

Irina realizes her life so radiant. She hopes to go to Moscow. Moscow is the setting of their happiness.

Natasha's wearings of pink dress with a green sash represents middle class family. Olga insults Natasha that she is not equal to their culture.

Olga. ... [In a horrified undertone.]You're wearing a green sash. That's quite wrong, my dear.

Natasha. Why? You mean it's unlucky?

Olga. No, but it just doesn't go with your dress, it looks odd somehow.

Natasha. [in a tearful voice]. Does it? But it isn't really green, you know, it's more a sort of dull colour. [Follows Olga into the ballroom.] (Act I 209)

In the first act, Natasha seems weak. Her middle class power asserts weak culturally, economically, socially, and so on. Later acts make her strong in the Prozorovs' family.

Chekhov's play represents part of a whole. The particular scenes of changing setting link the whole play. Time of setting gives light's meaning. In act I, Time setting is at midday "[o]utside the sun shining cheerfully" (Act I 17). This means feudal characters live their culture. American theatre designer Lee Simonson realizes that lighting focuses on particular place of setting. The emphasis on particular place and time informs different meaning.

Simonson lives Appia's view:

The flexibility of stage lighting, as Appia envisaged it, relates it fundamentally to every movement that an actor makes; the whole setting by fluctuations of light and shade moves with him and follows the shifting dramatic emphasis of a particular scene or sequence of scenes... alternately in light and shadow... respective roles become more or less important... any portion of a setting—a building, a tree, the background of a room—can actually be brought forth or wiped out as its dramatic importance in the scene increases or diminishes. (36)

In the second act, Natasha enters into the stage with candles in her hand. The light reflects the reality that Natasha invites new system as capitalism. It is the evening at 8 o'clock for feudality whereas Natasha lights house with candle light. This gives chance to enter individual rules. After a year and a half she has a baby Bobik. She establishes her own authority slowly and gradually. The second act is in the evening at 8 o'clock. Setting of act two justifies the feudalism is going on dark:

The scene is the same as in Act One. It is eight o'clock in the evening. From the street comes the faint sound of an accordion. The stage is unlit. Natasha comes in wearing a dressing-gown and carrying a candle. She crosses the stage and stops by the door leading into Andrew's room. (Act II 212)

The setting of second act favours realistic life of middle class family. Natasha comes with candle. She invites light of middle class. She claims Irina's room because it is the best room for the sun light. That room is healthy for her baby. So, she narrows down feudalism by capturing Irina's room. Olga and Irina have to share one room.

Irina. Is Bobik asleep?

Natasha. Yes, but he's rather restless. By the way, dear, I keep meaning to ask you, but either you've been out or I've been too busy. I think Bobik's nursery's too cold and damp. But your room's just right for a baby.

Darling, would you mind moving in with Olga for a bit? (Act II 229)

Irina's happiness narrows down in Act second. She seems longing for Moscow. She says "[alone on the stage, with intense longing]. Moscow, Moscow, Moscow!" (Act II 231). She searches past setting which is going far for three sisters.

Natasha devalues their cultural norms. She establishes her system. She goes with Protopopov leaving her sick child. She undermines her husband with extra-marital affair with Protopopov.

Natasha. Protopopov? Oh, isn't he a scream? Protopopov's turned up, wants to know if he can take me for a drive. [Laughs.] Aren't men funny! [The door-bell rings again.] And there's someone else. Perhaps I might go for a little spin just for a quarter of an hour. [To the Maid.] Tell him I'm coming. [The door-bell rings.] There goes the bell again, it must be Olga. [Goes out.] (Act II 229-30)

Natasha leaves ill baby in the cold house. She refreshes her life with her own culture. She seems careless of prestige. Erika Fischer-Lichte in *History of European Drama and Theatre* inhabits *Oedipus Rex* drama's setting as exile. Characters dishonour other's life. Mixture of meaning emerges of changing setting. Fischer-Lichte complains:

The fall into barbarism has no cathartic effect for the person concerned and is powerless to constitute identity. When Agave awakes from her madness, recogni[z]es her son's head in the seeming lion's head, and gains insight into the terrible act of killing her own son, there is no possibility that she can find any meaning in it – as Oedipus did after he recogni[z]ed himself as one who had killed his father and committed incest with his mother. Agave's family – which represents all human society – is dissolved; the family members are dissipated across the world in different directions, into exile. (31)

Chekhov's play disrespects of exile. Though the three sisters exile from Prozorov's house. The characters get lesson on living reality. However, all the characters move on their directions. They live on their real life. Natasha takes different direction. She goes with the boss of county council office. Her illbehaviour on feudal culture demonstrates her middle class behaviour.

Natasha. [crosses the ballroom wearing a fur coat and a fur hat. She is followed by the Maid]. I'll be back in half an hour, I'm just going for a little airing. [Goes out]. (Act II 231)

The realistic life of feudal seems different of bourgeoisie. Natasha's culture makes the three sisters restless to live on their own culture. As the setting changes so the reality reflects such changes:

Irina [sobbing]. What's become of everything, where's it all gone? Where is it? Oh my God, I've forgotten, forgotten everything, my head's in such a whirl. I can't remember the Italian for "window"—or "ceiling" either. I'm always forgetting things, I forget something everyday. And life is

slipping away, it will never, never come back again, and we shall never go to Moscow either, I just know we shan't. (Act III 242)

The characters feel of being far from feudality. Vershinin seems aware of change:

Vershinin. [after some thought]. Now how can I put it [death]? I think everything on earth is bound to change bit by bit, in fact already is changing before our very eyes. Two or three hundred years, or a thousand years if you like—it, doesn't really matter how long—will bring in a new and happy life. We'll have no part in it of course, but it is what we're now living for, working for, yes and suffering for. We're creating it, and that's what gives our life its meaning, and its happiness too if you want to put it that way. (Act II 219)

Vershinin states that reality is not fixed. Rsearcher Shrestha says that for Jacques Derrida “meaning is never static, never given one for all. Instead, meaning changes over times and with changing contexts” (33). Setting of act III begins in a cubicle. A cubicle is the Olga's bedroom. That room is also shared by Irina. Irina has to leave her own room for Bobik's health. It gives different meaning. Olga and Irina lose their power of politics. They accept the politics of Natasha.

Chekhov elaborates the light as fire in Act III. The old rituals are burning and the coming morning as setting is inviting realm of new rituals:

The bedroom shared by Olga and Irina. There are beds, left and right, with screens round them. It is between two and three o'clock in the morning. Off stage church bells are ringing the alarm, a fire having broken out some time previously. Obviously no one in the house has gone to bed yet. Masha is lying on a sofa wearing a black dress as usual. Olga and Anfisa come in. (Act III 232)

The feudality is burning in this act. The coming morning at 2 or 3 o'clock raises life of middle class. The dream of Irina, Olga, and Andrew for Moscow burns with fire. Their dream world seems burnt. They come on real life in which they live. Though Irina dreams that she will marry the Baron, her aim is to grab feudality. She says:

I respect the baron, Olga darling, I think very highly of him, only do let's go to Moscow. We must go. Please! There's nowhere in the world Moscow. Let's go, Olga, do let's go! (Act III 247)

Irina's dream changes with the news that Baron has been killed in a duel. She changes her ideal world. She comes in real life as setting shifts in the backyard in the act IV. She philosophies:

Irina. [puts her head on Olga's breast]. What is all this for? Why all this suffering? The answering will be known one day, and there will be no more mysteries left, but till then life must go on, we must work and work and think of nothing else. I'll go off alone tomorrow to teach at a school and spend my whole life serving those who may need me. It's autumn now and it will soon be winter, with everything buried in snow, and I shall work, work, work. (Act IV 264)

The last act changes feudal society to capitalistic. All the characters change through acts. They realize their real life to settle as real. This act locates at midday in the backyard. This represents time and place of changing realism.

The last act shows changing culture, economic, politics, and so forth. Act IV begins in the backyard that reflects the feudalism changed into capitalism. All the characters come to their destiny:

The old garden belonging to the Prozorov's house. A long avenue of firs with a view of the river at the end.... On it a table with bottles and glasses—

someone has obviously just been drinking champagne. Midday. From time to time people from the street go through the garden towards the river. Five of six soldiers march briskly past. (Act IV 248)

The soldiers' transformation to other places means the shift of feudalism. They say good-bye to the provincial town. The last act shows everything in changed form.

All characters change their social, mental, political, economical perspectives through changing setting. George W. Brandt in *Modern Theories of Drama* defines "'realism' is a slippery concept which means different things in different contexts" (XVII). Brandt clarifies realism that "has been the accepted convention of Western drama for the greater part of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. It largely reflects a positivist outlook, a belief in science and technology, a materialistic, urban, industrial culture" (XIX). Natasha follows these culture from which context she comes.

Natasha. [to the Maid]. Now what was it? Oh yes. Mr. Protopopov's going to keep an eye on Sophie and my husband may as well push Bobik's pram. Children do make such a lot of work. [To Irina.] What a shame you're leaving tomorrow, Irina. Why don't you stay on another week? ... now you're leaving. I'll move Andrew into your room along with his violin. He can scrape away in there as much as he likes and we'll put Sophie in his room. What a heavenly little girl. Isn't she a wonderful child? She gave me such a sweet look today and said "Mummy." (Act IV 263)

Natasha places Andrew dishonouring him. Masha mistreats her husband Kuligin. She enjoys with Vershinin who has two little daughters and wife. As changes takes place she feels her fault. Kuligin saves her from scattered. So, the mentality of characters changes. Whatever problems come, they solve patiently.

Kuligin. [embarrassed]. Never mind, let her cry, let her. Dear Masha, good, kind Masha, you're my wife, and I'm still happy in spite of everything. I'm not complaining or blaming you at all, as Olga here can witness. Let's go back to living as we used to, and I won't breathe so much as a word or hint— (Act IV 261-2)

Through changes in setting Chekhov portrays culture as unfixable. Culture is changeable. Chris Barker ignores the argument of Raymond William that culture is a “whole way of life” (16). For justification of culture, Barker professes:

Culture can be thought of as the continual hybridization of meaningful practices or performances in a global context. Thus, culture is a matter less of locations with roots than of hybrid and creolized cultural routes in global space. Cultures are not pure, authentic and locally bounded; rather, they are syncretic and hybridized products of interactions across space. (16)

Culture in realism reflects social, economic, political pictures of setting. The changes in settings give the meaning of hybridization of feudal and capitalistic society. Characters of this play live in present culture. They remember their past culture. It means they live on the reality of hybridization. They accept the mixture of culture.

The Three Sisters seems dynamic through changes in settings. This play assumes dynamic socio-economic reality. Lois Tyson argues that " Marxist analysis of human events and productions focus on relationships among socioeconomic classes, both within a society and among societies, and it explains all human activities in terms of the distribution and dynamics of economic power" (54). Natasha as a member of middle class receives dynamic economic power. Protopopov becomes the owner of mortgaged house of Prozorovs. Socio-economic-cultural environment of different class "divide people in ways that are much more

significant than differences in religion, race, ethnicity, or gender" (54). Realist drama defines reality through changes on those conditions.

Pierre Corneille philosophies that Aristotle in his *Poetics* takes one action, one place and time miscalculates the meaning of drama. Corneille includes "...the spectator is not at all disturbed, that what is performed before him in two hours might actually be able to take place in two hours, and that what he is shown in a stage setting which does not change might be limited to a room or a hall depending on a choice made beforehand; but that is so awkward..." (211). Corneille means stage should expand. So, setting becomes easy to find meaning of drama.

The separation of setting in Prozorovs' house to backyard as a whole explores suitable meaning compatible with setting. Tyson supports the idea in *Critical Theory Today* that "If a text has an organic unity, then all of its formal elements work together to establish its theme, or the meaning of the work as a whole" (138). Chekhov's this play as a whole reflects the Russian revolution that brings consequences after crisis. Feudalist characters are defeated by few middle class characters.

The changes succeed on particular movement of environment. The setting of changing season declares the meaning of particular society with different perspectives—Social, cultural, economical, political and so forth. Researcher Neupane quotes the idea of Cheryl Glotfelty that eco-criticism is "[t]he study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (21). Eco-criticism has environmental concerns. It examines the various ways literature treats the subject of nature. Chekhov's setting of *The Three Sisters* elaborates environment. The acts change from the heart of the house to backyard with changing seasons. The spring season in the first act of fifth May, Feudalism seems blooming. As setting changes in second act, it is winter season. The feudal supporter Irina has to leave her healthy room for Natasha's baby. She shares Olga's room. Natasha cancels carnival party

though Andrew tells to Natasha that “Isn’t that rather up to my sisters? It is their house, you know” (Act II 312). Natasha promotes her power:

Natasha. Yes, it’s their house too. I’ll have a word with them, they’re so kind.

[Moves off.] I’ve ordered some yogurt for supper. The doctor says you shouldn’t eat anything but yogurt or you’ll never lose weight. [Stops.]

Bobik gets so chilly. I’m afraid his room may be too cold. We must have a word with her, she can go in with Olga for the time being. She’s never at home during the day anyway, she only sleeps here. [Pause.]

Andrew, sweetie-pie, why don’t you say something? (Act II 213)

Natasha seeks her suitable environment. Natasha creates her own environment in Prozorovs’ house. In the third act, a big fire catches that town in May. This season favours no more for the three sisters. Their dream of feudalism burns with fire. The last act takes at the turn of spring into autumn. The three sisters leave dream world. They live on reality.

Chekhov gives meaning of awareness through converting acts in this play. Vershinin seems aware of old and new environment .

Vershinin [walking up and down]. I often wonder what it would be like if we could start living all over again, knowing exactly what we were doing. Suppose our past life could be just the rough draft, so to speak, and we could start the new one on a fresh sheet of paper. Then we’d all try hard not to repeat ourselves, I imagine. We’d create different surroundings for ourselves anyway, and see we had somewhere to live like this with these flowers and all this light. I have a wife and two little girls, my wife is in poor health ... if I could start my life again, I wouldn’t get married. No, I would not. (Act I 205)

Vershinin modifies his characteristics through changes on the settings. Olga feels as old and thin. Her inner thinking makes her weak. She worries on her present life:

Olga. Do stop whistling, Masha. Really! [Pause.] Being at school every day and then giving lessons till late in the evening, I'm always having headaches and the things that run through my mind—why, I might be an old woman already. And it's true that these four years I've been at the high school, I've felt my youth and energy draining away drop by drop each day. Only one thing grows stronger and stronger, a certain longing—[Moscow] (Act I 192)

Olga's weakness of being aged brings her in dream world. So, she wishes:

Olga. You're [Irina] perfectly radiant today, I've never seen you look so beautiful. Masha's beautiful too. Andrew wouldn't be bad-looking either, only he's put on so much weight and it doesn't suit him. But I've aged and grown terribly thin—because I'm always losing my temper with the girls at school, I suppose. Now I have the day off, I'm here at home, my headache's gone and I feel younger than I did yesterday. I'm twenty-eight, that's all. God's in his heaven all's right with the world, but I think if I got married and stayed at home all day it might be even better. [Pause.] I'd love my husband. (Act I 192-3)

Olga hides herself in dream world but that seems impossible as feudalism is declining. The changing eco-system changes dream of Olga. She thinks nothing matters “[i]f we could only know, oh if we could only know!” (Act IV 265). She accepts reality to live the present.

Olga. After all you [Irina] do respect him [Baron], you think so much of him. He may not be all that good-looking, but he's a fine, decent man. One doesn't marry for love, you know, it's only a matter of doing

one's duty. That's what I think anyway, and I'd marry without love.

I'd marry the first man who came along provided it was someone

honest and decent. I'd even marry old man. (Act III 243)

Olga realizes the duty of wife. In reality, Olga becomes upset of not married in time. So, she wishes to accept even old. She becomes headmistress from school teacher. In real life, the change comes naturally.

All the characters shift their maturity on the changing environment. This play captures the changes reality of Russian people. This may not match with the context of other settings. So, it brings compatibility between setting and meaning. Famous Tharu singress Hariyar Bati Chaudhary says that after the tiredness of looking bride-groom for daughter, daughter requests her father that "*Tohor ghar aab nai hetai paar, jeho Buruho hetai soho karabai*" (Personal Interview). Chaudhary clearly highlights that it is too difficult to marry aged daughter. So, the daughter thinks that she would marry even an old man for honouring her father. This view implies on Olga and Irina as they think to marry even an old. Later they get lesson that they could live for the present reality. They accept reality.

The setting is related on particular society with changing culture and politics. Pre-priminister and writer of Nepal Jhalanath Khanal underlines that "political system captures the overall changes culture of particular movement. Political system and literature are interconnected" (Radio Interview, Self Translation). Realism seems flexible through changes setting in Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. This play represents the reality of transformation.

The changes come all the sectors of life of the then Russian people. The drama is now in the new form as film. The science and technology make the world realistic. The common audiences see the drama on performance in the screen. Erwin Piscator in "The Theatre Can Belong to Our Century" opines the film as new form of drama.

A film palace in Radio City is the symbol of the people's theatre today. When audiences go into this vast building they find a magic wonderland, complete on a one-dimensional screen. Modern science and technology are free in the visual imagination. Using all the technical devices supplied by research, the film can project those farthest from the screen, 'hitting home' with close-ups or with the increased power of voice, music and sound effects. (471)

Drama takes advance in setting through changes realism. Chekhov's changes in setting welcomes the up-coming reality of life. The real life of Russian people's upheavals seem in Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. The real life is modified with respecting changed reality in this play.

Changed Reality of *The Three Sisters*

In conclusion, *The Three Sisters* by the famous Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov opines compatibility between setting and meaning. The setting of *The Three Sisters* represents the changes in reality through changing setting. All the characters change with changing acts. Realism changes through settings. There comes crisis on transformation. It accepts changes slowly and gradually. Life is to work. All the characters improve themselves as perfect on the new setting. Past is the memory that remained. Present is to live whatever our reality is. All people are rich or poor in their real life. Work is important to live. Work is not small or big. The reality is to survive on the setting where we live. Though characters seem unsatisfied with their job, they promote slowly and gradually. With blood and flesh, Olga, Irina, and other characters seem no beautiful. They are beautiful by work when changes setting takes place. People go in dream world. Their reality always follows them. Dream world is beautiful whereas real world is ugly.

However, all the characters learn to live on reality. Andrew loses his house. Natasha grabs money of mortgaged house. She thinks to cut down fir trees. She tries to clear remaining fossils of feudalism. Her ideas of planting flowers means arrival of new reality. Chekhov's this play has setting changes through acts. The compatibility between setting and meaning is losing something and gaining some new thing. The three sisters lose the right of Prozorov's house. Their physical changes make them dull. Though they gain beauty by work. Realism accepts the changes of social, cultural, economic setting of particular time and place.

The researcher supports theorists of realism as mentioned in above analysis section. The point is that the researcher finds compatibility between setting and meaning in Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. The different settings of *The Three Sisters* give different

meaning compatible with setting. The three sisters lose Prozorovs' house though they have right of sharing that house. Natasha grabs money of that sold house. Andrew takes care of Bobik whereas Protopopov for Sophie. With changing setting, culture seems changed. It means the changes influence all sectors of real life whether it is cultural, economical, political, and social.

In real life of Russian people, upheavals bring the great changes. Setting of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* make the three sisters far from the heart of the Prozorov's house. Their life of feudal changes into new form as capitalism. They experiment their life as bold though they suffer from their age. The nature of living thing is to grow. All thing is changeable through time and place. Chekhov has shown gradual change that represents life of real people. This changes are application to the whole universe people live. However, reality is different through setting of different context. It takes particular time and place. What is true in one setting may not be matchable to other context. Drama is the mirror through which different setting reflects different meaning.

Different theories have different perspectives that reflect different reality as setting of the perspective change. They have different versions of realism laid in. Feudalism has own realism of living whereas capitalism has own. Feudalism is defeated by the founder the Soviet state, Vladimir Lenin in Russia. All hands able to the rule of Russia.

The researcher comes on conclusion that real life is always bitter though have to follow. Realism is changeable through changing setting. Struggle against troubles brings crisis that consequences conclusions to real life. Feudalism is not downfall but the reality of feudalism changes. Though characters of *The Three Sisters* have small job, they learn lesson to work. Their mind make-up changes. So, Chekhov's this play gives compatibility between setting and meaning.

The researcher's intention is to differentiate settings' meaning as setting changes in Act I, II, III and IV. The changes in setting of Chekhov's play seek the suitable meaning to define the reality of the world with particular reality where setting takes place. Realism in *Three Sisters* leaves old clothes. This play gives space to new system of culture, economics, politics, and so on. Realism thus reflects the changeable reality of upheavals of setting with the context.

At last, Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* is a realistic play. This play has brought the characters on the track of work. The changing setting of this play represents the period of hybridization of cultural, social, political, economical reality of Russian people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

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