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Thematic Analysis

All the major works of English Literature have discussed the themes of marriage and love in a large number of their literary works. Two of such stories are *The Proposal* by Anton Chekov and *Shiloh* by Bobbie Ann Mason. Their works can be observed discussing the aforementioned themes, but at the same time, we can also observe differences in their techniques in the course of telling their respective tales.

Anton Chekov is a writer famous for his distinct style of comedy in his masterpieces, which are simultaneously filled with the themes of marriage, love and sometimes even death. Also, his plays are observed to hold some elements of hopelessness such as the seagulls and the cherry orchards and numerous others. *The Proposal* would have gone the same way had the writer not ended the story with a light and comfortable note. On the other hand, *Shiloh,* Mason's first collection of stories is centered around the way of life of the Southerners and the replacement of modern concepts like technology, chain stores and even divorce in place of traditional cultural ones (Tyler).

The story of *The Proposal* is centered around two characters: Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov and Natalya Stepanovna. These characters are seen locked in a love-hate relationship (Chekhov). Furthermore, the plot of the story can be observed to revolve around the marriage proposal that Ivan intends to make to Natalya. However, there is a comic element to the story as well as Ivan is observed to suffer from Hypochondria and other anxiety issues which makes it difficult for him to propose (Tim Newman). However, in the mid of the story, we see both of the main characters involved in a series of arguments involving dogs and issues of ownership of property[[1]](#footnote-2). In the end, Ivan manages to put forward the proposal regardless of many sessions of debates and the story ends after the conclusion of the engagement of both the characters.

*Shiloh* by Bobbie Ann Mason tells the story of a married couple, Leroy and Norma Jean Moffitt (Mason). At the start of the story, the couple loses their newborn child, Randy. After being involved in a horrible truck accident, Leroy does not want to go back to earn his living the same way and dreams of secluding himself in a cabin in the woods. On the other hand, Norma tries to make ends meet by working at a Drugstore. Therefore, she is against the whole idea. Things go out of control and the reader finds the couple at Shiloh were Norma informs Leroy that she is going to leave him [[2]](#footnote-3). Leroy realizes his mistakes and decides to patch things up. In the end, Norma went to the edge of the river and turned, and the story is concluded with a suspense hanging in the air.

Comparing both the literacy works, we can see that Chekov is trying to show the mechanism of the Russian upper-class marital relations while the Mason tries to show the drift in relationships due to multitudes of issues and wishes in one’s life. Also, Mason uses a set of different characters whereas Chekov uses only two characters to tell his story based on the theme of marriage and love. Lastly, it can be observed that Chekov relies on comedy to bring out the importance of marriage and love, whereas Mason uses the elements of tragedy to show the meaning of love in a married relationship between Leroy and Norma. Also, the uncertainty at the end of *Shiloh* is another difference that opens the imagination of the reader, unlike the end of *The Proposal.* But even thoughthere are a multitude of differences, the themes of marriage and love can easily be observed to be the same in both stories.

# Works Cited

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1. LOMOV: I don't understand! How have you the right to give away somebody else's property?

   CHUBUKOV: You may take it that I know whether I have the right or not. Because, young man, I'm not used to being spoken to in that tone of voice, and so on: I, young man, am twice your age, and ask you to speak to me without agitating yourself, and all that. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. They sit in silence and stare at the cemetery for the Union dead and, beyond, at a tall cluster of trees.  Campers are parked nearby, bumper to bumper, and small children in bright clothing are cavorting and squealing.  Norma Jean wads up the cake wrapper and squeezes it tightly in her hand.  Without looking at Leroy, she says, "I want to leave you." [↑](#footnote-ref-3)