

Three Sisters

ALRI Fall 2010 - "The Educated Theater Audience"

from the edition translated by Ronald Hingley

(speech at the end of Act Three)

ANDREW

I'll say what's on my mind and go. Right. In the first place, you all seem to have it in for Natasha.

Oh yes, I've noticed it since the day we were married. My wife, in case you want to know, is a fine, decent, straightforward, honourable woman. Or that's what I think. I love my wife and respect her. I respect her, I tell you,

and I require others to do the same. I repeat— she's a decent, honourable woman, and you'll forgive my saying that all your objections to her are sheer childishness. *[Pause.]*

And in the second place, you seem annoyed with me because I'm not a professor and don't do academic work. But I happen to work for the county council.

I'm a county councillor and I consider that work every bit as honourable and worthwhile as any academic job. I'm on the county council and proud of it, in case you're interested. *[Pause.]*

And in the third place I've something else to say. I know I mortgaged this house without getting your permission. That was wrong, I admit, and I apologize.

I had to do it because of all that money I owed, thirty-five thousand roubles of it. I don't gamble any more, I gave that up long ago, but the main point in my defence is that you girls have an annuity, whereas I've had no such source of— income, so to speak.

ANDREW's objective:
to get his sisters to apologize to him

he attempts to get this by...

showing them he is reasonable

defending his wife to demonstrate how his sisters have hurt him personally

asserting his authority as head of the household

logically providing another reason they should apologize to him

shaming them for demeaning good work

guilting them into apologizing – by behaving civilly and admitting his own mistakes

guilting them into apologizing – by defending his decisions and pointing out their privilege