

Introduction this story  
to fit "modernism of  
1970s"



## **Introduction**

Oates and Chekhov's versions of *The Lady with the Pet Dog* have both conspicuous differences and similarities though debatable. Despite intriguing similarities and differences, few things stand out; the plot of the two versions is the same with different point of view, characterization, and setting.

## **Analysis**

As aforementioned, the plot of the two versions of this story is the same; the story line of the two versions carries clandestine love affair between Anna and Gurov with a happy conclusion where the two realize true love. Both Oates and Chekhov adopt third person narrator.

This forms the main similarity between these two stories as the authors strive to achieve the theme of love. The fact that the stories are told from the third person, there is no involvement of other characters and this enables the reader to relate these two stories. Nevertheless, there are numerous differences surrounding these stories. The setting of the two versions of this story is different. The two versions are set in different times. Chekhov's version is set in early nineteenth century in Russia while Oates' version is set in the twentieth century in Nantucket.

In Chekhov's version, while in Yalta for vacation, Gurov meets Anna and they both realize they have something in common; they are unhappy with their marriages. Consequently, their common grounds lead them into an affair that starts as a simple association but turns out to be a long lasting relationship. Despite the fact that they know well their relationship is 'illegal' and unacceptable in society, they choose to carry on with it; surely, love is

blind. Moreover, life void of happiness is not worth living and by being together, it is the only way they can be happy.

Chekhov's tells his story from perspective of a man, Gurov, the protagonist. On the other side, Oates adopts the same plot as Chekhov's, but tells the story from a feminist point of view, protagonist being Anna. Anna meets Gurov whilst on her way to Nantucket for vacation. Oates permutes the setting of this story to fit " modernism of 1970s" (Paul Para. 6), something conspicuously lacking in Chekhov's version. Oates uses non-characterization widely; for instance, she refers to Gurov as ' the stranger' until late in the story where she reveals his true name. However, just like in Chekhov's version, Anna of Oates' version falls in love with this ' stranger.' Chekhov tells his story in a linear manner introducing an idea after the other.

For instance, Gurov meets Anna and falls in love with her. Even though at first he takes this relationship just like any other that, he had had; he eventually realizes his mistakes in relationships; " he focuses on sexual aspects without much emotional depth" (Gioia Para. 6). These two love birds then part ways going different directions only for Gurov to realize that he has found, " really, truly - for the first time in his life" (Chekhov 12).

This is a linear form of events starting with Gurov meeting Anna, making their first love, spending time together, returning to their homes, reuniting after some period of separation, and establishment of an affair, which culminates to a relationship. " Chekhov uses a simple linear approach that allows for no deviation almost as if he were writing a logical or mathematical

proof" (Eshbaugh Para. 6). On the other side, Oates adopts a circular strategy to tell her story.

Oates' story keeps on going back to the beginning where Anna is taken aback by 'the stranger's' visit and she uses this incidence repetitively throughout the story. The fact that Anna is seeing another man makes her guilt on one side while on the other she cannot get over the thrill of being close to an entertaining man like Gurov. Nevertheless, she has to make her mind and admit her fate "...to be here and not there, to be one person and not another, a certain man's wife and not the wife of another man" (Oates 13). However, as aforementioned, Oates keeps on taking the reader back to initial events making her story circular. For instance, Anna meets 'the stranger' in a concert, something that makes her faint forcing her husband to rush her home before the concert ends. At this point, Oates talks of events of Anna's first meeting with Gurov, and parting in Nantucket and immediately goes back to the incidences at the concert.

This circular form of story telling enables Oates to explore Anna's conflicting feelings towards her situation of being in love with Gurov and being loyal to his husband. "A linear plot, such as in Chekhov's story version would have dampened these conflicting feelings, hindered full expression of her thoughts and thus numbed the reader's observations of the conflict within Anna" (Scott Para. 12).

## **Conclusion**

Both Oates and Chekhov's versions have outstanding differences and similarities. They share common plot exploring love issues between same characters viz. Anna and Gurov.

However, the differences outweigh the similarities. The setting is different; while Chekhov's version is in nineteenth century in Moscow, Oates' version is a modern version, taking place in twentieth century in Massachusetts. The two versions have different point of views with Chekhov telling his story from a female point of view while Oates tells hers from a male point of view. Moreover, Chekhov's version is a linear story telling whilst Oates' version is a circular story telling.

## **Works Cited**

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