

# Complex human character of a main hero in the lady and the pet dog

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## **A Cheater**

Anton Chekhov is a classic fiction and play writer and can be considered to be among one of the greatest writers in history. His short stories are among the best of their time, in the 19th and 20th century, and are a great example for writers of even the modern day and age. Chekhov is widely renowned in paying close attention to human nature and the ways in which seemingly simple events can hold a profound meaning (Murphy). By doing so, Chekhov sets a great example of the ways in which to create complex characters. He is phenomenal at creating the raw, real life characters you can find in his work. One of his most recognized stories is the Lady and the Pet Dog. The main character Dmitry, is a good example of a complex human character because of his three dimensional lifelike actions, emotional intensity, and thought patterns.

A realistic character does not only reside in the book, but has a life of their own outside of it. Sounds silly, I know. But when creating a character it is important to think of him or her as a real person. The reader should never feel as though the character lives and dies in the story. Chekhov gives us this feel in this work. For example, Dmitri's character gives us this feel because of the way he is introduced into the short story. We are brought into this tale in a scene in which Dmitri is watching the new arrivals in Yalta. We are taken immediately into the basis of his life: marital problems, the lady with the pet dog, his disdain for women, etc. In doing so Chekhov has not only introduced us into the seemingly already existent life of the character,

rather than bringing us into a story. But he has made this character feel as though he has had a life previous to the beginning of the story.

Another example of this is the way in which the story comes to its conclusion. Dmitri and Anna are left in the hotel room. Anna is crying about the affair and Dmitri can't do anything to aid her. He soon realizes that there is nothing he can do to fix this predicament. This is a very real moment, and the work does not come to a soft ending. The end of this piece is messy. There are heaps of loose ends, and no real solution can be found. This makes the reader feel as though there is more story to be told, and that these characters lives are still going to exist after the story had ended.

A realistic character has flaws in nature and weaknesses in his or her thought patterns. This makes them seem lifelike. Without these flaws and weaknesses the character becomes a stereotype. For example, take the jock star football player, and make him self-conscious. This adds dimension to his character as well as breaking the stereotype of the jock. This can greatly improve the overall story itself. A prime example of this in the Lady and the Pet Dog is in the way Dmitri views women. The character himself, is a womanizer. He is great at attracting and seducing women. He is also a frequent adulterer. He speaks of women in an ill matter calling them "the inferior race". Now, if this were all that this character offered he would just be a stereotype. But what is particularly interesting is that women seem to be his achilles heel. When he is with women he "felt free", "comfortable", and "couldn't live without them" for more than two days. Oddly enough Dmitri views women as objects to comfort himself with. If he really viewed

women as inferior, how could he possibly spend all his time with them? This contradiction shows a flaw in his nature. This gives the work a raw, real life feel. It shows Dmitri's flaws and weakness.

In addition to the above, a complex human character shows emotional intensity. This can be portrayed with a large emotional response, or no response to a situation at all. This helps reveal the character's thought processes. For example the series of events in which Dmitri falls in love with Anna. When he returns back to Moscow he can not rid himself of the thoughts of Anna. He jumps the gun, and goes to S\_\_\_ to search for Anna. This in itself shows how infatuated he is for her. He shows no self control, and even becomes childlike. Some may say these actions are crazy. These very scenarios show a real life quality in Dmitri's character.

Another example of this is Dmitri becoming involved in his daughter's life. Previously, there was little mention of her- other than her age at the beginning of the work. This shows how Dmitri's character is evolving, and that he is becoming a more caring person because of his love for Anna. This is another good example of real life emotion.

A complex human character must also be lifelike in his actions. In relative terms, the character must think like a real person, and act on these thoughts with lifelike response. Without this, a character may seem cartoonish. A good example of this in the Lady and the Pet Dog is a scene nearing the end of the work. In this scene Dmitri, while in the middle of consoling Anna catches a true glimpse of himself in the mirror. This seems extremely ordinary. Most people catch themselves in a mirror and don't think twice about it. What

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makes this scene defining, is the simple fact that Dmitri truly views himself. He sees his graying hair, he's noticed he's lost his looks in the last few years. He realizes that he has aged. This is so crucial because prior to this Dmitri had a larger than life ego. He knew he was an attractive man- and he used this to his advantage with the women he had relations with.

Another example of this is when Dmitri's wife tells him that the " part of a philanderer does not suit you". He has no reaction to this and continues to see Anna. The fact itself that he has no reaction to this tells us that he doesn't have any true connection to his wife. Or vice versa. This example of a loveless marriage is a great addition to the work, and shows the reality of human nature at this point in time in history.

In conclusion, Dmitri from the Lady and the Pet Dog, is a great example of a complex human character because of his three dimensional lifelike actions, emotional intensity, and thought patterns. There is a large amount of in text evidence proving these points such as, but not limited to the scenes stated above. Anton Chekhov assembled this masterpiece, and it can be used as an example for writers of any time period as to the basis of a lifelike character.