

The lady with the pet dog

Philosophy



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Comparison of two stories of the same name A story of two lovers in an affair is never a simple thing to understand. Anton Chekhov original and Joyce Carol Oates's updated version of " The Lady with the Pet Dog" tells the story of two unhappy individuals trying to find love in a long lasting affair. Both versions of the story are similar in plot, but the different point of view allows readers to view the conflicts and emotions that each character faces, instead of just getting one side of the story. Although both stories follow the same plot, there are many differences that help readers understand the emotions of the protagonist.

Chekhov's version of " The Lady with the Pet Dog" the main protagonist is a male named Dmitry Gurov. The third person point of view allows readers to only see how Gurov's emotions throughout the story and not his love interest Anna. Gurov is an unfaithful husband and views women as the " inferior race" (Chekhov 205). He has been through many affairs in Moscow that he already knows that the affair will grow into an " extreme complexity" (205) and when the end comes a " painful situation is created" (205).

In Oates version the protagonist is Anna, who is not as timid as she appears in Chekhov's version. Anna doesn't know what it feels like to have a bond with a person, because she can't seem to connect with her husband. The affair allows Anna some freedom from her boring life and allows her to have some purpose in life. Yet she feels guilty for being in an affair with a stranger. The plot in Chekhov's version is very straight forward being in chronological order, whereas Oates mixes the plot around starting with the climax first.

They share the same climax of the theater, but in both stories Anna reacts differently when seeing her lover appear to see her. In Chekhov's version, Anna is shocked by Gurov's appearance. She tells him that she is suffering and thinks only about him, but wants to forget everything that happened. Yet she knows she wants to be with him so she promises to see him in Moscow and tells him to leave. While in Oates's version, Anna is shocked and very displeased with seeing her lover, and makes sure he doesn't come near her.

Her lover then calls her, and we see that Anna gets frustrated with him for calling her. We can see that Oates was trying to give Anna a little more power in the affair unlike Chekhov. The mix of the plot in Oates's version I feel allows readers to really understand Anna and her emotions. It would've been easier to understand if it was in order, but Oates took the same story and updated it and wrote it in a way that made it much different from Chekhov's. She gave Anna life and we got to see how the guilt ate at her, while Gurov wasn't really affected as bad as she was in Chekhov's.

I had to read Oates's story more than once to get the story into order, which allowed me to think more about Anna's feelings more than I could do if I only read it once. In both stories the protagonists are stuck in unhappy marriages, but neither actually make an effort to divorce. The setting of Chekhov's version takes place at the turn of the century, so I feel maybe divorce wasn't an option for both characters then. Yet Oates had her story take place in the 1970's, which happened to be a time of feminism, which to my surprise Anna never thought about leaving her husband for her lover.

The confusing emotions from an unhappy marriage and guilt drove Anna crazy. She would ponder “ this is 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” (222). We could tell she just wants to be accepted from someone, and that was her lover. The guilt of cheating even on a broken marriage drove her to tell her lover that she wished that one of her men would die, so it could make things easier on her. In each story we find that the protagonist finds some sort of love in the end of the story.

Chekhov’s character Gurov, sees his wife as “ limited intelligence, narrow minded and dowdy” (205). Anna seems to be the opposite of his wife, which makes him even more attractive to her. Gurov has been in many affairs, but each time he was left lonely, because he was focused on looking for the sexual aspect of the relationship and not the emotional. Anna allowed him to open up emotionally, giving him someone to talk to. In the end Gurov knew he was growing old and that he truly for the first time actually loved someone.

Oates’s Anna, has been through a lot of confusion never knowing who she loved. She almost commits suicide and gives up on her relationship. It takes her sometime, but she finally learns to accept her lover and the secrets. Anna was looking for her own identity and love, but she had to learn to love herself first before she could love anyone else. With the third person point of view we are limited to so much information, but Oates’s adaption sheds light on the other half of the story. A one sided story would’ve left readers with a lot of questions concerning Anna.

It's like they made the affair seem so easy in Chekhov's version, but we find out that they struggled just like any couple would. Although the stories shared many similarities they did have their difference in approach. Works Cited Chekhov, Anton. "The Lady with the Pet Dog." The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature. Ed. Michael Meyer. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin; s 2009. 205-16 Oates, Joyce Carol. "The Lady with the Pet Dog." The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature. Ed. Michael Meyer. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin; s 2009. 219-31