The Lady With The Dog: The Theme Of Love

Anton Chekhov wrote a short story in 1899 titled “The Lady with the Dog”. The story happened in a town called Yalta in 19th century.

The protagonist, Dmitri Dmitritch Gurov, and his young love interest Anna, are given the emotional freedom to fall in love with one another. They are trying to escape from the forced unhappy lives. Even though Anna come back to Moscow at the end of story, they are still needed to deal with the remaining problems for their future. Chekhov is writing about this problematic love story. In 1972, the writer, Joyce Carol Oates, rewrote the story and changed the point of view to Anna Sergeyevna’s side. Her version’s stage is moving to Nantucket Island in twentieth-century America.

Through the deeper understanding of Anna, readers will realize differences when Gurov and Anna deal with this immoral love issue. Although Gurov and Anna take different actions and attitudes of getting rid of guilt, they condone the relationship with still married to separate people. There are three factors which all affairs contain: factors that “shove”, factors that “pull”, and societal factors. The main character, Gurov, is downcast with his wife. There is a description of how Gurov evaluates his wife “ he secretly considered her unintelligent, narrow, inelegant, was afraid of her, and did not like to be at home. He had begun being unfaithful to her long ago.

”(Chekhov 605) His wife pushes him away from what he expects, and Gurov feels shoved into looking for other options. As a result, after he meets Anna, he cheats on his wife. Though he considers women as “ the lower race”, he is still intrigued by the exuberant naive of Anna in the garden in Yalta.

He desires with her fresh and unaffected nature. Yalta as a romantic oasis for him is colorful and beautiful in his mind. “ The water was of a soft warm lilac hue, and there was a golden streak from the moon upon it.”(606) The bright color of view shows Gurov’s inner heart activities, which means he enjoys the time with his young partner Anna. But Anna is also attracted by this elder man. She considers him as a kind and lofty man.

During every dawn time, they are observing the sunset from the vantage point over Yalta at Oreanda, the narrator states that “ Anna Sergeyevna looked through her lorgnette at the steamer and the passengers as though looking for acquaintances, and when she turned to Gurov her eyes were shining.”(607) This is exactly the scene that girls fall in love with someone. They met each other in the garden by chance. At that moment, Anna with her dog sat next to Gurov. Unlike his wife with the dog, he was intrigued by Anna’s beautiful appearance and tried to strike up a conversation by petting her dog. And now they have totally forgotten their married partners, and are thinking to continue their forbidden love no matter the societal or moral issues.

During Anna’s vacation in Yalta, Gurov is aggressive to show his love and pay full attention on it. On another hand, Anna is behaving a bit defensively and feels vacillant on this circumstance. When Gurov positively intives Anna to sleep together, she euphemistic rejects the invite and

starts to use excuses trying to persuade Gurov.

She evaluates herself as “a bad, low woman”. And when she mentions about her husband, Von Diderits, she expresses that ”I told my husband I was ill. And here I have been walking about as though I were dazed, like a mad creature;

...and now I have become a vulgar, contemptible woman whom any one may despise.”(608) It is easy to tell that she is woman with the normal value of love morality.

She understands what she wants to do will not be accepted in the society. Anna enjoys the time with Gurov, but she has to put love and morality on the scale. She does not hate her husband and says that her husband is somehow taking care about her. Her youth and lack of experience make her hesitate in this situation. As a result, She decides to push the questions to Gurov, and abuses herself to see if she can win the sympathy or Gurov can persuade her to have a reasonable reason to let them stay together.

Do not know if she is lucky, Gurov’s words are not touching her heart, and the balance trends to the moral side. While she receives the letter from her husband, she leaves Gurov in the end. She told Gurov that “It’s a good thing I am going away. It is the finger of destiny.”(610) She concludes all in fate and compromises for the society and love moral.

Anna, a youth naive woman, escapes from her husband and now also escapes from Gurov too. Anna’s left leaves regret and sadness in Gurov’s heart. Life will not stop, Gurov goes back to his routines soon.

However, he grows to despise the “ useless pursuits and conversations” surrounding him. He reorganized him minds, and base on the only clue - Unspecific Town ”S--”, he starts his journey to find his youth lover, Anna. Gurov for his happiness is chasing Anna all out.

He believes that this will bring him a bright future. Like the poles of a magnet, Gurov catches Anna in the theater. “she, this little woman, in no way remarkable, lost in a provincial crowd, with a vulgar lorgnette in her hand, filled his whole life now, was his sorrow and his joy, the one happiness that he now desired for himself.”(613) It is the most real feeling from his heart, and he confesses love to Anna fatefully. Anna is shocked by Gurov’s behavior, but she surrenders and guarantee Gurov go back to Moscow. Author does not provide much Anna’s inner activities, but the promise proves that Gurov already become a part of her life.

Gurov gets his girls successfully, but there are still problems, such as family and social evaluations, which leaving behind. He criticizes himself as an “aging graying old” man; even so, he comforts Anna and hope they can live together openly in the future. As if the title of the novel, “the lady with the dog” as a symbol runs through the whole story.

The first appearing is Gurov’s wife. This shrew disturbs Gurov’s life and leads him to an unhappy life. Then pure and young Anna with her dog appears in his views. Gurov realizes that seducing someone else wife will cause trouble, he cannot give up his ideal partner. After Anna and Gurov meets, the color of their worlds are changed.

They will never forget the colorful sunset they watch together. Even though the colorful world is covered by a dark mask, they are still looking forward and trying to solve the problems about

immoral love and social cognition. Author, Chekhov, does not write their future and leaves the space to image their happy or unhappy life. It is difficult to judge the correctness of the unbodied love; no matter how society judges it, or people think it morally or immorally, the only two who can decide are people who fall in love.