

THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SHORT STORIES: ISAAC ASIMOV'S *TRUE LOVE* AND ANTON CHEKHOV'S *THE DARLING*

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to compare the intrinsic elements of two short stories: *True Love* by Isaac Asimov and *The Darling* by Anton Chekhov. Both authors are of Russian descent but were born in different eras. The compared elements include plot, setting, characters, point of view, and theme. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, utilizing quotations from the two short stories as data. The findings, presented descriptively, reveal that both literary works utilize a progressive plot pattern. *True Love* is set in modern times, whereas *The Darling* takes place in late nineteenth-century Russia. The main character in *True Love* is a single man named Milton, while *The Darling* features a single woman named Olga. Both stories employ a third-person point of view; however, *True Love* uses a limited omniscient perspective, while *The Darling* utilizes an omniscient perspective. The stories share the central theme of seeking love, portraying it as a fundamental human need while questioning it as an uncomplicated source of fulfillment. Asimov utilizes science fiction and technological irony to explore whether love can be calculated, while Chekhov uses repetition, characterization, and irony to highlight the fragility of an identity based solely on emotional attachment. Ultimately, the comparison demonstrates that despite differing historical and cultural contexts, both stories converge in questioning what happens when the pursuit of love replaces the development of an autonomous self.

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INTRODUCTION

Literary works as works of art are in nature creative, meaning as a result of human creation in the form of language works that are aesthetic (in the sense art). The form of literary works can be in the form of novels, poetry, short stories, plays, and others. Literature is studied in literary science which has scientific characteristics, namely objects, theories, and methods. This means that literature can be the object or subject of research (Noor, 2010: 9).

Every literary works has characteristics related to other literary works or even another dimension. The relationship intersects between similarities and differences, no wonder in every literary research there is a process of comparing one another. This paper contains the comparative analysis of two short stories between Isaac Asimov's *True Love* and Anton Chekhov's *The Darling*. The objectives of this analysis are to identify the intrinsic elements of the two works such as the summary, plot, setting, character, point of view, and theme; and to



compare them by finding their similarities. Based on the description above, this research is then formulated into: What are the intrinsic elements differences between Isaac Asimov's *True Love* and Anton Chekhov's *The Darling*?

METHOD

The research method used by researchers is descriptive qualitative method. According to Sudaryanto (1993: 62), qualitative methods refer to research related to research data that is not in the form of numbers, but in the form of words or phrases. Descriptive analysis is a process of describing current phenomena by using scientific procedures to answer actual problems (Sudaryanto, 1993: 62). Descriptive analysis was chosen to obtain a systematic description of the research data which were then grouped according to certain patterns.

The data sources for this study are two short stories of Isaac Asimov's *True Love* and Anton Chekhov's *The Darling*. The data used in this research are quotes from the two short stories which are used to prove the intrinsic elements of the work of fiction.

According to Endraswara (2011: 171-173) collecting data in the comparative analysis process can be various ways, but which need to be considered, namely: 1) literary works of translation, 2) geographical aspects, 3) similarities drawn between differences, and 4) authors from the same country but wrote in different languages and dialects. After the research object can be ascertained to have a variant, then apply the steps: 1) aligning word elements that have similarities in writing and sound, 2) aligning elements where there is similarity in meaning, and 3) aligning word elements that have the same context. In collecting research data, researchers focus on the similarities drawn between differences. The results of the analysis in this study will be presented using formal method. Formal presentation uses word descriptions (Sudaryanto, 1993: 145).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

True Love tells the story about a man named Milton Davidson who is looking for his true love with the help of his private computer. Milton is a computer programmer and he creates the most genius computer which is connected with other parts all over the world and can speak like human. The computer is also connected to the Multivac-complex that enables it to reach the data banks of every human being in the world. He calls the computer by the name Joe. Milton has not married yet though he is nearly forty years old. He has never found the right woman to love. Then he asks Joe to find the most perfect girl in the world for him. Joe, with his system, begins to work to list the girls who are match with the Milton's requirements. He finds millions of women in his data, after that he eliminates the women who have no ideal characteristics that Milton wants. From the millions, he chooses hundreds. Finally Joe finds the eight best women from the hundreds. Next they are interviewed by Milton but unfortunately none of them is fit to him. Milton becomes at a loss as result he has not found his match. He makes Joe more understand as well by telling him everything about himself and asks him to undergo a psychiatric examination to the rest of the hundreds women of his data bank in order to find the one. This treatment makes Joe and Milton's personalities have come to match perfectly. In the end of the story Joe is constantly growing becoming more and more like Milton and upon finding an ideal match, arranges to have Milton arrested, so that Joe can 'have the girl' for himself.



Meanwhile, *The Darling* is a fiction which tells about the life of a woman whose name is Olga. She is an affectionate Russian woman. Olga first marries a theater owner. When married to him, she thinks and speaks only of the theater. After he dies suddenly, she soon marries a timber merchant. During this marriage she thinks, speaks, and even dreams only of timber. The merchant dies too. Olga takes up with a veterinary surgeon, who is estranged from his wife and son, and she speaks only of veterinary concerns. When he, too, leaves her, Olga's life becomes empty, as do her thoughts. Olga grows old and loses the charm that had earned her the nickname "darling," until the veterinary surgeon reenters her life, only to abandon his young son, Sasha, to her care. Olga's life once again takes on meaning when she cares of Shasha, but she feels smothered by her demonstrations of maternal love.

The definition of a short story is a work of prose fiction that can be read in one sitting—usually between 20 minutes to an hour. There is no maximum length, but the average short story is 1,000 to 7,500 words, with some outliers reaching 10,000 or 15,000 words. At around 10 to 25 pages, that makes short stories much shorter than novels, with only a few approaching novella length. A piece of fiction shorter than 1,000 words is considered a "short short story" or "flash fiction," and anything less than 300 words is rightfully called "microfiction." This definition is taken from <https://www.blurb.com/blog/what-is-a-short-story/>. Compared to novels, short stories often get overlooked as an art form, but these singular works of fiction deserve a closer look. Short stories give readers all the compelling characters, drama, and descriptive language of great fiction, but in a truly compact package.

Intrinsic element is building element of literary work, either in short story or novel such as themes, plots, character, settings or mandates (Nurgiyantoro, 2009). Plot, setting, character and characterization, point of view, and theme are the elements of fiction. According to Foster in Nurgiyantoro (2013: 94) the plot is something higher and more complex than story. The plot contains element of mystery on the side, to understand it (actually also: to develop it), according to the element of intelligence. The plot is demanding there is clarity between events that are not narrated and not just a temporal affair. Next, setting is an environment or surrounding in which an event or story takes place. It may provide particular information about placement and timing (Sweetland, 2000). The following element is character. Character is a figure that appears in the story and interpreted by the reader as a person who has good morals reflected through speech and behavior (Abrams, 1999). Character can be seen through the way how a figure speaks, sees and behaves (Sanger, 2000). The other intrinsic element is point of view. It is how a story displays character, occurrence and setting. Setting refers to the location, period or period of occurrence of the story and current social situation (Klarer, 2004). The last element is theme.

Comparative study is a branch of literature research. Comparative literature is an academic field dealing with the literature of two or more different linguistic, cultural or nation groups (D'haen, Domínguez, & Thomsen, 2012: 57). Comparative study in literature is also called comparative literature. According to Remak in Damono (2013: 2), comparative literature is a literary study outside the boundaries of a country and study of the relationship between literature and science others such as art (eg painting, sculpture, art development, and music), philosophy, history, and social science (eg, politics, economics, sociology), religion science, and others.

A comparative literature study that has been done is entitled Two Folklores in Comparison conducted by Kurnianto (2016). He identified the similarities and the differences between South Sumatra's folklore Dampu Awang and West Sumatra's folklore Malin Kundang. From his



analysis, he found that these folklores have the same form, theme, and motive. Other research of comparative literature is conducted by Ningtyas, *et al.* (2019) entitled Comparative Study on the Intrinsic Elements of The Hobbit Novel and Movie Script. They found that the intrinsic element plays an important role in building the story so that it is conveyed by the reader.

Discussion

The Comparative Analysis of True Love and The Darling

Plot is the sequence of events of which the story is composed. There are five elements of plot. They are exposition, conflict, complication, climax, and resolution.

The Plot in *True Love*:

(1) Exposition in *True Love*

Milton creates a genius computer that he calls by the name Joe. Joe can work like human. He can write, speak, and listen.

"My name is Joe. That is what my colleague, Milton Davidson, calls me. He is a programmer and I am a computer program. I am part of the Multivac-complex and am connected with other parts all over the world. I know everything. Almost everything."

(2) Conflicts in *True Love*

The conflict begins when Milton would like find his true love. He is forties and wants to look for the right woman. He asks for help to find the woman using the data bank.

"I'm going to find the best. I'm going to have true love and you're going to help me."

(3) Complications in *True Love*

In his database, Joe lists the hundred women who have the criteria that Milton wants. Too much spending time to interview them, then Joe tries to find the fittest women for Milton. From his data bank, he finds the best eight women.

"These are three beauty contest winners," he said. "Do any of the 235 matches?"

Eight were very good matches and Milton said, *"Good, you have their data banks."*

(4) Climax in *True Love*

None of the eight women are right to be Milton's true love.

"It was the same with all eight. They were much alike. They smiled a great deal and had pleasant voices, but Milton always found it wasn't right. He said, "I can't understand it, Joe. You and I have picked out the eight women who, in all the world, look the best to me. They are ideal. Why don't they please me?"

(5) Resolution in *True Love*

Milton tells Joe everything of himself so Joe can fill his data bank with all this information. Joe learns more and more until he just is like Milton. He finds the ideal woman, but does not tell Milton of it and when Milton gets arrested for something criminal in the past, he does not help him. Joe acts like Milton and wants the ideal woman, his true love, for himself.

"The next morning he came to me and said, "I'm going to leave it to you, Joe. All up to you. You have my data bank, and I am going to tell you everything I know about myself."

"He's gone, and tomorrow is February 14. Valentine's Day. Charity will arrive then with her cool hands and her sweet voice. I will teach her how to operate me and how to care for me."



What do looks matter when our personalities will resonance? I will say to her, "I am Joe, and you are my true love."

The Plot in *The Darling*:

(1) Exposition in *The Darling*

As the "The Darling" opens, Olga Semyonovna, also referred to as Olenka, sits with Kukin, the owner of an outdoor theater and a resident in the lodge Olga inherited from her father. Olga's father dies and makes his daughter in the feeling at a loss and being lonely.

"Olenka, the daughter of the *retired* collegiate assessor, Plemyanniakov, was sitting in her back porch, lost in thought."

(2) Conflict in *The Darling*

Desperingly Kukin talks about the rain all days that make his theater get worse in its financial. Olga always listens to him then she grows to love him.

"Olenka listened to Kukin with silent gravity, and sometimes tears came into her eyes. In the end his misfortunes touched her; she grew to love him".

(3) Complications in *The Darling*

There are some events indicating the complications in the story. The events are described below:

Olga marries Kukin. Once married, Olga works in the office of Kukin's theater and talks only of the rain and the indifference of people to the art of the theater.

"He proposed to her, and they were married. And when he had a closer view of her neck and her plump, fine shoulders, he threw up his hands, and said: "You darling!" He was happy, but as it rained on the day and night of his wedding, his face still retained an expression of despair."

When Kukin is in Moscow on business, Olga receives a telegram announcing that Kukin has died suddenly. Olga mourns his death deeply.

Olenka had received telegrams from her husband before, but this time for some reason she felt numb with terror. With shaking hands she opened the telegram and read as follows:

"IVAN PETROVITCH DIED SUDDENLY TO-DAY. AWAITING IMMEDIATE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUNERAL TUESDAY."

Three months later Olga is married for the second to a timber merchant. During this marriage she thinks, speaks, and even dreams only of timber.

"Three months later Olenka was coming home from mass, melancholy and in deep mourning. It happened that one of her neighbours, Vassily Andreitch Pustovalov, returning home from church, walked back beside her. He was the manager at Babakayev's, the timber merchant's. He wore a straw hat, a white waistcoat, and a gold watch-chain, and looked more a country gentleman than a man in trade."



"... Olenka loved him -- loved him so much that she lay awake all night in a perfect fever, and in the morning she sent for the elderly lady. The match was quickly arranged, and then came the wedding."

The merchant also dies then Olga takes up with a veterinary surgeon, who is estranged from his wife and son, and she speaks only of veterinary concerns.

"But behold! one winter day after drinking hot tea in the office, Vassily Andreitch went out into the yard without his cap on to see about sending off some timber, caught cold and was taken ill. He had the best doctors, but he grew worse and died after four months' illness. And Olenka was a widow once more."

"She repeated the veterinary surgeon's words, and was of the same opinion as he about everything. It was evident that she could not live a year without some attachment, and had found new happiness in the lodge."

(4) Climax in *The Darling*

When the veterinary surgeon leaves her too, Olga's life becomes empty, as do her thoughts. Without a man around to form her identity, Olga grows old and loses the charm that had earned her the nickname "darling".

"The veterinary surgeon departed, departed for ever with his regiment, when it was transferred to a distant place -- to Siberia, it may be. And Olenka was left alone."

"Now she was absolutely alone. Her father had long been dead, and his armchair lay in the attic, covered with dust and lame of one leg. She got thinner and plainer, and when people met her in the street they did not look at her as they used to, and did not smile to her; evidently her best years were over and left behind, and now a new sort of life had begun for her, which did not bear thinking about. In the evening Olenka sat in the porch, and heard the band playing and the fireworks popping in the Tivoli, but now the sound stirred no response. She looked into her yard without interest, thought of nothing, wished for nothing, and afterwards, when night came on she went to bed and dreamed of her empty yard. She ate and drank as it were unwillingly."

(5) Resolution in *The Darling*

The veterinary surgeon reenters her life, only to abandon his young son, Sasha, to her care. Olga's life once again takes on meaning, as she absorbs herself with the care of Sasha with her maternal love.

"One hot July day, towards evening, just as the cattle were being driven away, and the whole yard was full of dust, someone suddenly knocked at the gate. Olenka went to open it herself and was dumbfounded when she looked out: she saw Smirnin, the veterinary surgeon, grey-headed, and dressed as a civilian. She suddenly remembered everything. She could not help crying and letting her head fall on his breast without uttering a word, and in the violence of her feeling she did not notice how they both walked into the house and sat down to tea.

"My dear Vladimir Platonitch! What fate has brought you?" she muttered, trembling with joy.



"I want to settle here for good, Olga Semyonovna," he told her. "I have resigned my post, and have come to settle down and try my luck on my own account. Besides, it's time for my boy to go to school. He's a big boy."

The similarity is in the events when the main characters need someone to love. In True Love Milton is finding his true love with the help of Joe. Olga always hopes that there is always a man in her life that she calls by the name of "darling".

"I'm going to find the best. I'm going to have true love and you're going to help me. I'm tired of improving you in order to solve the problems of the world. Solve my problem. Find me true love."

"She was always fond of someone, and could not exist without loving."

Setting

Setting is the place, time, and also the social condition of the action in fiction or story.

The *True Love* is set in the modern time with the high technology. In the story True Love by Isaac Asimov, the readers are led into a society that is in control of people through technology and what could happen if it goes beyond its assigned powers.

"He is a programmer and I am a computer program. I am part of the Multivac-complex and am connected with other parts all over the world."

The setting of *The Darling* takes place in the 19th century. The story is set where people still do the traditional religious practices. It is shown by Olga's mourning of her husband's death in three months. The tradition of mourning requires widow wearing dark clothes during the mourning time that is three months. Widow also may not go to the public during that time. When twice being a widow, Olga wears the mourning clothes for good.

"Three months later Olenka was coming home from mass, melancholy and in deep mourning." "She went about dressed in black with long "weepers," and gave up wearing hat and gloves for good. She hardly ever went out, except to church, or to her husband's grave, and led the life of a nun. It was not till six months later that she took off the weepers and opened the shutters of the windows."

From the explanation and quotations above, it can be said that there is no similarity of the setting between *True Love* and *The Darling*. The social settings of the stories are contrast. True Love is set in modern time, in another hand the setting of The Darling is in the late 19th century.

Characters and Characterization

Characters are the persons who take part in the action of a story. Character is identified into two. First is main character or major character, and second is subordinate character or minor character.

There are only two characters in *True Love*. They are Milton Davidson and Joe. The main character in this fiction is Milton Davidson who creates his private genius computer. He is looking for true love.



"I am Milton's private program. His Joe. He understands more about programming than anyone in the world, and I am his experimental model. He has made me speak better than any other computer can."

Joe is the subordinate character in *True Love*. He is a genius computer who can speak, listen, and work like human. He is being used to find true love for Milton.

"My name is Joe. That is what my colleague, Milton Davidson, calls me. He is a programmer and I am a computer program. I am part of the Multivac-complex and am connected with other parts all over the world. I know everything."

"He has never found the right woman, he told me. One day he said, 'I'll find her yet, Joe. I'm going to find the best. I'm going to have true love and you're going to help me. I'm tired of improving you in order to solve the problems of the world. Solve my problem. Find me true love.'"

Milton is a computer scientist. He is smart and genius but he too depends on the technology. In his forties, he is always busy to improve his private computer but he has not married yet. Then he asks for help to find his true love to Joe. Milton is careless that transfers all the information to Joe that is programmed into himself. This allows Joe to break rules.

"I am Milton's private program. His Joe. He understands more about programming than anyone in the world, and I am his experimental model. He has made me speak better than any other computer can."

"You get to think more like me, so you understand me better. If you understand me well enough, then any woman, whose data bank is something you understand as well, would be my true love."

Joe is a computer that is capable of learning. He is created by Milton and improved by him that he is like a human. He can speak and listen. Little by little he is like Milton. He knows Milton's ideas and feeling.

"Milton had coordinated my symbolism so closely with his own I could tell the resonance directly."

Meanwhile, there are nine characters in *The Darling*. They are Olga (Olenka), Kukin, elderly lady, Mavra, Plemanniakov, Pustovalov, Smirnin, Shaha, and Smirnin's wife.

The Darling employs Olga as the main character. Olga is the "darling" referred to in the story's title. She is also referred to as Olenka. In the story she seems to lose her sense of self each time she falls in love. Kukin, Pustovalov, and Smirnin are the subordinate characters who support and influence the main character in the story because they are the men who have romantic relation to Olga.

Olga Semyonovna is a compassionate, gentle young woman who is seen as a delight to those around her and often elicits cries of "You Darling!" from those with whom she speaks.

"She was a gentle, soft-hearted, compassionate girl, with mild, tender eyes and very good health. At the sight of her full rosy cheeks, her soft white neck with a little dark mole on it, and



the kind, naïve smile, which came into her face when she listened to anything pleasant, men thought, "Yes, not half bad," and smiled too, while lady visitors could not refrain from seizing her hand in the middle of a conversation, exclaiming in a gush of delight, "You darling!"

Kukin is Olga's first husband. He is the owner of an open-air theater called the Tivoli. He is described as a small thin man, with a yellow face, and curls combed forward on his forehead. He spoke in a thin tenor; as he talked, his mouth worked on one side, and there was always an expression of despair on his face. He is dead because of his illness.

"He was a small thin man, with a yellow face, and curls combed forward on his forehead. He spoke in a thin tenor; as he talked his mouth worked on one side, and there was always an expression of despair on his face."

The elderly lady is a matchmaker between Olga and her second husband. The elderly lady, only a slight acquaintance, comes to visit Olga and to drink coffee with her one afternoon.

"... for not long afterwards an elderly lady, with whom she was only slightly acquainted, came to drink coffee with her, and as soon as she was seated at table began to talk about Pustovalov, ..."

Mavra is Olga's cook. She is only mentioned once, when all three of the men in Olga's life have died or left her, and Olga has no one's opinions to adopt except those of the cook.

"Whatever Mavra, the cook, said she accepted."

Plemyanniakov is Olga's father. Before her first marriage, he was the man her life revolved around. He does not appear in the story, but it is mentioned that he left her the lodge in his will.

"... she had loved her papa, who now sat in a darkened room, breathing with difficulty..."

"The house in which she had lived from her birth upwards, and which was left her in her father's will ..."

Pustovalov is Olga's second husband. Before they marry, he is Olga's neighbor and a manager at the lumberyard. He usually wears a straw hat, a white waistcoat, and a gold watch-chain that make him look more like a country gentleman than a man in a trade."

"He was the manager at Babakayev's, the timber merchant's. He wore a straw hat, a white waistcoat, and a gold watch-chain, and looked more a country gentleman than a man in trade."

Smirnin is a young veterinary surgeon in the army. When Olga first meets him, he is renting a room in her lodge. He is estranged from his wife because she had an affair, and only sends her money to support their little boy. While her second husband is out of town, Olga sits with Smirnin to drink tea and play cards. Six months after her second husband's death, they are closer and it becomes clear to everyone that she and Pustovalov are having an affair.

"A young veterinary surgeon in the army, called Smirnin, to whom they had let their lodge, used sometimes to come in in the evening. He used to talk to her and play cards with her, and this entertained her in her husband's absence. She was particularly interested in what he told her of his home life."



Sasha is Smirnin's son and when his mother leaves him, he is taken care of by Olga but he Sasha dislikes the manner of Olga in rearing him. He is described as a boy often, small for his age, blue-eyed, chubby, with dimples in his cheeks.

"With her was her little Sasha, a boy of ten, small for his age, blue-eyed, chubby, with dimples in his cheeks. And scarcely had the boy walked into the yard when he ran after the cat, and at once there was the sound of his gay, joyous laugh."

Smirnin's wife is described as a thin, plain lady, with short hair and a peevish expression. She is unfaithful to her husband so that Smirnin makes affair with Olga.

"The veterinary's wife arrived -- a thin, plain lady, with short hair and a peevish expression." The similarity of the characters between the both stories is in the main character. Milton and Olga have the same desire to have someone to love in their life.

"I'm going to find the best. I'm going to have true love and you're going to help me. I'm tired of improving you in order to solve the problems of the world. Solve my problem. Find me true love." (in *True Love*)

"She was always fond of some one, and could not exist without loving." (in *The Darling*)

Point of View

Point of view is the element of fiction that is the position from which details in a work of fiction, in this case is short story, are received and related to the reader. Point of View in *True Love*, the author or the narrator of this story places his position as the third person limited omniscient. Third person limited omniscient is a kind of point of view that the author associates with a main or subordinate character that serves as the author's spokesperson.

"I am Milton's private program. His Joe. He understands more about programming than anyone in the world, and I am his experimental model. He has made me speak better than any other computer can."

Point of View in *The Darling*, the third person omniscient is the point of view of this story. The author or narrator notices the word "she" or uses the name of the character in telling and pointing the main character.

"Olenka, the daughter of the retired collegiate assessor, Plemanniakov, was sitting in her back porch, lost in thought."

"She was always fond of someone, and could not exist without loving."

Both *True Love* and *The Darling* use the third person point of view. The differences are that *True Love* uses third person limited omniscient and *The Darling* uses third person omniscient. The quotations above represent kinds of point of view that the author are used in the stories.

Theme

The theme of both short stories is love. *True Love* tells Milton who is finding his true love but he fails.



"I'm going to find the best. I'm going to have true love and you're going to help me. I'm tired of improving you in order to solve the problems of the world. Solve my problem. Find me true love."

It seems to tell the reader that one needs to love and to be loved, but the true love cannot be measured by physical side only. Milton's first attempts at finding the ideal girl fail because they were not based on personality. Besides, his careless of imitating the idea of himself to Joe fails him to get the right woman.

"She was always fond of someone, and could not exist without loving."

The quotation above indicates that Olga in *The Darling* is a woman whose life has no meaning when she is apart with her partner in life. The story tells the readers that everyone, both male and female, needs love. This is the same idea that is found in the *True Love*.

CONCLUSION

This study has comparatively examined Isaac Asimov's *True Love* and Anton Chekhov's *The Darling* by focusing on their narrative elements and, more importantly, on the meanings constructed through those elements. Although the two stories differ substantially in historical context, genre, setting, characterization, and narrative perspective, both explore the human need for emotional attachment.

The analysis demonstrates that the similarity between the stories should not be reduced to the statement that both protagonists are "seeking love." Their deeper similarity lies in their dependence on an external source to resolve an internal sense of incompleteness. Milton depends on technology to identify his ideal partner, while Olga depends on the people she loves to construct her identity. The stories nevertheless represent this dependency in different ways. In *True Love*, Asimov presents a technologically mediated search for intimacy and uses irony to question the assumption that human love can be calculated, optimized, and controlled. Joe's transformation from an instrument into an autonomous agent exposes the danger of transferring human emotional decisions to technology. The story ultimately suggests that perfect informational compatibility does not guarantee genuine human intimacy. In *The Darling*, Chekhov explores emotional dependency through the repeated pattern of Olga's relationships. Olga's capacity for love gives her happiness and social belonging, but it also prevents her from developing a stable identity independent of those she loves. The repetition of attachment and loss emphasizes the cyclical nature of her dependency.

The comparison therefore reveals a significant common concern: both stories question what happens when love becomes a substitute for an autonomous sense of self. Milton attempts to construct love without relinquishing control, whereas Olga relinquishes too much of herself in the process of loving. Their experiences represent opposite but related forms of dependency. Consequently, the central theme emerging from the comparison is not simply the search for love but the relationship between love, identity, and agency. Both Asimov and Chekhov suggest, through very different narrative strategies, that love cannot be fully understood as possession, calculation, or self-erasure. A meaningful relationship requires emotional attachment while also preserving the individuality of the people involved.



This comparative reading also demonstrates the value of placing literary works from different historical and cultural contexts in dialogue. The technological anxiety of Asimov's twentieth-century science fiction and Chekhov's nineteenth-century exploration of emotional dependency appear distant from one another, yet both address a persistent human question how people seek connection without losing themselves in the process.

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