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Complexities of Human Relationship: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Chekhov's
Selected Short Stories

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Aurjun Bahadur Khatri has completed his thesis entitled “Complexities of Human Relationship: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Chekhov’s Selected Short Stories” under my supervision. He carried out his research from March 2024 to June 2023. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled Complexities of Human Relationship: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Chekhov's Selected Short Stories submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Aurjun Bahadur Khatri, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the complexities of human relationships grounded on the human unconscious. The characters' psychological struggles and their quest for meaningful human relationships underscores the feelings of alienation, and emotional detachment which are guided more by unconscious than deliberate actions. To substantiate the point further, the research work examines Anton Chekhov's three stories: "About Love", "The Darling" and "The Schoolmistress" from perspectives of psychoanalysis. This research highlights how unconscious desires, repression, and familial influences profoundly shape the characters' behaviors and their relationships in the theoretical frame of the Freudian psyche. His narratives illustrate the tension between personal desires and societal expectations, leading to emotional turmoil and unfulfilled lives. The Freudian psychoanalytical theoretical perspectives unfold the intricate dynamics of love and marriage, revealing how traditional gender roles and social norms can suppress individual identity and happiness. Through nuanced portrayals of characters' psychological struggles, Chekhov explores the complexities of human relationships, emphasizing the enduring impact of repressed emotions and societal pressures on personal fulfillment and psychological well-being.

Key words: love, relationship, family, unconscious, repression, desires

This study aims to unfold the relationship between human behaviour manifested through love, relationship, and marriage as an outcome of the unconscious mind. Tracing the strong connection between human activities and their root in the deep down unconscious is a major issue of the research. This study explores how human behavior in love, relationships, and marriage is linked to suffering stemming from the unconscious mind. It investigates the connection between our actions and their unconscious origins. Understanding this link is the central focus of the research. The aim is to reveal how deeply rooted unconscious factors influence human experiences and pain. The research tries to explore the imbalance between the quest for love and the influence of marriage and family in characters' relationships along with the role of psychological factors in positioning human complexities.

To find the association between the complexity of love, marriage and suffering the research uses three selected short stories: "About Love", "The Darling" and "The Schoolmistress" by the Russian writer Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. These stories present the themes of love, identity, marriage, isolation, dependency and their close connection with human suffering. By going through these stories the research mainly concerns to dig out the complexity of love, marriage, a search for identity and suffering in human relationships. The major argument of the research is what are the complexities of love, what pushes people into repression, how marriage leads the lives of a couple, and what are sufferings led by the unconscious mind in human relationships? These three stories are the primary cursor to analyze and explain the affinity between expressed human behaviour and suffering as a result of an unconscious segment of the brain. Classical psychoanalysis is used to interpret and analyze the behaviours of major characters in these stories to address the above arguments.

According to Pradipsinh Zala and Bhaskar Pandya, studying human relationships in literature is profoundly relevant as it offers deep insights into the complexities of human nature, society, and interpersonal connections (1493). By exploring the narratives, one can

gain a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in human nature, the dynamics within society, and the intricate web of interpersonal connections.

In love and marriage, dysfunctional relationships cause human suffering. In this context, Tina B. Tessina opines, "Dysfunctional relationships are relationships that do not perform their appropriate function; that is, they do not emotionally support the participants, foster communication among them, appropriately challenge them, or prepare or fortify them for life in the larger world" (7). The unhealthy relationship is an outcome of dysfunctional love between the partners which is central to most of Chekhov's stories. Dysfunctional relationships fail to provide emotional support, facilitate effective communication, encourage personal growth, and prepare individuals for the broader aspects of life. These failures prevent the relationships from fulfilling their intended purposes, leading to negative outcomes for the participants.

Chekhov presents interpersonal relationships between and among characters in the story "About Love". Here, he shows tri-dimensional love complexities. Similarly, he shows the mystery of love in this story. Likewise, in "The Darling", Chekhov portrays a female character's desire for love and support from the male partner, however, she always suffers in her life instead. Furthermore, through "The Schoolmistress" Chekhov shows dullness and isolation in characters because of the lack of love. In this way, his writings revolve around the human relationship and their consequences.

In examining these stories, Chekhov not only brings his characters to life but also unpacks the complexities of human relationships and the resulting emotional outcomes. This study aims to analyze characters' internal thoughts, desires, and the consequences of love, marriage, and the sufferings they endure, highlighting how the unconscious mind shapes present human relationships.

Chekhov was a Russian playwright and physician who is considered one of the greatest writers of all time. He was born in 1860 in Russia and died in 1904 in Germany. He is known as the master of modern short stories. In his lifetime, Chekhov gained considerable critical acclaim. In 1888, he won the Pushkin Prize for his fiction, and in 1900, he was selected for honorary membership in the Russian Academy of Sciences for both his fiction and his drama.

There are various public acclaims and criticisms regarding Chekhov's writings. His stories are mostly read and reviewed across the world. It is worthy to discuss here how scholars and reviewers see Chekhov as a story writer. According to Nasrullah Mambrol, who analyzed Chekhov's short stories in 2019, Chekhov's work encompasses the question of human experience regarding love and its consequences. In Chekhov's "The Darling", Mambrol views:

Chekhov's concern with conflicting ideologies gives way to more fundamental questions about human beings' ability to transcend their nature. He examines characters who suffer desperate unhappiness, anxiety, isolation, and despair, experienced mainly through the characters' inability either to give or to accept love. He also, however, concerns himself with its antithesis, the suffocating potential of too much love, which is the thematic focus of "Dushechka" ("The Darling"). (Mambrol 25)

Human feelings and thoughts are affected by the human relationship. When persons start a close relationship with others, their behavioral nature is reflected in it. People make up their minds about how they should behave to others but it does not happen in all conditions. As a result, the complexities can occur in relationships and the person may suffer from the negative effects of love and relationship.

Similarly, Leila Mirahsania and Mahnaz Norouzib analyzed the "The Darling" through the psychoanalytical perspectives and they state:

Chekhov portrays Olenka as a woman who feels insecure, fears loneliness, and lacks wholeness of herself without a man in her life. Chekhov tries to show what happens when a woman lives solely for her partner and nothing else. Olenka is compassionate, gentle, and sentimental. (Mirahsania and Norouzib 28)

There is a clear portrayal of Olenka's dependency on men for identity and it illustrates the consequences of living solely for a partner. Chekhov highlights her compassionate and sentimental nature.

Similarly, the critic Aliz Farkas has discussed existential concerns in Anton Chekhov's short stories. He views:

The insoluble conflicts arising from the desire to be one's authentic self and the roles imposed by social games, physical and mental suffering, the cultural relativity of mental health, the inadequacy of scientific reasoning to address essential aspects of the human condition, science and philosophy as distractors and defense systems against the terror of looming death become the central themes of his short stories. (Farkas 86)

Chekhov presents how people behave in society and self, according to their internal drive. There is a great impact of the id, ego and superego in human behaviour and their manifestation in visible relationships. The deviation in love, tragedy created by material gain and human interest etc. are also responsible to create complexities in love and relationships. Mental and social situations, religion, beliefs about the fate of the people play a significant role in identity, co-dependency, isolation and tragedies.

In the same manner, S. Rahim Moosavinia and Amir Tavasoli talk about how a woman suffers an identity crisis and psychoanalytic imbalance due to her unfulfilled desire.

Commenting on the character Olga, they state:

In "The Darling", Olga's behavioral traits have revealed that she suffers from a lack of identity. To elaborate more, she has neither social nor individual prestige to build her identity upon and complete her individuation process. So, such deprivations are the main cause of her psychological problem, freedom. (Moosavinia and Tavasoli 5)

Chekhov reflects on societal situation to determine the identity of an individual. In a male-dominated society where females struggle for their identity though they cannot easily achieve the desired goal. The desires are born as discussed by Sigmund Freud like id, ego and super-ego. "The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions... The superego can be thought of as a type of conscience that punishes misbehavior with feelings of guilt" (Freud 47). Olga's life is driven by similar psychological forces. While discussing the themes of psychological isolation and connection in Chekhov's stories, Zala and Pandya view:

Chekhov's characters frequently grapple with internal struggles, feelings of alienation, and emotional detachment, reflecting the broader existential concerns of his time. In "The Darling", Olga's psychological isolation is masked by her constant need to find identity and purpose through the men she loves. Despite being surrounded by people, her lack of a stable sense of self-leaves her feeling empty and detached whenever she is without a partner. (Zala and Pandya 1994)

Chekhov's characters embody existential struggles, as seen in Olga's quest for identity through relationships highlights her psychological isolation and sense of emptiness without a stable self.

Likewise, core psychological issues are the subjects of Chekhov's writing. For Muhammad Gabir Abdelfadeel, Chekhov highlights low self-esteem as a result of psychological disorder. Surely, Chekhov's characters are driven by fear of intimacy and fear of abandonment. As Abdelfadeel says:

The characters ... suffer deeply from a chronic psychological core issue, low self-esteem, which is accompanied by a related series of core issues including fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, and a deep sense of guilt. These core issues prevent the characters from getting involved in true love affairs since they are afraid their low self-esteem will be exposed to others. (Abdelfadeel 5)

As delineated in Abdelfadeel's review, in "The Schoolmistress", Marya Vassilyevna is a very passive character and, for the bulk of the story, is literally a passenger. She relies on those around her to speak up where she cannot. In "About Love", when we talk about Anna's confusion, stress of Alehin's love, and relationship with her husband, there is also a great mental complexity in Anna's life. On the other hand, Alehin is also suffering from the mystery of love with different girls.

Similarly, the reviewer Anohal Tiwari analyzes love, marriage, and romance in Chekhov's selected short stories. Dr. Tiwari views:

In most of his fictional oeuvre, he has depicted the individuals of modern society experiencing various shades of emotions which guide their psychological, interpersonal as well as social life. The stories written by Anton Chekhov are kaleidoscopes of various experiences which are an integral part of modern existence. Interpersonal relationships, especially man-woman relationships are strikingly portrayed by Chekhov. (Tiwari 73)

As Chekhov is a modern story writer, he displays the people's experiences in modern society and their psychological, interpersonal and social situations. Similarly, he also focuses on how a person's internal motive works to establish relationships in society.

Chekhov presents the private aspects of human life and their roles in transfixing love relationships in his short stories. No previous literature regarding the complexities of human relationships is studied in Chekhov's stories. In this context, Chekhov's representation of the human psyche, love, social relationships and human suffering are essential to study through psychoanalytic theory. The issues under investigation in this study are why Chekhov displays a complex human relationship between and among characters, what connections there are between love, marriage and romance, and how these complexities bring human suffering through these selected stories.

Chekhov, through these selected stories, displays the complex relationship of love, marriage and human suffering to exhibit human behaviours exposed and directed by their psychological conditions. Therefore, this research is broadly concerned to address the following research questions:

-) What is the bond between love and marriage in human relationships?
-) What psychological factors are responsible for creating love complexities and sufferings between and among the characters in the stories?
-) How does Chekhov portray the condition of a love relationship shaped by family background?
-) How is the human suffering related to love and marriage displayed in these stories?

This study has adopted psychoanalytic theory to examine the complexity of love, marriage and human suffering in Chekhov's selected stories: "The Darling", "About Love" and "The Schoolmistress". Psychoanalysis is a term that is fully developed by Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalytical theory. Psychoanalysis was

initially developed as a therapeutic technique for the treatment of the hysteric patient. It expanded later as a technique for the psychological study of the psycho-sexual development of human personality. Later in collaboration with and influenced by the Viennese physician Josef Brewer, Freud wrote two papers on hysteria (1893-1895). Those were to be the precursors of the vast body of psychoanalytic theory.

At present time, psychoanalysis is primarily utilized and applied in analyzing all genres of literary works ranging from short stories to poetry. It is difficult to get any text that does not have a connection with and influence from psychoanalysis. Therefore, as this study is applying it to study the selected short stories of Chekhov, psychoanalytic reading brings more insightful knowledge of human relationships presented here.

As Chekhov writes his works in the field of human behaviour, psychoanalytic theory is very suitable to investigate the issues of complexity of love and marriage in his selected stories. Discussing the vulnerability associated with love and emotional connections Freud states, "We are never as defenseless against suffering as when we love" (Freud 84). Loving someone makes us most vulnerable to emotional pain and suffering. In this reference, Lois Tyson views, "If psychoanalysis can help us better understand human behavior, then it must certainly be able to help us understand literary texts, which are about human behavior" (Tyson 11). In that sense, one can reaffirm that love shapes human behaviours and relationships and explores its complexities and dynamics in the therapeutic context. However, this research uses psychoanalysis in reading the text; exploring the behaviours of characters according to this theoretical perspective.

In "About Love", Chekhov, through the love affair between Alehin and Anna, and Anna's relationship with her husband, reveals a pattern of psychological behaviour responsible for a good deal of the narrative progression. "This pattern is grounded in the characters' fear of intimacy, the unconscious conviction that emotional ties to another human

being will result in one's being emotionally devastated" (Tyson 39). This psychological problem is so pervasive in Chekhov's selected stories that the stories become, through a psychoanalytic perspective, the stories of dysfunctional love. Lacan forwarded the view that desire is always the desire of the other. What we desire is what we are taught to desire. He views, "Man's desire is the desire of the other" (Lacan 264). Then, if our desire is not fulfilled we get suffering. Lacan focuses on loss and the lack of something that is always in the characters' unconscious minds. In "About Love", Anna's lack of getting Alehin and vice versa reflects such a state of unconsciousness in them. Alehin says:

“I had to say goodbye. When our eyes met in the compartment our spiritual fortitude deserted us both; I took her in my arms, she pressed her face to my breast, and tears flowed from her eyes. Kissing her face her shoulders, her hands wet with tears –oh, how unhappy we were! –I confessed my love for her, and with a burning pain in my heart I realized how unnecessary, how petty, and how deceptive all that had hindered us from loving was. ("About Love" 525)

This extract reveals the deep emotional connection and mutual love between the characters, highlighting the profound regret and suffering they feel for not having embraced their love sooner due to superficial obstacles. It underscores the intense pain of unfulfilled desire and the realization of what they have lost.

Similarly, in "The Schoolmistress", Chekhov portrays Marya's character with such unconscious mind of lacking someone's love. For it what Lacan called is Symbolic Order. He states, "The unconscious is structured like a language" (Lacan 149). The unconscious, which includes repressed desires and fears, is structured and expressed through language, reflecting the complexities of loss and desire within the psyche. Presenting this state in Marya, the narrator says, "“ It was all so inconvenient, so comfortless. Her abode consisted of one little room and the kitchen close by. Her head ached every day after her work, and after dinner she

had heartburn" ("The Schoolmistress" 447). Marya's desire is repressed, she gets such physical suffering because of the tension created in her unconscious not in the external world. Chekhov provides a glimpse into the unconscious struggles and challenges faced by the character in her everyday life through this story.

The psychoanalytic theory puts the origin of the unconscious in the centre of the human psyche. This is the major determinant of human relationships. Psychoanalysis digs out and goes through individual human beings. Psychological history begins with childhood experience and adult behavior is the result of such experience. In "The Darling", the protagonist, Olenka, known as "Darling," is deeply influenced by her childhood experiences. As a child, she loses her father and is raised by her mother, which shapes her need for affection and dependency on others throughout her life. Her childhood experiences of loss and reliance on her mother set the stage for her adult behaviors. As evidence, the narrator says about Olenka, "In earlier days she had loved her papa, . . . She had loved her aunt who used to come every other year from Bryansk; and before that, when she was at school, she had loved her French master" ("The Darling" 528). Chekhov explores that Olenka's pattern of intense attachment to significant figures in her life, starting from childhood (her father, aunt, and French master), shapes her adult behavior of seeking love and validation from men, illustrating the theory that early emotional experiences influence later relationships and behaviors.

The goal of psychoanalysis is to help us resolve our psychological problems, disorders and dysfunction. The focus is on patterns of behavior destruction. Repetition of destructive behavior may indicate the existence of some psychological difficulty. Psychological difficulty influences us without our knowing it. Freud discusses the interplay between conscious desires and unconscious drives. While talking about the existence of the unconscious Tyson states, "You can't always get what you want, but you get what you need.

Psychoanalytically, you can't always get what you consciously want, but you get what you unconsciously need" (12). People have different desires consciously such as getting some materials, prestige, wellness etc. but they may get other things which they do not expect because of the unconscious. The notation is that human beings are motivated, even driven by desires, fears, needs and unaware i.e. unconscious. For example, in "About Love", Alehin and Anna have a deep attachment to each other. Though they cannot express their love openly to each other, they are in a very serious love affair. Anna is the wife of a reputed lawyer, they have a baby girl and she wishes to live happily with this family that is her wish but her need is different that is she wants Alehin's love, she sits close to him and she smiles at him and so on. Therefore, here is the vital role of the unconscious in the relationship between Alehin and Anna. The following extract from the story in Alehins' words justifies it:

And when I went to the town I saw every time from her eyes that she was expecting me, and she would confess to me herself that she had had a peculiar feeling all that day and had guessed that I should come. We talked a long time, and were silent, yet we did not confess our love to each other, but timidly and jealously concealed it. We were afraid of everything that might reveal our secret to ourselves. I loved her tenderly, deeply, but I reflected and kept asking myself what our love could lead to if we had not the strength to fight against it. ("About Love" 523)

The remark made by Alehin discloses that there are love feelings between Alehin and Anna, they wish to reveal it to each other but they have a different need in their unconscious mind as a result they cannot reveal their feelings. They always expect each other's love, however, they cannot confess it. Here, the unconscious is the centre in their unexpressed relationship. As a result, the complexities occur in their love and relationship.

The unconscious mind holds our painful experiences, emotions, fears, guilt, desires, and unresolved conflicts that we avoid acknowledging because we fear they will overwhelm

us. Alehin is always afraid of the bad result that may occur if he reveals his love to Anna which is completely based on his unconscious. He seems to be emotional about beautiful Anna, but he fears the potential consequences if they marry. Therefore, he says, "It seemed to be incredible that my gentle, sad love could all at once coarsely break up the even tenor of the life of her husband, her children, and all the household in which I was so loved and trusted" ("About Love" 523). There is a deeply conflicted emotional state in Alehin's mind. We find an extreme internal conflict within the narrator. It reveals the struggle between his repressed desires and the moral and societal constraints imposed by his super-ego. The tension between these forces creates a sense of incredulity, fear, and guilt, highlighting the complex nature of human emotions and relationships. Therefore, "About Love" explores the complexities of romantic relationships, particularly through the perspectives of unrequited love and societal expectations. Chekhov explores an idea that while marriage is often seen as the culmination of romantic love, it can also be a source of disillusionment and unhappiness. Chekhov suggests that the institution of marriage may not always align with the true essence of love. While marriage can provide stability and social acceptance, it may not necessarily guarantee emotional fulfillment or genuine connection between partners. The characters in the story grapple with their own unfulfilled romantic desires, highlighting the complexities of love and the human heart. In this situation, how we can imagine meaningful and comfortable relationships between the characters. The stories offer an exact exploration of true connection between love and marriage, questioning conventional notions of romantic relationships and highlighting the often-fraught nature of human connections.

Repression is the selective material associated with conflict and stress. Freud views that our conflicted feelings about painful experiences and emotions are our repressed desires. In Chekhov's stories, the characters are found to be repressed and they become unsuccessful in their fruitful and cheerful relationship. Instead, they become a victim of suffering from

complex love situations. For instance, the protagonist of "About Love", Alehin is repressed when he should return to his farm in the village because of the debt his father has taken for his university education. Despite working in a reputed job in the town, he is obliged to stay on the farm after his graduation. Therefore, Chekhov sketches a character who is over-boiled with repression as in the character of Alehin. He remarks:

Ever since I left the University, I am an idle gentleman by education, a studious person by disposition; but there was a big debt owing on the estate when I came here, and as my father was in debt partly because he had spent so much on my education, I resolved not to go away but to work till I paid off the debt. ("About Love" 518)

This excerpt suggests a complex interplay of familial obligation, personal ambition, and a sense of duty-ego. The individual's decision to stay and work to pay off the debt could stem from a subconscious desire to rectify feelings of guilt or indebtedness towards their father, possibly influenced by unconscious conflicts and desires related to their upbringing and education.

Repression may be evident in the individual's suppression of their desires for leisure and intellectual pursuits. Despite being naturally inclined towards study and idle pursuits, he consciously chooses to work and prioritize paying off the debt owed by the estate. This decision to suppress their natural inclination could be influenced by unconscious guilt or a sense of duty towards their father, stemming from the financial strain caused by their education. The individual may repress their desires to fulfill perceived familial obligations and responsibilities, prioritizing practical concerns (namely ego) over personal fulfillment (i.e. Id). Chekhov beautifully represents the influence of family background on the love condition of his characters in these stories. "About Love" underscores how familial responsibilities, societal norms, and personal duties shape and often hinder the expression and fulfillment of love. Through Alehin and Anna's experiences, Chekhov explores the

complexities and emotional depths of human relationships, highlighting the profound impact of family background on the condition of love.

Moreover, repression resonates throughout Chekhov's subsequent story, "The Schoolmistress", reflecting the familial context of the characters. The protagonist, Marya Vassilyevna, experiences various forms of repression throughout the story like personal repression, social repression, emotional repression and intellectual repression. First of all, Marya suppresses her desires and aspirations, sacrificing her happiness for the sake of her family's well-being. She longs for love and companionship but feels duty-bound to care for her siblings and fulfill her obligations as a schoolmistress. Secondly, the societal constraints of 19th-century Russia also contribute to Marya's repression. As a woman in a patriarchal society, she faces limitations on her autonomy and opportunities, forcing her to conform to societal expectations rather than pursue her own dreams. Thirdly, Marya suppresses her emotions, particularly her longing for companionship and affection. So that, she never feels the real taste of love and human relationship. Though she has desire for love with the men, she cannot take her towards it. She maintains a stoic façade, hiding her vulnerability and inner turmoil from others, including her potential suitors. At last, Marya's intellectual pursuits are stifled by her role as a schoolmistress. While she is passionate about education and learning her responsibilities as a teacher leave little time for personal enrichment or intellectual exploration. Overall, repression permeates Marya's life, shaping her choices behaviours, and relationships. She is too much more familiar with her duty and responsibility than with fulfilling her desires. The given extract illustrates it:

She felt as though she had been living in that part of the country for ages and ages, for a hundred years, and it seemed to her that she knew every stone, every tree on the road from the town to her school. Her past was here, her present was here, and she

could imagine no other future than the school, the road to the town and back again, and again the school and again the road... ("The Schoolmistress" 443)

Chekhov explores the psychological tension between pleasure and reality through the character's experience of monotony and entrapment in her environment. Chekhov artistically depicts the psychological struggle between the pleasure of potential new experiences and the stark reality of an unchanging, monotonous life. The character's deep familiarity with her surroundings and inability to imagine a different future underscore a sense of psychological entrapment and despair. This tension between pleasure and reality is a central theme in Chekhov's work, reflecting the broader human experience of seeking fulfillment and meaning in the face of life's inherent limitations and routines. Therefore, Chekhov, in his stories, explores the psychological and emotional complexities of his characters, as well as the societal constraints that limit their freedom and fulfillment.

By nature, human beings have deep feelings regarding others either of the opposite sex or the same sex. Whenever an individual starts to feel another, there are many obstacles which halt their closeness. Then, what comes in their life is suffering rather than comfort as such feelings play in their unconscious mind unexpectedly. The unconscious serves as the repository for mental acts and desires that are forcibly kept out of conscious awareness, shaping behavior and emotions without explicit recognition. In his Introductory Lecture in Psychoanalysis, Freud defines repression as, "The process by which mental act capable of becoming conscious is made unconscious and forced back in to unconscious system. Repression can also be described as reversion to an earlier and lower stage in the development of mental act"(63). Therefore, repression is one of the most important aspects of personality and psychoanalysis. When we see the behaviours of the characters and their representation by Chekhov in these short stories, we find they are repressed. The main characters of the stories—Anna, Alehin, Olenka and Marya —seem to be repressed in "About

Love", "The Darling" and "The Schoolmistress" respectively. Anna and Alehin experience emotional repression due to their unfulfilled love for each other. This repression is evident in their internal struggles and inability to act on their feelings. Alehin says:

Anna Alexyevna and I used to go to the theatre together, always walking there; we used to sit side by side in the stalls, our shoulders touching. I would take the opera-glass from her hands without a word, and feel at that minute that she was near me, that she was mine, that we could not live without each other; but by some misunderstanding, when we came out of the theatre we always said goodbye and parted as though we were strangers. ("About Love" 524)

Chekhov skillfully portrays the psychological repression experienced by the characters. The narrator's intense but unexpressed feelings for Anna Alexyevna, coupled with their contradictory behaviors of intimacy and subsequent detachment, highlight a deep-seated repression driven by societal norms, personal fears, and communication barriers. This repression not only affects their relationship but also emphasizes the broader human experience of concealing true emotions due to external and internal constraints.

In a similar fashion, in "The Darling", Olenka exhibits a pattern of repression through her dependence on the men in her life, taking on their interests and opinions as her own, effectively losing her identity. This situation is reflected in the sentence, "She was fond of someone, and could not exist without loving" ("The Darling" 528). Love originates hope, trust, security and relief in a person, without it a person becomes like a fish without water, it is a natural process. To happen the same condition to Olenka is not accidental, however, she could not get cherished by her one way and blind love. Although she got the persons she loved in her life, she was unable to make that relationship resilient. Therefore, love and relationships create complexities in human life rather than providing them happiness and satisfaction.

Similarly, in "The School mistress", Marya Vassilyevna experiences a sense of repression through her monotonous and unappreciated life as a rural schoolteacher. In this context, the narrator says, "And no one thought her attractive, and life was passing drearily, without affection, without friendly sympathy, without interesting acquaintances. How awful it would have been in her position if she had fallen in love!" ("The Schoolmistress" 448). Chekhov identifies the psychological impact of repression on Marya's emotional well-being. Her fear of falling in love and the resultant repression of her desires for affection and connection reveal a deep-seated anxiety about vulnerability and societal judgment. This repression serves as a defense mechanism to protect herself from potential pain but ultimately leads to a lonely and unfulfilling existence. Chekhov's exploration of these themes underscores the complex interplay between internal desires and external realities, highlighting the often painful consequences of emotional repression. To create a lovely and supportive environment in one's life, one needs love either from their male or female partner or from their family. Why people feel love in adulthood is the reflection of the love, care and support they learnt to get from their family members.

Family is a storehouse of love and strong human relationships. There is a significant value of family to shape people's attitudes and deeds. Family is very important in psychoanalytic theory because we are each a product of the role we are given in the family complex. To what types of family and family members we are brought up and are living matter a lot in shaping one's personality. The characters in Chekhov's stories are greatly influenced from their family status, condition and members. In "About Love", both Anna and Alehin's psychological attitudes are deeply influenced by their family backgrounds, which instill in them values of duty, responsibility, and conformity at the expense of personal happiness and emotional fulfillment. Anna's loveless marriage and fear of societal judgment lead to emotional imbalance in her behavior. Alehin's inherited responsibilities and self-

denial result in isolation and an internal conflict between duty and desire. The narrator says, "I was unhappy. At home, in the fields, in the barn, I thought of her; I tried to understand the mystery of a beautiful, intelligent young woman's marrying someone so uninteresting, almost an old man, and having children by him; to understand the mystery of this uninteresting, good simple-hearted man ..." ("About Love" 522). Chekhov uses the characters' family backgrounds to highlight the broader human experience of struggling between societal expectations and personal fulfillment, demonstrating how deeply family influences can shape an individual's psychological landscape.

Similarly, in "The Schoolmistress", Marya, under societal pressure to conform to her role and duties, faces an internal conflict as she navigates her desires for love, intellectual pursuits, and personal happiness. When she is talking with Hanov and attracting herself towards him she is again driven by societal expectations and duties. The narrator says:

And again she thought of her pupils, of the examination, of the watchman, of the School Council; and when the wind brought the sound of the retreating carriage these thoughts were mingled with others. She longed to think of beautiful eyes, of love, of the happiness which would never be ... ("The Schoolmistress" 447)

An individual should balance between his or her personal feelings, family responsibilities and societal norms and values to have a happy and meaningful life. Whenever the characters fail to manage such balance among different aspects of their life, they suffer from complexities created by such desire of love and relationship. Though the personal desires of the person are not fulfilled in the expected time and situation they are not eliminated from their minds. In contrast, they are only snatched by familial duties and obligations and they are stored in the unconscious mind with the help of defenses for a long time. Defense mechanism consists of condensation and displacement along with various defenses. According to Freud, condensation refers to the process where multiple latent thoughts or feelings are compressed

into a single dream image or symbol, masking their true complexity. Displacement, on the other hand, involves the redirection of emotional significance from its original source to a more acceptable or less threatening alternative in the dream, allowing unconscious desires or fears to be expressed indirectly (Freud 135).

There is a great role of defenses to store the contents in our unconscious. Defenses are the process by which the contents of our unconscious are kept in the unconscious. Defenses include regression, selective perception, selective memory, denial, avoidance, displacement and projection. Freud discusses the concept of regression in his book "Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis" and says that it is the temporary return to a former psychological state. He further states, "Regression can involve a return either to a painful or a pleasant experience. It is a defense because it carries our thoughts away from some present difficulty" (423). Here, regression involves temporarily reverting to a past psychological state, whether positive or negative, as a defensive mechanism to divert attention from current challenges. This return to earlier experiences serves to alleviate present distress by immersing the mind in familiar, albeit potentially less stressful, mental territories.

When we see the characters' behaviours in Chekhov's stories we precisely find the place of regression. Chekhov displays regression in Anna's behaviour when in later years after the relationship with Alehin she was frustrated and started showing different behaviours. The narrator states:

In the latter years Anna Alexyevna took to going away for frequent visits to her mother or to her sister; she began to suffer from low spirits, she began to recognize that her life was spoilt and unsatisfied, and at times she did not care to see her husband nor her children. She was already being treated for neurasthenia. ("About Love" 524)

It shows that Anna's psyche is not stable and it is suffering from complexities created by love. Love does not only bring happiness and satisfaction but it also brings suffering to the people. Though people start their relationship unconsciously and they are bound in deep connection of their hearts in the beginning it cannot continue for a long time. As a result, love brings problems in people's relationships and family relationships. There is no one-to-one relationship between love and marriage. Although Anna is a married woman she falls in love with an unmarried boy, Alehin. Family relations can be beautified or destroyed by love and marriage. Human beings expand their love and marriage relationships by confronting core issues in their psyche.

Several psychological factors and core issues contribute to the complexities and sufferings experienced by the characters like Alehin, Anna, Olenka and Marya along with other characters in their romantic relationships in Chekhov's stories. The major psychological factors identified in these stories consist of the fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal, low self-esteem, unrequited love, fear of rejection, insecurity, idealization of love, social pressure, dependency and lack of identity, lack of autonomy, loneliness, desire for validation, power imbalance.

Through these stories Chekhov explores these core issues which reveal the complexities of human psychology in the context of love and relationships. When we see different characters' failure in love and relationship we find the effect of at least one or more than one core issue. In Alehin, the protagonist of "About Love", there is fear of intimacy, low self-esteem and insecure sense of self. Similarly, Anna's reluctance to fully engage with Alehin and Olenka's quick attachment to each new partner may stem from a fear of abandonment. Olenka's low self-esteem is manifested in her inability to form her own opinions and desires. Likewise, in Marya Vassilyevna, the protagonist of "The Schoolmistress", we find core issues like fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, low self-

esteem and insecure or unstable sense of self. Marya's isolated life as a schoolmistress suggests a fear of intimacy. Her monotonous and solitary existence prevents her from forming close, meaningful relationships. Likewise, her resignation to her dreary life indicates low self-esteem and a fear of abandonment. Further, her identity is strongly tied to her role as a schoolmistress, and she lacks a sense of self beyond this role. Her routine and predictable life provide a sense of security, but also highlight her fear of change and the unknown, which contributes to her unstable sense of self. The characters in these stories often struggle with internal conflicts and societal pressures that prevent them from achieving emotional fulfillment. Through these meticulous depiction, Chekhov highlights the acute impact of psychological issues on personal happiness and the intricate ways in which individuals navigate their emotional landscapes. The complexities in human relationships do not remain only in the unconscious mind but they also occur in the characters' dreams as they are asleep. The characters' relation complexities are not only limited to their sufferings and dysfunctional love but they start to appear in dreams and trouble them.

Psychoanalysis puts dreams and dream symbols in the centre of studying a character's psyche and behaviours. In his seminal work "The Interpretation of Dreams", Freud analyzes meanings in dream and he views, "....dream has a meaning, albeit a hidden one that it is intended as a substitute for some other thought process, and that it is only a question of revealing this substitute correctly in order to reach the hidden signification of the dream" (80). According to Freud, dreams are not meaningless occurrences but rather have significance. This significance is not obvious or manifest; it is hidden or latent. Freud posits that dreams serve as substitutes or disguises for deeper, unconscious thoughts or desires. The content of dreams is shaped by these underlying thoughts which are often repressed or unacceptable to the conscious mind.

The process of dream interpretation involves uncovering this hidden or latent content. Freud believed that through careful analysis, one could decode the symbolic language of dreams to reveal the unconscious wishes, fears, or conflicts that they represent. What we dream is its origin from our unfulfilled desire. There might be many things that we want but we cannot get in reality. Such unfulfilled desires are stored in our subconscious mind. When we sleep then these unfulfilled things come in our dreams. In "The Darling", Olenka, the protagonist wishes that she had been in the timber trade for ages and ages and that the most important and necessary thing in life is timber. Therefore, she dreams as she wants when she is asleep. The narrator says:

At night when she was asleep she dreamed of perfect mountains of planks and boards, and long strings of wagons, carting timber somewhere far away. She dreamed that a whole regiment of six-inch beams forty feet high, standing on end, was marching upon the timber-yard; that logs, beams, and boards knocked together with the resounding crash of dry wood, kept falling and getting up again, piling themselves on each other. ("The Darling" 532)

Chekhov's narratives conjure vivid dreamworld where the subconscious mind blends elements of construction and transportation. The imagery of perfect mountains of planks and boards suggests a landscape shaped by human industry, while the procession of wagons hints at a journey or movement toward an unknown destination. The regiment of six-inch beams marching upon the timber-yard personifies the materials themselves, lending a surreal quality to the scene. The repeated falling and rising of logs, beams and boards evoke a sense of perpetual motion and transformation, perhaps reflecting the cyclical nature of dreams themselves. Therefore, Olenka's subconscious state of mind plays important role in dreaming such scenes. Dreams and dream symbols are sketched by Chekhov in his stories to display the intricate relationship between our material realities and dreams we see as the production of

unfulfilled desires. In this or that medium or form, the human suffering can be fairly noticed in the characters. Human comforts, happiness, relief and cheerfulness are related to life and human sufferings, troubles, unfulfilled desires and dysfunctional human relationships are bound to death. The complexities play around human life and death.

Psychoanalytic theory is concerned with life and death concepts for these what he calls as the forces at work of human beings. Here recognize two fundamental forces: Eros and Thanatos. The first one denotes the force of life instinct in human. The second is concerned with the death instinct, which encompasses the drive towards aggression, self-destruction, and a return to an inorganic state. The instinct of Eros is directly concerned to love and sex instincts of human life. What inevitably drive human behaviours are love and sex matters. Love and sex dominate the psyche of a person. Chekhov's stories portray such types of love and attraction between characters. When we see Alehin's attraction to Anna in "About Love", we can say that love and sex are the very powerful forces to drive the human psyche.

In the late autumn there was a theatrical performance for some charitable object in the town. I went into the governor's box; I looked, and there was Anna Alexyevna sitting beside the governor's wife; and again the same irresistible, thrilling impression of beauty and sweet, caressing eyes, and again the same feeling of nearness. We sat side by side, then went to the foyer. ("About Love" 520)

The relationships are established because of the life forces of love and sex. Alehin's emotional and sexual desire towards Anna is reflected in the story. He observes every appearance and actions of Anna.

Every human body seeks to fulfill psychological needs, such as hunger, thirst and love. In the Freudian psychoanalysis, the most motivating force of life is the libido. It means the energy of sex motive. On one side, sex instinct is a destructive force of life that ruins a person and it collapses morality. We find a representation of sex as a destructive force while

we closely observe the love between Nikanor and Pelagea in "About Love". Though they were in love, Nikanor's behaviour towards Pelagea is not fruitful rather it is violent and destructive as he uses to drink alcohol, speaks swearing words and beats her; she uses to run upstairs to be saved from him. The following excerpt illustrates it:

“Beautiful Pelagea was in love with this cook. As he drank and was of violent character, she, did not want to marry him, but was willing to live with him without. He was very devout, and his religious convictions would not allow him to “live in sin”; he insisted on her marrying him, and would consent to nothing else and when he was drunk he used to abuse her and even beat her. (About Love 516)

Love and sex drives, sometimes, establish relationships which lead to bitter experiences. Human beings are trapped by such drives in some suffering instead of providing happiness. Pelagea is obliged to tolerate Nikanor's violent behaviour because of their love and sexual relationship. Although his behaviour is not fair to her, Pelagea loves him. In most cases, though love is converted into marriage, it might not be successful. Indeed, there is the birth of children after a couple gets married. After getting married even if the married couple give birth to children, they may have debates, conflicts and misunderstandings in some subject matters. As a result, marriage gives dissatisfaction, trouble and tragedies to the partners. Chekhov depicts the same condition in Smirnov in "The Darling". “He was married and had a little boy, but was separated from his wife because she had been unfaithful to him, and now he hated her and used to send her forty rubles a month for the maintenance of their son" ("The Darling" 533). How can a couple get separated even after begetting the children? Surely the unconscious plays a vital role here. From a psychoanalytic perspectives, this scenario reflects a complex mix of emotions and motivations. The husband's feelings of betrayal and anger toward his wife suggest deep emotional wounds resulting from her infidelity. His decision to continue supporting their son financially despite the separation

could stem from a sense of responsibility as a father, demonstrating a commitment to his parental role despite the breakdown of his marital relationship. However, the act of sending a specific amount of money each month could also indicate a desire to maintain control or a sense of obligation, perhaps influenced by societal expectations or personal values regarding familial duties. Overall, this situation highlights the intricate interplay between emotions, social norms, and personal values in shaping individuals' responses to relationship challenges.

On another side, sex energy is the creative and intellectual source of life instinct. Freud uses sex in a broad sense. It is not only coition and it represents love, tenderness and sympathy that brings all human beings in close contact. He states, "The concept of sexuality and at the same time of sexual instinct has to be extended so as to cover many things which could not be classed under the reproductive function" (Freud 45). It is a life force to extend the genes of a person through love.

Love is very closely related to life, therefore, sometimes people say love is life. To develop hope, behave properly and live quietly we need love. The search for love is reflected in "The Darling" very clearly as Olenka, the protagonist, seeks love from at least one person in her life. Let's see it:

She was always fond of someone, and could not exist without loving. In earlier days she had loved her papa, who now sat in a darkened room, breathing with difficulty; she had loved her aunt who used to come every other year from Bryansk; and before that, when she was at school, she had loved her French master. ("The Darling" 529)

Olenka's thirst for love illustrates how love is connected with one's life. Her need for love starts with her father and it grows up to school teacher as well in her early life. Later on, she gets married to two men and is attached to one more man in her life. Therefore, love and sex are very strong forces that drive a person to a close relationship and psychoanalysis grounds

them in the fundamental role. Marriage strengthens the couples' closeness. Love is converted into marriage and marriage further deepens the strong relationship. In married life, the individuals are co-dependent on each other to their life partner. They have a strong desire to be always together, they want to work together, they want to eat together and share their internal thoughts sitting side by side. The behaviours are transformed after the person falls in love with someone or gets married. They feel isolated and loneliness without their partner.

We find such miss and isolation in Olenka when she becomes alone without Kukin. The narrator says, "Kukin went to Moscow to collect a new troupe, and without him she could not sleep, but sat all night at her window, looking at the stars, and she compared herself with the hens, who are awake all night and uneasy when the cock is not in the hen house" ("The Darling" 530). It is considered that when people fall in love and get married, they become happy, get a lot of pleasure and enjoy their conjugal lives. However, life cannot go as straight as we think and love does not always provide a person happiness, entertainment, safety and satisfaction. It causes suffering in humans too.

Love creates such a psychological bond between the partners that causes great trouble to one partner when losing another. It is evident when Olenka's first husband Kukin dies. It is very traumatic for Olenka to tolerate her husband's loss. "My darling!" sobbed Olenka. "Vanka, my precious, my darling! Why did I ever meet you! Why did I know you and love you! Your poor heartbroken Olenka is alone without you!" ("The Darling", 531). Similarly, such troubles can also be identified in Olenka's venting out, showing her pain, loneliness and grief over losing her second husband Vasily. "I've nobody, now you've left me, my darling," she sobbed, after her husband's funeral. "How can I live without you, in wretched and misery! Pity me, good people, all alone in the world!" (The Darling, 534). These lines show the grief and sorrow of Olenka. How broken, lonely and empty she becomes now that after the person she loves and depends upon has gone. She has no one left. Dependency is also a

strong drive in human psyche. Olenka has no her own identity, she is dependent upon the people she cherishes solely. Then, we can say that when a person's mind and thoughts are completely dependent on others, they face much more troubles than others. All these troubles and tortures are based on the death instinct.

The aggressive behaviors, destructive will and hostile motives are manifested in death instinct. Always sexual violence is the result of sexual repression on the mind or psyche of person. Fear of abandonment also plays a role when we fear the death of others. We can see how death, emotional death if not biological death, is so attractive at least on the unconscious level. In "The Darling", death drive is subtly represented through the protagonist's dependence on others for her identity and sense of self-worth. Olenka, the protagonist, continually adapts her beliefs and personality to mirror those around her, losing her individuality in the process. This constant need for external validation and lack of a strong sense of self can be interpreted as a manifestation of the death drive, as it leads to a passive existence devoid of true vitality or purpose. After her father's death, she marries Kukin, immediately after Kukin's death, she marries Pustovalov. When Pustovalov also dies she becomes too close to a veterinary surgeon. At last, when the surgeon is also far away in his duty she becomes close to Sasha, the surgeon's son. All these evidences show how Olenka is tied with men and it can be interpreted as a fascination with death in a metaphorical sense.

Her dependency on men in the story can be taken as a fascination with death through the symbolic erasure of her individuality, her emotional and intellectual passivity, and the existential void she experiences in the absence of male influence. Such evidence can be observed in the following extract, "When she had Kukin, or Pustovalov, or the veterinary surgeon, Olenka could explain everything, and give her opinion about anything you like, but now there was the same emptiness in her brain and in her heart as there was in her yard outside. And it was as harsh and as bitter as wormwood in the mouth" ("The Darling" 536).

Olenka's attachment to various men in her life, like Kukin, Pustovalov, and the veterinary surgeon could be seen as an expression of her unresolved psychological conflicts and desires. It depicts Olenka's emotional state after the departure of her latest romantic interest. The metaphor comparing her inner emptiness to the barrenness of her yard evokes a sense of desolation and loneliness. Olenka's ability to engage intellectually and express opinions is shown to be dependent on the presence of a romantic partner, highlighting her deep-seated need for emotional connection. The bitterness likened to wormwood suggests that without someone to love, Olenka's life lacks meaning and fulfillment, emphasizing her recurring pattern of emotional dependency on others for validation and purpose.

In psychoanalysis, Freud tries to explain the meaning of sexuality in the human psyche and behaviours. He views that sexuality as a matter of a biological pressure that is discharged in the act of sexual intercourse, so then, children are also sexual humans. Chekhov tries to show how important is sexuality to human beings through his short stories. In "The Darling", the protagonist, Olenka is not very conscious of her childhood as she has forgotten everything about it, however, it remains in her unconscious. The narrator states:

She had once had a father and mother; they had lived in Moscow in a big flat near the Red Gate, but of all that life there was left in her memory only something vague and fluid like a dream. Her father had died when she was ten years old, and her mother had died soon after ... she had a brother, an officer; at first they used to write to each other, then her brother had given up answering her letters, he had got out of the way of writing. Of her old belongings, all that was left was a photograph of her mother, but it had grown dim from the dampness of the school, and now nothing could be seen but the hair and the eyebrows. ("The Schoolmistress" 444)

Olenka's forgotten childhood memories linger in her unconscious, shaping her emotional life. Despite vague recollections of her family, the loss of her parents and estrangement from her

brother leave her clinging to remnants like a faded photograph, symbolizing her unresolved longing for connection and stability amidst emotional turbulence.

Chekhov explores the theme of sexuality through some important subjects like Olenka's identity through relationships, absence of sexual autonomy, symbolism of repetition, emotional and psychological needs and patriarchal context. Olenka's identity is heavily tied to the men she loves and marries. Her sexuality is expressed through her emotional and psychological dependence on her partners. She adopts their interests, opinions, and even speech patterns, showcasing a kind of emotional and sexual submission that raises questions about her individuality and autonomy. "And what Kukin said about the theatre and the actors she repeated. Like him she despised the public for their ignorance and their indifference to art; she took part in the rehearsals..." ("The Darling" 529). Olenka does not have her own ideas regarding when she is tied with Kukin she completely adopts his voices and thoughts. Olenka's similar behaviours takes place when she marries Pustovalov, too. The narrator says, "Her husband's ideas were hers. If he thought the room was too hot, or that business was slack, she thought the same. Her husband did not care for entertainments, and on holidays he stayed at home. She did likewise" ("The Darling" 532). Here, Olenka's pattern of mirroring her husband's thoughts and behaviors highlights her tendency to adapt herself completely to her partner's preferences. This behavior suggests a deep-seated need for approval and a lack of strong personal identity, as she aligns her own opinions and actions closely with those of her husband, demonstrating a consistent pattern of dependency and impressionability in her relationships.

Similarly, sexuality can be examined through the perspectives of Marya's emotional experiences, societal expectations, and personal reflections in "The Schoolmistress". Marya's life is marked by isolation and a sense of unfulfilled potential. Her emotional loneliness can be interpreted as a form of sexual repression, where societal norms and personal

circumstances prevent her from experiencing intimate relationships. At first, Chekhov subtly portrays Marya's dissatisfaction with her monotonous and unremarkable life. This emotional and sexual repression is emblematic of the limited roles and opportunities available to women in her position. Reflection on lost opportunities is the next perspective to explore sexuality. Marya's reflections on her past hint at moments when she might have experienced or desired romantic and sexual relationships. For instance, she thinks about her former suitor, the land surveyor, Hanov, who once showed interest in her. However, these potential relationships never materialize into anything substantial, leaving her with a sense of what might have been. This aspect of the story highlights the theme of missed opportunities and the impact of societal constraints on personal and sexual fulfillment. The third perspective is societal expectations and personal sacrifice to see sexuality. As a schoolmistress, Marya is expected to maintain a certain decorum and dedication to her work. These societal expectations contribute to her sacrifice, where her professional responsibilities overshadow her desires and needs. The role of a schoolmistress is often seen as a vocation requiring selflessness, which in turn suppresses any expression of her sexuality or pursuit of personal happiness. Every time whenever she thinks about love and relationship she is repressed by her duty. Freud's concepts of the reality principle and the pleasure principle provide a framework for understanding the tension between immediate gratification and the demands of external reality. The pleasure principle is hedonistic and concerned with avoiding pain and seeking pleasure without considering the consequences. On the other hand, the reality principle is the driving force of the ego that seeks to delay gratification of the id's desires until an appropriate and realistic time and manner. Whenever the pleasure principle occurs in Marya's mind, the reality principle intervenes. For instance, "And again she thought of her pupils, of the examination, of the watchman, of the school council; ..." ("The Schoolmistress" 447). Her

mind is filled with whatever she has been doing for thirteen years. Her desires for relationships are completely repressed by her duty.

On the basis of the above discussion, it is inferred that Chekhov's stories intricately explore the serious impact of unconscious desires and repressed emotions on human relationships. Through characters like Alehin and Anna, Marya Vassilyevna, and Olenka, Chekhov reveals the hidden psychological landscapes that govern their actions and relationships. These characters, driven by the unconscious fears and desires shaped by early experiences and societal norms, navigate through lives marked by unfulfilled love, longing, and emotional chaos. Chekhov's narratives illuminate how repression and unconscious conflicts intricately influence the characters' decisions, revealing a pathetic exploration of human nature and the complexities of love.

Similarly, Chekhov's exploration of psychological tension and repression in his stories reveals a thorough struggle between pleasure and reality experienced by his characters. Through narratives of "About Love", "The Darling" and "The Schoolmistress", he portrays that the individuals are trapped in monotonous lives, yearning for fulfillment amid societal constraints. The characters' deep familiarity with their surroundings underscores a sense of psychological entrapment and despair, as they navigate between the pleasure of potential new experiences and the stark reality of their unchanging existence. Chekhov's depiction highlights the universal human quest for meaning and fulfillment amidst life's inherent limitations and routines, offering a plaintive exploration of the complexities of desire, repression, and societal expectations in shaping individual psyches.

Furthermore, these stories intricately explore the complexities and emotional turmoil of the protagonists in their romantic relationships, revealing a tapestry of psychological factors that influence their behaviors and experiences. These narratives vividly depict themes such as fear of intimacy, abandonment, and low self-esteem, which manifest in characters'

struggles to form meaningful connections amidst societal pressures. Chekhov examines the characters' subconscious through dreams, symbolizing unfulfilled desires and internal conflicts. Likewise, he addresses Freudian concepts like Eros and Thanatos, underscoring how love and human instincts drive their actions and relationships. Through complex and detailed portrayals of love, marriage, and societal expectations, Chekhov challenges conventional notions, highlighting the often-painful complexities of human connections and the search for emotional fulfillment.

In addition, Chekhov's exploration of human relationships in his stories reveals a great interaction between psychological drives and emotional experiences. Characters like Pelagea and Olenka illustrate Freudian concepts such as the libido, which manifests both as a destructive force, as seen in Nikanor's abusive behavior driven by his love for Pelagea, and as a creative life force, evident in Olenka's continuous search for love and connection. Love and marriage, central themes in Chekhov's narratives, often bring both joy and suffering, exposing the complexities of human emotions and desires. Olenka's repeated attachments to men reflect a deep-seated dependency and a yearning for emotional fulfillment, revealing how love can become entangled with issues of identity and self-worth. Ultimately, Chekhov depicts how these psychological dynamics shape individuals' experiences of love, highlighting the intricate balance between fulfillment and despair in human relationships.

At last, Chekhov's exploration of sexuality in his stories, particularly through characters like Olenka in "The Darling" and Marya in "The Schoolmistress", reveals complex dynamics influenced by Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Olenka's identity is intricately linked to her relationships with men, demonstrating a pattern of emotional and psychological dependence that erodes her individuality. Her tendency to adopt her partners' thoughts and behaviors underscores a deep-seated need for approval and a lack of personal autonomy. Similarly, Marya's life as a schoolmistress illustrates the suppression of her sexuality and

personal desires due to societal expectations and professional responsibilities. Her reflections on missed opportunities and the tension between her emotional longings and professional duties reflect Freud's concepts of the pleasure principle versus the reality principle. Marya's internal conflict between her longing for intimacy and her commitment to duty exemplifies how societal norms and personal sacrifices shape individuals' experiences of sexuality and fulfillment in Chekhov's anecdotes.

In conclusion, the stories under the investigation offer a poignant exploration of human psychology and the complexities of relationships through the Freudian perspectives. These stories explore the unconscious desires, repressed emotions, and societal pressures that shape characters like Alehin, Anna, Olenka, and Marya. Through their struggles with fear of intimacy, abandonment, and identity, Chekhov vividly portrays the inner conflicts that govern their actions and relationships. The characters' quests for love and fulfillment reveal the profound impact of psychological factors on personal happiness and emotional disorder. Chekhov's complex and detailed exploration not only highlights the universal human experience of navigating love and societal expectations but also underscores the intricate interplay between pleasure and reality in shaping individual psyches. His stories ultimately resonate as timeless reflections on the complexities of desire, repression, and the human condition.

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