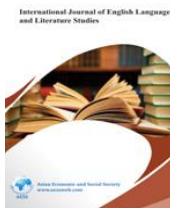




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SIMILAR WOMEN'S ROLE IN RUSSIAN AND CANADIAN MODERN SOCIETIES A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ALICE MUNRO'S SHORT STORIES AND THOSE OF ANTON CHEKHOV

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a new comparison of short stories of Munro and of Chekhov regarding motif of woman including her role, self-recognition, her complementary role, her searching for true identity and also her struggles, trials and errors on the way of gaining self-development. This research follows the method of American school of comparative literature based on thematology. Not one other research has been done in this new aspect of the authors' stories as most of the critics compared both authors' works based on their styles and not on their themes and motifs. This article concludes in comparing and contrasting of the stories and the fact that in all the stories there is a sense of lack on the part of the female character that leads to her quest for identity and also her struggles.

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Keywords: Alice munro, Anton chekhov, Comparative literature, Motif of woman, Self-development, Self-recognition, Identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Women throughout the world and in all ages have been the subject of many literary works written in different literary genres. Lots of literary critics have argued over the role and the status of women in the world and their self-recognition of their economic, social, political, literary, cultural and familial position in literary works. Thus, women have been the important analytical issue since the dawn of literature and whatever role they had, they were included in literary works as well as

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literary canons. The motif of woman is a universal issue; her oppression, her self-entanglement, her self-recognition, her role in society and also in the family, her relation to art, science and nature. All these issues have been the concern of most authors and they tried to shed light on these subjects through different literary devices and different literary genres. It's interesting to find out the affinities and differences of this universal issue between authors with different backgrounds and cultures.

Here, the comparative literature comes to the help of critics and also lay people as readers of literature. This research takes benefit from comparative study focusing on the motif of woman in short stories of Alice Munro and Anton Chekhov. Comparative literature is a vast and also eclectic kind of study as Jost asserts this idea in his book:

The comparatist's field, furthermore, touches upon philosophy, religion, psychology, sociology, history, and political science, though his efforts are centered on literary works...in the past twenty years, comparison has acquired other dimensions: foreign", for the comparatist, does not mean foreign to a country; it signifies foreign to the proper domain of literature.(1974, p.38)

In Jost's view it is divided in to four fields, "influences and analogies, movements and trends; genres and forms; and motifs, types and themes" (1974, p.33). But he believes that there is no specific method in comparative literature; in other words, the three schools complement each other but he is mostly follower of American school of comparative literature.

In most of the comparatists' view comparative literature consists of three major schools: French school, American school and Russian school. Jost, Praver and Aldridge, the prominent theoreticians in this field of study, are the followers of American school because of its being moderate. Thus, this thesis intends to follow American school of Comparative Literature which is more moderate and free than French school and it is also without any positivism. This school is completely free of national concerns and its main feature is the use of multiple literary theories. The American School of Comparative Literature is based on analogies which mean the differences as well as similarities between two or more works from different nations and languages.

And this school is more moderate than French school which is nationalistic and focuses only on documents. Jost points out the importance of the American school and says "The American School of comparative literature does not proclaim a precise doctrine or program, but practices tolerance and eclecticism. It is the school in which, to repeat Wellek's phrase, it is best to speak simply of literature" (1974, p.26).

This school is to be applied on the short stories of two masters of short story, the Canadian Alice Munroe and the Russian Anton Chekhov. The motif of woman is to be compared in both authors' selected short stories. That's why this thesis is after following the previously mentioned theoreticians' ideas on thematology. Jost emphasizes importance of studying themesthis way:

In brief, two languages are spoken in thematic: one understood readily by everyone, the other by the specialist only; except for the initiated, the second is an esoteric language. Both languages are equally capable of showing the relationships between the thematological elements of a specific work. The desirability of the more technical terminology, however, is strongly felt as soon as more

than one critic, even within the border of a national literature, comments on specific thematological issues. (1974, p.177)

This research is based on analogies rather than influences, thus, the comparison on thematology and motif includes both similarities and differences in the short stories of both authors in order to bring together their ideas despite their cultural, temporal and spatial distinctions. Aldridge points out the necessity of studying theme and motif and believes "affinity consists in resemblances in style, structure, mood or idea between two works that have no other connection" (Aldridge, 1969).

In general, the role of woman and her state during the process of acquiring self-development is emphasized in the previously mentioned short stories of Alice Munro and Anton Chekhov. In each story the activities and ideologies of a woman character is under the focus even much more than a male character whose deeds are briefly mentioned. This, points out the fact that the authors are interested in revealing the potentialities of a woman in different situations and also the female struggle, trials and errors in proving their power, ideology and self-recognition. This thesis is to find out the differences as well as similarities of the role of woman character in Munro's *Runaway* (centers on actions of Carla and her conflict with her husband), *Too Much Happiness* (centers on actions on the actions of the mathematics and novelist Sophia Kovalevsky) and *Lives of Girls and Women* (centers on Del since her childhood till her adolescence) as well as Chekhov's *The Lady with the Dog* (centers on ideas and actions of Anna in her relationship with Dimitri), *The Grasshopper* (centers on Olga's trials and errors in the path of reaching the moment of recognition) and lastly *The House with Mezzanine* (centers on the conflict between Lyda and a man who is a landscape artist).

Most of the critics compared Alice Munro's fictions with those of Anton Chekhov regarding their style of writing. For example, both authors use moments of epiphany, especially for the protagonists' moment of self-recognition. Another comparison made between the two authors with different cultural background is the secondary role of plot. In other words, both writers focus on characterization more than on plot. The element of time in both authors' most works moves forward and backward and from backward to forward again. In fact, they use flashbacks in most of their works to show the time and categorize the events or situations.

Other critics who have done a research on the short stories of Munro are Kulkarni (2013) who believes that Munro in *Lives of Girls and Women* deviated from the conventional Canadian short story which is written in linear chronological form, with her narrative art and theme, Zsizsmann (2011) in his article studies Munro's latest short story collection *Too Much Happiness* and he aims to "examine the discourse of displacement, the clash of different value systems and the way in which travel implies both gains and losses" (2013, p.201), Barber (2006) in his article analyses the stories of the collection of *Runaway* "in order to present the reader with the description of her artistic interests, motifs and techniques in this work" (2006, p.1). He claims that this collection revolves around the theme of "love and its absence"(2006, p.5), mostly between a man and a woman. And the researches done on Chekhov's short stories are Apollonio (2008) article that

interprets the scenic storytelling in Chekhov's *Grasshopper*. He represents Olga as grasshopper and Doctor Dymov as ant. The author believes that this story is condemnation of art." Diligence is rewarded, and betrayal condemned" (2008, p.3), Flath (1999) in his article challenged the concept of art and idleness in Chekhov's *The House with Mansard: An Artist's Story*.

This study contributes in the existing literature in a way that not a research has been done on the comparison of two authors' themes, motifs and concepts. Thus, the quest for particular interpretation of female voice and motif of woman in Alice Munroe's and Anton Chekhov's short stories dominates this research.

This study is one of very few studies which have investigated to prove the universality of the point that women can be creative creatures due to their limitless effort for gaining self-development and identity and they are suppressed by society and family, regardless of place, language, time and culture. The spatial, temporal and cultural differences of the works and their authors provide the chance for this research to enter the domain of world literature and to bring together the ideas of the writers about the notion of woman to reach a comprehensive understanding of their cultures.

With these notions of feminine efforts of Canadian women in mind, Alice Munro, the master of short story who won the 2013 noble prize in literature, started to follow their path. In other words, she has tried to show both women's and girls' struggle to gain freedom, self-recognition and equal rights as men. Thus, the role of woman in Munro's short story collection *Lives of Girls and Women, Runaway* and *Too Much Happiness* is to be investigated in this article. The focus is both on major and minor female characters for better understanding of the fictions. The analysis starts with *Lives of Girls and Women*.

2. ANALYSIS OF ALCE MUNRO'S SHORT STORIES

The short story collection of *Lives of Girls and Women* includes eight chapters through which Munro goes through the details of women's ordinary life and makes this ordinariness extra ordinary to confirm that a woman can reach mental maturity through the observation of other women around her and her vital experience of the events. Munro embedded this fact in the protagonist Del who gains maturity at the end and becomes a creative writer.

Another point that Del opposes to her mother, Addie, is her anti-sexual and feminist nature. When Del asks her why she fell in love with Del's father, she merely responds because he was a gentleman. Del gets disappointed here and is annoyed by her mother's sexlessness and lack of love. She says to Del, "Don't get distracted over men, once you make the mistake your life will be never your own, you will get the burden a woman always does" (Munro, 2009). So Del cannot find herself through her mother's unaccepted modernity and intellectualism. Neither Del's aunts nor her close friend Naomi are able to help her in reaching recognition. Because all of them are submitted to patriarchy, as Kulkarni (2013) points it out in his article, "Aunt Elspeth and Grace are typical spinsters who are always busy in household marathons of scrubbing, washing, baking, preserving, cooking" (p.2). Then, Del gets acquainted with Garnet French who is a Baptist. They have sexual affair that is Del's first experience in sex. This leads her to think that sex is not woman's

submission to man but it is body's submission to passion and desire. So she rejects the common belief of her time that in sex a woman is the surrender to man. She believes, "Sex seemed to me all surrender—not the woman's to the man but the person's to the body, an act of pure faith, freedom in humility" (Munro, 2009). Furthermore, When Del and Garnet were talking about the time of their marriage, (actually Garnet proposes her for the first time), he asks Del she should be baptized first. Del does not pay attention to his forcing her to be baptized and she does not accept to be baptized and says, "I don't want to be baptized. It's no good if I don't want to be baptized" (Munro, 2009). Garnet becomes angry and forces her to do the baptizing by pushing her under the water. When she kicks him in the belly, puts on her dress and goes home. On the way a moment of epiphany occurs to her and she feels free,

As I walked on into Jubilee I repossessed the world. Trees, houses, fences, streets, came back to me, in their own sober and familiar shapes. Unconnected to the life of love, [uncoloured] by love, the world resumes its own, it's natural and callous importance. (Munro, 2009)

Thus, the scene of their being in the water and their struggling was a life battlefield for Del: to fight for freedom and selfhood. Here, an inner baptism occurs to her. Kulkarni (2013) asserts this point, In Del's life epiphany comes when Garnet French tries to push her head down into the river to baptize her so that he could marry her. (p.3) Del decides to write a novel about Jubilee and her experiences. At the end she becomes a creative writer. "A time came when all the books in the Library in the Town Hall were not enough for me; I had to have my own. I saw that the only thing to do with my life was to write a novel" (Munro, 2009) The title of her fiction is "photographer" who is a character in the story and takes picture from people of Flats Road and Jubilee but the pictures do not show the real appearance of the people. In other words, the pictures are changes when taken. The photographer is the artist who can empower the relation between art and life, between real and fiction. Del as a woman proves that writing a narrative is a woman's power of creation that can change the real of her hometown in to a fiction like the photographer. In general, *lives of Girls and Women* is a story about process of getting selfhood for two generations of a mother and a daughter. They struggle in to separate different ways. But, as Kulkarni suggests, "Mother is a failure and daughter succeeds" (2013, p.3). The first story in the collection of *Runaway* is *Runaway*. Interestingly, this story, as Barber emphasizes in his article, introduces themes and struggles that are somehow involved in the stories that follow; the struggle of a girl or a woman for finding herself and for making sense out of her life. This article is to analyze the role of woman in the first story *Runaway*. The story is about a couple named Carla and Clark. Clark teaches horse riding and Carla helps him in his job. Carla is a young girl who is abused by her husband's cold indifferent behavior. "The principal character in "Runaway" is Carla, a young woman fixed in a relationship with a moody, rather threatening lover named Clark" (Barber, 2006). He is not an emotional support for her and that makes Carla sad. They have a white goat named Flora whom Carla loves so much but suddenly she disappears. This makes Carla more agitated. Critics believe that the goat is actually symbol of Carla.

Flora was Clark's pet, followed him everywhere and danced for his attention. In other words, it is Carla who attempts at absorbing her husband's attention but he doesn't care. She tells a lie to Clark about their old neighbor Mr. Jamieson who was a poet and is dead now. Barber suggests that this lie is just because of attracting Clark's attention. This is evident in the story,

In an effort to please Clark and to stimulate their sex life, Carla has developed a fragmented and fictitious story about how the dying Mr. Jamieson next door has been aroused by her and sought her sexual favors during her visits to help with the housework. (Munro, 2005)

For this reason Clark decides to blackmail Mr. Jamieson, Sylvia's husband, who is dead now. Carla cannot tell the truth to Clark; that makes the situation gloomier than before. She gets more and more agitated and doesn't know what to do. Sylvia, Mr. Jamieson's wife, suggests Carla to escape to Toronto because of her depression and agitation but Sylvia doesn't know anything about blackmailing. However, when Carla is on her way to Toronto, everything changes in her mind and feelings. Barber also believes that a "reversal" occurs.

Before she reaches the third stop she has run through a gamut of recollections and feelings, including a grudging acknowledgment that she has adapted truth somewhat with Sylvia in order to live up to what she imagined to be the latter's expectations of her, as well as increasing self-doubts and a growing panicky feeling that she is incapable of living without Clark. She gets off the bus and phones Clark to come get her! (Munro, 2005)

Surprisingly, at the night of her returning, the goat comes back home. She appears in front of Sylvia's house when Clark goes there to threaten Sylvia not to interfere any more in their lives. Flora comes and the mood changes. Barber in his article demonstrates the point that it is because of Flora representing Carla's independence and freedom that Clark forgets about threatening Sylvia. Actually, returning Flora is returning Carla's selfhood and self-recognition. Because of this, Clark becomes friendlier with Carla, also reconciles with Sylvia and forgets about blackmailing her. Flora disappears again. And we don't know what happens to the goat. Carla gets informed about returning of Flora by reading Sylvia's letter. In other words, Flora does not go to Carla's house that night. By feeling a kind of temptation, Carla tends to go to the woods, "Where she might find the little dirty bones in the grass. The skull, with shreds of bloodied skin still clinging to it that she could settle in one hand. Knowledge in one hand" (Munro, 2005). According to Barber, Flora represents "...a more independent and self-confident Carla..." (2006, p.147). It is ambiguous for Carla that what happened to Flora. The third story to be analyzed is *Too Much Happiness* which is a short story collection by Alice Munro published in 2009. It is "a short biography of a Russian mathematician and novelist Sophia Kovalevsky (1850-1891), the first woman to be appointed for a chair at a European University, in Stockholm" (Boucherie, 2010). She was the first woman who became a professor in French University. In that time, a woman had so much constraint that she could not be a professor or a member of an academy. Interestingly she was a literary author as well.

Sophia's potentiality as a woman writer and mathematician was ignored by her father, Maxim (her first husband) and Vladimir (her second husband). When Sophia printed her first novel that was about her sister Aniuta, "Her father was outraged. "Now you sell your stories, how soon before you will sell yourself?" (Munro, 2009). Zsizsmann in his article emphasizes the restrictions of Russian women, "We see here parallel lives, as both Sophia and Aniuta were bright young women with [writerly] ambitions, eager to escape the restrictive world of 19th-century Russia and live by way of their knowledge" (2011, p.208). Also, in 19th century of Russia women had limited opportunities for education. Sophia could not go to university or go to a foreign country without consent of her parents or without being married. Thus, she used "white marriage" to a liberal Vladimir Kovalevsky to be able to educate in German university and get a PhD. She writes a letter to her father very daringly, "My dear father, I have gone to Vladimir and will remain here. I beg you that you will no longer oppose our marriage" (Munro, 2009). Her father allows their marriage. Amutha reveals this fact and says, This once again happens to be a representation of the Russian tradition where the consent of the father was sought for the marriage. Amutha (2010) Her first husband, Vladimir, can grant her equality but he does not give her emotional support and love. Zsizsmann emphasizes this in his article, "She ponders her relationship with her husband Vladimir, who could grant her some equality but could never offer her safety and comfort" Zsizsmann (2011). Sophia's relation with Maxim kovalevsky, who is a professor of law and a namesake of her first husband, is worth noted here. He cannot give her the love and protection she expects. He wants her to be a wife for him and put way her intellectual positions. Easily, he ignores Sophia as an intellect. Amutha suggests this point in his article, "Maxim, on the other hand is a man not too serious about his affair with Sophia. He too is more preoccupied about his own importance of being a scholar...He is a scholar, but not one who wishes to recognize the intellectual part of a woman" (2011, p.325). Zsizsmann suggests that the reason of Maxim's ignoring her intellectual position is his jealousy, "Despite their common interests, she could not be happy with Maxim, the Russian professor of law either, as he was jealous of her talent and felt himself ignored" Zsizsmann (2011). This jealousy is explicitly explained by Munro when Sophia wins the Bordin Prize. Another man who also ignores her position is her nephew Urey, Aniuta's son. He makes fun of her being a mathematician as well, "being a mathematician isn't necessary, as I see it." She kept silent. "I could not respect myself," he said. "Being a professor of mathematics." (Munro, 2009). When it comes to her death, Sophia's last words were "too much happiness". Boucherie believes that here death means alienation from the common reality that the artists and scientists confront it in their never ending task of searching truth. Generally speaking, it is believed that too much happiness is actually a story that Sophia wants to write as she mentions the idea of writing a new story. It is that happiness that results from all the convergences and interconnectedness of life variables. It is the happiness of a woman as an artist.

3. ANALYSIS OF ANTON CHEKHOV'S SHORT STORIES

Anton Chekhov is also a master of short story who pays attention to women's status in most of his stories and dramas. *Lady with the Dog*, *The House with Mezzanine: An Artist's Story* and *The Grasshopper* are to be analyzed in this article regarding the role or motif of woman. The first to be discussed is *Lady with the Dog*. It's a story about a man and a woman who are caught in a love affair. Gurov is a married man about forty years old who is not in love with her wife. That's why he has lots of sexual affairs with women though he hates them. "...and he secretly considered her unintelligent, narrow, [inelegant], was afraid of her...and when they were talked about in his presence, used to call them "the lower race" (Chekhov, 1899).

He is in search of something in women that he cannot find it in men.

...and yet he could not get on for two days together without "the lower race."...but when he was in the company of women he felt free, and knew what to say to them and how to behave; and he was at ease with them even when he was silent. In his appearance, in his character, in his whole nature, there was something attractive and elusive which allured women and disposed them in his [favour]. (Chekhov, 1899)

This force is actually the need to love a woman whom he cannot find. He thinks all women are the same and are low race. Every affair he has with a woman he easily forgets about it. There is not something interesting in them for Gurov, even in his wife. What is he looking for in women?

One day in a sea resort in Yalta, he saw a lady with a dog. Her appearance and the way she dressed is a cue for him to think that she is here for the first time and she is married. Her name is Anna. The thought of making love with her comes to his mind. They gradually become intimate. When they have sexual affair for the first time, Anna hates their deed and regrets.

I am a bad, low woman; I despise myself and don't attempt to justify myself. It's not my husband but myself I have deceived. And not only just now; I have been deceiving myself for a long time. My husband may be a good, honest man, but he is a flunkey! I don't know what he does there, what his work is, but I know he is a flunkey! I was twenty when I was married to him. I have been tormented by curiosity; I wanted something better. 'There must be a different sort of life,' I said to myself. I wanted to live! To live, to live! (Chekhov, 1899)

She is the first woman who regrets about her affair with Gurov. In other words, she is the first who confesses their affair as wrong because they are both married, though both have an unhappy marriage. When Anna returns to Moscow, he realizes that "Anna's shadows follow him everywhere and that he is haunted" (Levitt, 2012). He discovers she is different from the other women he had seduced and that were not a sense of regret in having affair with him.

She is not an ordinary woman for him but Anna always suspects that he does not love her truly. She does not get love and passion from her husband so she seeks this love from Gurov. In other words, she is not like other women whom he had seduced. This difference leads to his change. Actually, he does not at first intend to love her. Actually he thinks that this relationship

is not like his other relationships, "Anna is another episode or adventure in his life" (Chekhov, 1899). He finds out that he is in love for the first time in his life. He goes to her hometown because he cannot forget her. They meet each other in the opera house and she promises to visit him in Moscow provided that he immediately leaves her in her hometown. After that they meet each other every three or four months in Moscow. Now they are deeply in love secretly. It's a kind of escape for both of them; an escape from their unhappy marriage.

The moment of epiphany comes when the lady returns to her hometown after their first intimacy. This lady with her purity and innocence lead to Gurov's change and moral growth as Porter (1977) asserts in his article,

...the man surprises himself by missing the woman intensely and discovers that he has experienced something new, that he has never before felt so strongly about a woman. In both stories, the emphasis is on the reaction to the affair rather than on the affair itself. (p.52)

She is so logical that when for the first time she wants to leave for her hometown, she actually is leaving Gurov. In fact, she does not want to continue their adulterous affair. It's Gurov who goes to her again and seeks her love. This is described by Chekhov in the story,

She did not shed tears, but was so sad that she seemed ill, and her face was quivering. "I shall remember you . . . think of you," she said. "God be with you; be happy. Don't remember evil against me. We are parting forever -- it must be so, for we ought never to have met. Well, God be with you." (Chekhov, 1899)

But Chekhov does not give a solution for this problem. He just reveals and explains this problematic situation. It is open ended.

Generally speaking, this true love for him comes out of the relationship with a woman with pure genuine feeling; the true sense of love that he could not find in other women whom he had seduced. This woman cannot bear disrespect from behalf of a man; she does not accept to be an object of desire for men. That's her difference that attracts Gurov, satisfies his affair with her and leads to his growth. That's why she always wants him to confess if he does not love her truly and spends his time with her only for sex. She is the woman he seeks for.

Another story to be analyzed is *The House with Mezzanine: An Artist's Story*. *The House with Mezzanine* is a story about a landscape painter who spends a summer in a Russian countryside and lives there with a wife and two daughters of a landowning family and then returns to the city of Petersburg. Interestingly, the girls are at odd with each other; their ideologies are different. Lydia the older daughter, about twenty three years old, is a schoolteacher in Zemstvo school and writes pamphlets and booklets for the peasants to inform them about their health. She earns money and is proud of her independence. She is sociable and socially active. Zhenya, the younger daughter about eighteen years old, is passive, highly emotional and not independent. Lydia, Zhenya and their mother are interested in art but the way they look at it is different. The landscape painter in the story is the narrator as well. He is a man who is caught between two sisters; seriousness of Lydia and idleness of Zhenya.

Flath asserts that in the surface reading of the story the narrator and Zhenya are featured as being idle as the story describes this feature,

As a man without a care in the world, seeking somehow to justify his constant idleness, I have always found such festive mornings in a country house universally attractive...When you know that all these healthy, satisfied, beautiful people will do nothing all day long, [then] you long for all life to be like that. So I thought then as I walked through the garden, quite prepared to drift like that without occupation or purpose, all through the day, all through the summer. (Chekhov, 1999)

Actually, Zhenya is his inspiration for painting, but not Lydia because of her seriousness and dislike of him as mere idle. Zhenya thinks him as god, as a creature who knows everything and who can eternalize everything. The artist himself is surprised that she believes him easily without demanding any reason or proof,

Zhenya thought that I, as an artist, knew a great deal and could guess what I did not know. She wanted me to lead her into the region of the eternal and the beautiful, into the highest world, with which, as she thought, I was perfectly familiar, and she talked to me of God, of eternal life, of the miraculous. And I, who did not admit that I and my imagination would perish forever, would reply: "Yes. Men are immortal. Yes, eternal life awaits us." And she would listen and believe me and never asked for proof. (Chekhov, 1999)

Lyda is opposite of her younger sister. She is so active in her work as teaching and also in political affairs. She dislikes the landscape artist because he is so idle and does not express people's problems in his art. She believes herself to be more helpful than him in meeting people's needs as is described in the story itself,

She did not like me because I was a landscape-painter, and in my pictures did not paint the suffering of the masses, and I seemed to her indifferent to what she believed in... And in exactly the same way Lyda despised me as a stranger. Outwardly she never showed her dislike of me, but I felt it, and, as I sat on the bottom step of the terrace, I had a certain irritation and said that treating the peasants without being a doctor meant deceiving them, and that it is easy to be a benefactor when one owns four thousand acres. (Chekhov, 1999)

Flath in his article argues about the relationship between the artist and Lyda that, "...his relations with Lyda are marked by conflict, struggle and tension" (Chekhov, 1999). Interestingly, the artist needs Lyda's struggle and conflict to complete his idle art which requires dynamism and work, "I was fascinated by the breadth of her views, perhaps because she thought differently from the strong, handsome Lyda, who did not love me" (Chekhov, 1999).

Lyda tries to inform the artist to add dynamic atmosphere to his works by expressing social needs and problems. She believes that his art is futile without any practicality. By telling the sentence, "...who did not love me", the artist shows us there is a need for Lyda that he ignores,

here there is a lack in his art that should be filled with Lyda's practicality and conflict. Flath (1999) also emphasizes that the artist is interested in Lyda despite her conflict with him,

And in spite of her repeated statements to the narrator that what she is saying "cannot be interesting" to him, she is the one who keeps the narrator's attention and interest...the narrator's interest in Lyda and her struggle against that interest, seems clearly to serve as the alternative to the emptiness and languor that mark his interactions with Zhenya. (p.462)

Generally, Chekhov leads his story without any resolution. But the need of the man artist to practicality of a woman is interesting and highlighted in his story. In fact, to complete his art, that is merely an inspiration, he requires Lyda's attention.

The Grasshopper is the last story to be analyzed. It is a story about the recognition of Olga who craves art and artist in her life and the mistake she does in this path. She marries to Dymov who is a doctor and does not have any talent or tendency toward art. The story begins in Olga's wedding day; in their wedding day, Olga's relatives are described as sort of artists and Olga has so many tendencies toward learning art,

Every one of them was remarkable in some way, and more or less famous; already had made a reputation and was looked upon as a celebrity ... there was a singer from the opera, a good-natured, fat man who assured Olga Ivanovna, with a sigh, that she was ruining herself, that if she would take herself in hand and not be lazy she might make a remarkable singer; then there were several artists... (Chekhov, 1892)

Olga loves art but she doesn't know how she can embed her soul and spirit into art. In fact, she is shown only as appearance and exterior as Apollonio asserts in his article, "story. Chekhov's heroine herself is associated with perception and appearance; she is all exterior and marked by leitmotifs of clothing, decoration, and visual art" (2010, p.7). It is explained in the story that Olga cannot learn any art in a sophisticated way but she is just good at meeting the famous artists and make acquaintance with them.

Olga goes to an artistic journey down the Volga River. It is a painting expedition. She is seduced there by Riabovskii, a prominent painter who attracts Olga's attention with his seductive words and admires her progress in painting. Olga believes in his immortality.

"I love you madly," he whispered... "Don't talk like that," said Olga Ivanovna, covering her eyes... "What of Dymov? Why Dymov? What have I to do with Dymov? ... I don't care about the past; give me one moment, one instant!" (Chekhov, 1892)

She distances from her husband and her past. She is immersed in Riabovskii's art of appearance. Apollonio discusses this point, "Thus this is also the story of the painter's use and abuse, for the purpose of art, of a living, breathing, human being" (2010, p.13). Soon Riabovskii lost Olga's inspiration and substitutes it with "some other woman, a new source of inspiration"

(Apollonio, 2008). This gloomy and embittered relationship of Olga and Riabovskii is very well described in the story,

Olga is not his source of inspiration anymore, “A thousand reasons!” cried Olga Ivanovna. “The chief one is that you are weary of me. Yes!” she said, and broke into sobs” (Chekhov, 1892). She tries to attract his attention once more but it is no use. She goes to his studio, writes him letters and begs him to love her again. She even threatens him if he doesn’t come to see her, she will poison herself. Here, she decides to forget about him forever and to begin a new life with Dymov. This is the first time that she feels free,

To avoid farewells and explanations, and above all to avoid bursting into sobs, she ran as fast as she could...and went out into the street; then she breathed easily, and felt she was free for ever from Ryabovsky and from painting... (Chekhov, 1892)

A year passes and everything is like before; Olga meets celebrities, visits new ones and comes home late every night. But one day Olga realizes that Dymov is ill. He gets diphtheria by cutting his hand while performing post-mortems. This is the moment of recognition for Olga as Apollonio asserts,

And now, with everything turned inside out, Olga comes to her moment of “recognition,” that point in tragic art where, as Aristotle explains, there takes place “a change from ignorance to knowledge, bringing the characters into either a close bond, or enmity, with one another, and concerning matters which bear on their prosperity or affliction. (2010, p.17)

Here she realizes her husband is a celebrity whom she ignored by paying attention just to Riabovskii. Dymov is a real genius. Olga learns from Korostev that her husband is a really a great man, “What a loss for science!” he said bitterly”. (Chekhov, 1892) Olga feels guilty and remorse for what she has done to him. She prays God if he feels better, she will be a faithful wife for him. She realizes that Dymov is a man who dies for science. So the true artist is Dymov because a real artist makes his art immortal but Riabovskii was not a real artist and his paintings were not famous because of not being immortal.

4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, there are some similarities and differences in the discussed stories of Munro and Chekhov regarding a sense of lack, female development and complementary role of woman and man. There is a sense of lack on the part of a woman in Munro’s *Runaway, Lives of Girls and Women* and also in Chekhov’s *Grasshopper, Lady with the Dog*. In *Runaway* Carla feels a kind of lack that makes her restless. That’s why she escapes from home and after a moment of epiphany she comes back to her husband who is one reason of her sense of lack by not paying much attention to her. Flora, Carla’s white goat, is a symbol of her identity and its loss represents the loss of Carla’s identity and her lack, “The worst thing, as far as Carla was concerned, was the absence of Flora, the little white goat who kept the horses company in the barn and in the fields”

(Munro, 2005). In *Lives of Girls and Women* there is a gap or lack in the character of Del who searches for self-recognition. She seeks help from her mother, her aunts and her close friend but none is a help for her because of some defects and incompleteness in their characters.

In Chekhov's *The Lady with the Dog* exists a sense of lack both in Anna and Dimitri. Both have an unhappy marriage which may be based on the Russian convention of that time. They find each other but first it is Anna that faces the reality of their falling in true love. This recognition on part of Anna leads to a recognition and change in Dimitri. He understands that he is in love with a woman for the first time in his life.

In Grasshopper Chekhov puts a sense of lack in the character of Olga who is always in search of a true artist. She meets with a Riabovsky who is a painter and they are in love for a while but he rejects her after a while and goes to another source of inspiration. This leads Olga not to pay any attention to her husband who becomes seriously ill. This makes an epiphany for her that the true celebrity is her husband who sacrifices himself in the path of science. She realizes that her gap should have been filled with paying love to him not to Riabovsky.

Complementary role of a woman and a man is much more highlighted in Chekhov's stories than those in Munro. For example in *Lady with the Dog* Anna's recognition leads to Dimitri's recognition of his true love and true self. He undergoes a change after having met Anna. Thus, Anna has a complementary role for Dimitri. In *The House with Mezzanine*, Lyda represents dynamism and practicality which is absent in the art of the landscape artist. She rejects his sketches because they do not express problems of society. Thus, his art is just a mere passiveness and spirituality that without practicality seems useless. But this complementary role of man and woman is not so much recognized in Munro's works. This point is emphasized just in one of her stories called *Lives of Girls and Women* in which Del gains recognition after the scene of her combat with Garnet who forced her to be baptized. At the final line of chapter seven of this story Del says, "Garnet French, Garnet French, Garnet French. Real Life" (Munro, 2009).

Female development along with achieving female potentiality is mostly evident in Munro's short stories than in those of Chekhov. In Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* Del gains maturity after the moment of epiphany occurs to her and she becomes a creative writer recounting her own experiences and the events happened in Jubilee. As a result, she proved her female potentiality that was rear in that time and place. "Munro has chosen to explore the emerging self through a writer protagonist: a woman who writes herself her story, her life into being" (Wikinson, 1988, as cited in Kulkarni (2013)). In *Too Much Happiness*, Sophia as a woman struggles to maintain her potentiality both as a mathematician and a novelist. She encounters so many obstacles in her life but they are not enough to prevent her from trying. The important men of her life instead of supporting her, diminishes her strength and hope as a woman. Her first husband, Vladimir, can grant her equality but he does not give her emotional support and love. Zsizsmann (2011) emphasizes this in his article, "She ponders her relationship with her husband Vladimir, who could grant her some equality but could never offer her safety and comfort: "Whether he worshipped or insulted her it was impossible for her to love him" (p.207). Maxim, her second husband, is jealous

to her wife and is so selfish that could not see her greatness. He wants her wife just to do chores and raise children as Amutha points out in his article, “Maxim, on the other hand is a man not too serious about his affair with Sophia. He too is more preoccupied about his own importance of being a scholar” (2010, p.325). Sophia’s father is another obstacle who is opposed to a woman to be educated and also to be an author. He mocks publication of her novel and as a result, insults her daughter. But Sophia shows her strength as a woman by becoming a great mathematician, working in the university and writing prominent literary works. At the end, she proves to be a creator by writing literature not by being a mathematician.

In contrast, in Chekhov’s short stories the women are in search of something such as searching identity but there is not any development. For example in *The Grasshopper*, Olga is a fan of artists and searches a true celebrity. This kind of searching brings not any personal development. It is just filling a lack or a gap. She is fond of art and artists but she cannot develop herself in art so she searches a true artist out of herself. In *Lady with the Dog*, Anna searches a true love and finds it in Gurov. There is not any female development. There is a quotation in the story in which Anna confesses to Gurov about her unhappy marriage, “I was twenty when I was married to him. I have been tormented by curiosity; I wanted something better” (Chekhov, 1899). And in *The House with Mezzanine: An Artist’s Story*, Lyda does not search for an identity or development because she is justified as a politically and socially active woman. It is the narrator, a landscape artist, who should include Lyda’s dynamism and practicality in order to complete his art.

In general, comparative literature puts universal issues together and helps for better, deeper understanding of world literature. In addition, it brings two or more cultures together despite their temporal, spacial and linguistic differences. As a result, the issue of woman, her role in the society and family, her oppression and struggles is a universal issue in Canada, Russia and also other nations. Both Canada and Russia had socially and politically active women throughout their history, thus, Munro and Chekhov included this fact in their short stories. This finding is due to the study of comparative literature.

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