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Research Article

## Bridging Medicine and Literature in Anton Chekhov's Short Fictional Works

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medical humanism perspective, connecting two diverse academic disciplines such as medicine and literature. For the theoretical perspective, it borrows idea the insights of Hulail and Charon, the theorists of medical humanities. In this paper, the characters who represent doctors and patients from the selected stories of Anton Chekhov are analyzed from the perspective of medical humanism, particularly the concept of narrative medicine developed by Hulail and Charon. The paper concludes that Chekhov's works bridge the clinical science with literature through empathy, ethics, respect, and humanly behavior among sick people, with their illness and medication.

**KEYWORDS:** Medical humanism, medico-criticism, medical ethics, interdisciplinarity

### INTRODUCTION

Medical humanities is a subject that focuses on the health care from medical and humanitarian side. It is concerned with medical procedure of studying, analyzing, checking, and providing necessary treatment on the basis of symptoms of patient. Medical doctors make diagnosis through medical knowledge and equipment. In this respect, medication, treatment procedure and dissection lab experiments are the processes in medical science. Schwartz and Wiggins (1985) in reference to medical science write, "Insofar as medicine is based on evidence, it is a science. Yet it is a practical, not a pure, science" (p. 347). Medical science is

### ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to explore and analyze the medical issue and its effects on human relations as portrayed in literary writings. The paper is an interdisciplinary study of literature that deals with literature from the

more based on diagnosis, symptomatic study, analysis and treatment. It is far from emotion, feelings, pains, problems, and even further results.

But medical humanities, on the other hand, is a field of study and analysis which emphasizes the bed side relation, behavior of doctors, other medical persons, family members, relatives, friends, and even the outsiders. Overall healthcare- integrating care, love, compassion, respect, caressing, bedside attendance, polite speech and understanding of the patient emotionally and physically is a study area of medical humanities. Schwartz and Wiggins (1985) in the reference of human science further comment, "The human sciences, on the other hand, are closer to the lifeworld and hence less abstract. They must take into account those facets of reality that fail to deliver exact evidence. The social world, for example, provides no exact evidence, and yet it does provide evidence" (p. 349). It is more concerned with human relations, emotions, feelings, pains, economic crisis, and many more human disease and medicine related difficulties and problems.

Medical humanity values the emotional, relational, psychological, economic, behavioral, and other social dimensions related to disease and treatment procedure, along with medical knowledge and practice over the patient. It focuses more on nursing service inside and outside the hospital on the patient care, communication, ethics, sharing, empathy, dignity, and overall love and care to the patient. Humanities is a term that came in popularity in Renaissance time with the rise of rationality replacing belief. The importance of human interests, values and right to be dignified, was foregrounded in the time backgrounding the belief on god and theology (Thibault, 2019). It focuses on the importance of human values rather than the power of God and super nature. Thibault (2019) in reference to humanism in medicine focuses on the importance of humanity in medicine and argues, "Medicine has always been regarded as a

humanistic enterprise" (p.1076). There is a close relation between medicine and humanism because healing is always both body and mind. Psychological healing relating with mind is close with relation, emotion and sharing, which includes humanistic qualities.

Disease is one of the prominent problems in life and a subject matter and issue of writing literature. Since the evolution of human beings, disease co-existed. In literary texts the characters suffer from various disease related problems. Some of them are simple, less serious and few others are fatal. The problem of disease is expressed through language. Foucault (1973) defines disease as, "...disease sign is in the body while patients express his/ her symptom in language" (p. 95). This simple definition suggests that disease is not only science but also a humanities phenomenon. It is expressed in language and a content in literature. This paper claims that there is nexus between disease, language, and literature which is expressed in the literary texts. A genre of medical literature since the classical to the contemporary period is in existence. *Oedipus Rex*, is an example of classical literature written with the content of disease where the whole citizen of Thebes city is under the influence of the Plague, a fatal disease. In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries Renaissance knowledge started to study and analyze disease rationally, which led the modern medical explanation.

Thibault (2019) provides a remarkable and chronological history of medicine and humanity knowledge in the long history of human civilization. The ancient Greeks developed a sort of medicinal practice along with human dignity. Thibault in this reference draws an outline of humanities in medicine's history and writes, the ethical principle in medicine in the 5<sup>th</sup> century Hippocratic thought was putting the patients interest first which is furthermore continued by the renaissance philosophers and physicians and gave importance on learning humanities as well

as medical science by the physicians. Humanism and medicine is made an important phenomenon in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thibault further says, the 20<sup>th</sup> century medical philosophers focused on the "humanize medicine in the face of dehumanizing forces" (np). Science, medicinal instruments, the theoretical practices are de humanistic forces in medical practice. It needs to be humanized by medical humanism like disciplines. Literature is that source of knowledge and record of human experiences that every humanistic experiences can be narrated through it. Rita Charon et.al. (1995) claim, "...one rich source of knowledge about the human experience of illness is literature" (p. 600). The reading and understanding of ill characters in literature and their narrative help the doctors and care givers to understand and recognize human emotions and sufferings during illness.

Medical humanity is a hybrid concept developed between the pure medical science and the social science of anthropological, historical and literary tools. Medical science, on one hand studies the biochemistry and anatomy of human body, identifying the problem and treatment of the problem by using medicinal tools and medicines by the trained medical persons. Medical humanities, on the other hand, shares an intimate connection with the concept of medical science with the social, cultural and psychological concept of the patient. It shares an intimate connection and relation between the physician and the patient (Gupta, 2011). Disease is not only a medical and body problem but a social and psychological problem. A high moral patient and good relationship with physician heal the disease faster and better. Gupta (2011) further suggests physicians' role to maintain patients' self-respect, beneficence, non- maleficence, justice, and veracity are the qualities of a good physician and medical humanities as well. The better relationship between physicians and patients results in better

chance of healing and poor relationship has less chance to trust each other.

Disease is one of the common and repeatedly used contents in literary writing which is one of the human sufferings in life. It is concerned with medicine, humanity and social discipline. This context opines that medicine and humanity are the interconnected disciplines and subjects in academics. Medical science gives theoretical knowledge based on evidence when social science helps to implement theory into practice on the base of social and cultural principles. Art and literature are concerned with social science and they also have enough incorporation of medical and the humanitarian problems.

In literatures of different periods, we get the inclusion of disease and characters suffer from various diseases in. In many stories of Anton Chekhov, the characters suffer from some diseases and medical doctors are given the prominent roles in his stories. Disease requires treatment and cure with specific knowledge and skill which is regulated by medical science. It is apparently a completely different field from literature. But humanities deal with love, care, history, time period with disease. Medical Humanities so that is a topic of social science and literature both. L. S. King (1954) writes, "This is something more than the sequences and laws which science studies. "Health" or "Disease" are value judgments based on something more than the study of reactions" (p. 194). Disease is a phenomenon of science and a social issue which affects personal and social relations.

Medical humanitiy a field of study which studies and analyses the relationship between medical science and human behavior. It also studies the nexus between medical and social science correlatively. Hulail (2019) in reference to medical knowledge and human science writes that a good physician should possess accurate medical knowledge and skills and also a moral judgement and actions, kind attitude, and a trusting relationship with patients along with their

family members. It means medical science and practice is a theoretical knowledge and skill along with social science subject. Since, there is a strong nexus between social science and medical problem and treatment.

This study attempts to address in the scholarly activity on the perspective of medical humanism and medical criticism in literary analysis. Humanity undergoes in crisis and difficulty when a person falls ill and need to go for a long clinical procedure. Humanity and human sympathy is required most by the doctors and others when individual is in the crisis, so it is a worth studying issue. How human behaviors, relations, love, care and needs are affected in time of illness and medication that is portrayed in literature is the main focus of this study. This paper attempts to study the relation and connection between medicine and literature, and how humanity is affected by medical problems in literature. The whole research will be roaming around these questions and will search the rational answers of the questions and takes textual evidences from Chekhov's selected stories.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term medical humanism on the other hand, is a new concept in the interdisciplinary field of studies that deals with the humanitarian and rational qualities in the field of medicine and treatment in the recent days though it has its long history. The concept has its history linked with Hellenic, Hellenistic, and Roman medicine during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Greek physician Hippocrates (460-370 BC), Roman physician (119 – 199 BC) opened the way of medicine literacy by writing and healing the people from the then medical problem (Albert R. Jonsen 2000). He further writes, "Healing began to be called an art or skill which is based on empirical observation and logical reasoning" (p. 1). Healing is not only the process of giving medicine and treatment of sick people but it is an art and skill. It is

not only the subject of medical science and theory based treatment but it is an art of dealing over the patient and it is a skilful treatment and dealing.

Chekhov is a renowned physician and a writer of many realistic short stories and plays. He writes about medical problem and creates doctor and patient characters in most of his writings. Various critics and writers have studied him from different perspectives. Whyman (2010) studied Anton Chekhov from the perspective of class consciousness. He opines, "Class politics are very important; the presence of servants, of landowners and merchants, literati and artists, is central to Chekhov's playwriting. The turmoil brought about by shifts in the class system as a result of the emergence of new ideologies and Life and context economies in Chekhov's lifetime has echoes in many other contexts" (p. 3). The contemporary rise of landowner and servants, the turmoil relation between the classes is the central issue of his writing. Whyman's argument in his study over Chekhov is from the perspective of economic factor and class reality of the then Russia.

Chekhov's writings are mostly studied and understood as the reality of the then life of the people. The village setting, people's sufferings, complexities on human relations, the psychological aspect of love and relations are some of the real state of human mind reflected in his stories and plays. He is the writer of the transition between 19<sup>th</sup> century realism and the 20<sup>th</sup> century modernism in Europe and Russia. Though his characters are from Russia but they represent the common life in the villages of every places. In this regard it is stated that "Chekhov's transcendence of the nineteenth-century realist tradition, situating Chekhov on the realist side of the borderline between Realism and Modernism. In this reading, Chekhov destroys nineteenth-century literary conventions without replacing them with any alternative, such as Symbolist metaphysics" (Shcherbenok, 2010, p. 298). We can read the realist

characters and psychology of individuals in his writings. Mangold (2020) in the similar context studies Chekov as a writer to, "articulate relationships between health and material environments as zemstvo medicine developed" (p. 711). Histories have the health and environmental problems as stated by Mangold.

There are some writers who are physicians too. Chekhov and William Carlos Williams are physicians and writers. They write literatures of great insight in medicine and they create the characters and situations among disease, treatment and inner conflicts. Reading some stories of such writers is to study the narrative as well as some phenomenon of disease, doctors and patients. Rita Charon (1995) in context of Chekhov and Williams writes, they write with great insight about medicine. She reviews and says, Chekhov's story "Ward Number Six" describes the inner conflict of Dr. Ragin. And William Carlos Williams short stories capture the contradictions of the physician's work (p. 601). The study of human, cultural and social contradictions is the study area of humanity or social sciences. The blending of both discipline in a new subject like Medical Humanities can be a distinct subject to understand both – medicine and literature.

This very prominent and widely written concept of medical problem in literature requires different perspective of criticism and analysis from medical humanities perspective. This area is worth studying as there is a big gap in study and analysis in this subject of medical humanism. This paper aims to contribute something in this area of medical criticism in literary analysis.

#### **MEDICAL HUMANISM AND LITERARY ANALYSIS**

Humanism is a term that deals with the philosophical and cultural aspect of human life. It focuses on the human and social value, dignity, importance of life, and life related various aspects. It is a rational study of human relations,

existence, ethical behaviour, critical thinking, and social justice. It puts human values, justice, ethics, human history, knowledge, experiences and achievements at the centre. The study of education, art, civic values, and responsibility where individuality and social characters are the study area of humanism. The goal of humanism is to develop justice, rational, knowledge based and social individual with respect and civic characters. Davies (2008) defines humanism as, "it stands self-evidently for the secular and rational decencies of contemporary civilization" (p. 3). Rationality in life, knowledge and human qualities is the main focus in the definition. He further says that humanism is the secular rationalism and scientific positivism. The positive way of thinking and studying about life is humanism as Davies focuses on. So, humanism is a rational and decent way of studying and understanding life, culture and human civilization. The study of life, humanity, human relations, ethics, life related history, economics, social relations, politics is the study of humanism.

Literature is that source of knowledge and a record of human experiences that every humanistic experiences can be read and understood through it. Rita Charon et.al. (1995) one of the writers in medical ethics claims that "one rich source of knowledge about the human experience of illness is literature" (p. 600). The reading and understanding of ill characters in literature and their narrative help the doctors and care givers to understand and recognize human emotions and sufferings during illness. It is the qualification of a good physician to be skilled in both medical knowledge and recognition of human emotions and sufferings. Medical and literature books equip the doctor to be skilled in both. Rita Charon in this context claims, "A good physician has skilled diagnosis, effective therapy and human recognition- two are by medical books and the third one by literature. Literary studies assist to achieve to comprehend patient's sufferings respect and care them" (p. 599).

Both medical and literature books enhance the medical treatment and human suffering recognition skills to treat the patients. This bridging between medical science and human relations is the medical humanism as a whole. It is an art of medicine to understand medicine for the patient and art of literature to understand human sufferings, feelings, and human empathy. Literary account of illness can teach physician concrete and powerful lesson about the lives of sick people (p. 600). It is the strength of medical humanism which helps to comprehend and connects the physical and emotional life of sick people.

The accomplishment of literature in medical courses enable the physicians to understand the patients' experiences better and the physicians grow for self-understanding. For the development of physicians' cognition power of the patients' problems literature's narrative contributes the great. Rita Charon concludes and writes, "We hope that the introduction of literature and of literary studies to medicine will allow physicians to more accurately render the lives of their patients and to recognize the human dimensions of all of the experiences that occur within their gaze" (p. 604). Medical humanism is a discipline which can bridge between the importance of literature courses in medical science and the urgency of medical criticism in literary criticism courses.

Basic medical knowledge with literary critic helps to make different literary criticism over literature and medically suffered characters. Like other literary theories medical criticism in literary studies help to interpret the characters, situations and diseases more effectively and closely because in some literatures the disease has affected the characters and situation tremendously. The inclusion of basic medical courses in literature studies and criticism, and literature course in medical studies may contribute to bridge between the courses and discipline and a new dimension of interpretation certainly emerges. Medical humanism is an

umbrella term that can connect both discipline and provide literary knowledge for the medical persons and medical knowledge to make literary interpretation.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CHEKHOV'S SHORT FICTIONS

### The Narratives of Doctors and Patients

The epistemological foundation of medical humanism is the knowing of human problems and sufferings during illness. Beside the relation between patients, doctors, nurses, medical technicians, family members, care givers, and the overall hospital and home environment for ill person is medical humanism. Medical humanism has the corresponding relation with medical ethics in which the individuals need to follow some basic social and humanitarian principles of human dignity, empathy, mutual understanding between patient and the attendance. In times of illness the individual becomes weak and disable physically and mentally, so s/he needs more care, love and treatment. Humanistic behaviour over the patient helps to heal the patient's mental and physical problems. Hulail (2019) in this context makes a statement that "listen to the patient" (p. 2). Listening the patients pain, and agony also heals the disease in some degree. This listening and caring the patient is the basic foundation of medical humanism.

The answer of the questions like, how do medical person facilitate and treat the patient? How is the ill-person treated and provided with nursing care? Is a basic principle of medical humanism. The correlation between medical and social science constructs the principles of understanding, basic human moralities and it helps in decision making during treatment and patient care. Medical humanism can be a distinct discipline that teaches and makes people conscious about patient and care givers relationship. Hulail (2019) further writes, "Humanism is characterised by a respectful and compassionate relationship between the healthcare provider and patient" (p. 2).

The focus on respectful and compassionate relationship with the patient develops the humanistic relationship between the parties. The patient needs to be respectfully behaved by medical persons, and care and love by the bedside attendants is the basic requirement of medical humanism.

Literature is the documentation of every life related events, information, facts, and virtues in different fictional or artistic way. Reading literature in a sense is reading, understanding and interpreting life in different periods and contexts. Disease is one of the realities of life which is recorded in literature. The writers, who also were the medical doctors like Chekhov, William Carlos Williams, Sigmund Freud, wrote literature creating doctors or medical persons dealing with patients. Non-medical persons like Anita Desai, Laxmi Prasad Devkota, and Eugene O' Neill also created their characters and medical content in their writings. Medical doctor and a renowned writer Chekhov has sketched many characters suffering from different diseases, and many doctors treating and providing services to the sick characters. This study only takes reference from some of his stories and plays having ill characters and the doctors treating them. In some stories the doctors themselves get sick and ultimately die. This research attempts to explore medical humanism in different situations in his stories.

This paper takes the stories "The Grasshopper" (1892), "A Doctors Visit" (1898), "Enemies" (1887), "Misery" (1886) *A Marriage Proposal* (1890) by Chekhov for textual analysis. These stories are purposively selected for analysis because of having ill characters so that the condition of humanism can be studied and analysed. In the story "The Grasshopper" a character Dr Osip Dynov himself suffers from diphtheria while treating the patients and dies at last while his own wife does not care and love him in his ill condition. Dr Krilov's only son dies recently by diphtheria when he is called forcefully by

a visitor Aboguin to go and visit his sick wife in the story "Enemies". He frantically quarrels with the doctor to treat his lovely wife though the doctor himself is in agony for his son's death in the story. Iona Potapov, a sleigh- driver is in deep misery for his only son's death. His misery is because he meets no one to express in the story "Misery." When someone is in the misery of some loved one's death others should console him/ her. Iona expresses his misery of his son's death and it is so clear that the father is in so deep misery and psychologically ill that he needs a good consolation and psychological treatment. He is a poor sleigh- driver, a lonely man who is mentally and physically alone. He expresses his sorrow with one of his neighbour, an officer and a passenger at the moment. He says; "My son ....or.... my son died this week sir. H'm! What did he die of? Who can tell! it must have been from fever." (p. 12). He expresses this to share his grief and to be healed psychologically, but the neighbour threatened him bitterly and inhumanly that he is put in deep hell. He is threatened rudely using vulgar words that a normal person does not use such rude remarks. The officer threatens him as, "Turn round you devil, come out of the darkness. Have you gone off your head, you old dog? Look where you are you going" (p. 13). Such vulgar, rude, and inhuman words and behaviour is not entertained over a person who is psychologically ill and in misery due to loss of his son.

There is not such harmonious, corresponding and mutual relationship between the disciplines of art, literature, and medicine. These disciplines are interpreted as distanced disciplines which do not have any connection as they belong to science and humanities subjects. It is the general understanding that medicine is the subject to study and interpret by the medical students, and art and literature is the subject to be studied and interpreted by social science students. Reading stories, characters, artists, events and problems recorded in literature is the study area of

literary analysis. When medical event and disease problem comes for the character, the critic is not allowed freely to remain absolute but needs to interpret cause, consequences, effects and overall change in art and literature. Osip Stepanovich Dymov is a medical doctor character in the story "The Grasshopper" and his wife is an artist and a popular celebrity. Her art is expressed in such a way, "Ogla Ivanovna covered the walls of her drawing-room with sketches, framed and unframed" (Chekhov, 1892, p. 71). Osip Stepanovich Dymov on the other hand, "was a doctor with the rank of titular counsellor. He worked in two hospitals, in one as non-resident physician, and in the other as prosector" (p. 69). They got married and are living their conjugal life in the story. They both are the characters of the same Russian society culture and face life challenges and enjoy it differently too.

Both Olga Ivanovna and Dr Osip Dymov represent common people of each society. Olga is a socialite artist, a painter, a celebrity, and always surrounded by other celebrities and artists. She represents the world of art—famous, worshiped, talent, romantic and glamorous, and often superficial. Marriage is a social and cultural bonding to face the comfort and challenges of life. It was a grand marriage ceremony between them: "All of Olga's friends and acquaintances went to her wedding" (p. 69). Their relation does not proceed as normal after some days because of their contrasting background of art and medicine. For few days their relation is romantic as, "They had a wonderful life after their marriage" (p. 71). But very soon there came some troubles in their life and co-living. General misunderstandings appear afterward that they both dislike each other's works as a doctor and as an artist. Olga complains her husband's dislike in art as, "you take no interest whatever in art. You quite ignore music and painting" (p. 72). There seems no co-relation between these two disciplines and subjects which also affected human relations too.

Olga is an artist, who is always surrounded by singers, musicians and other celebrities. She belongs to the field of social science, her attitudes, lifestyle, thoughts and behaviours are different than her husband. Her schooling in life is to enjoy outside, to live - glamorous life and making new friends. Chekhov writes, "Every time she made a new acquaintance... she was proud of them" (p. 72.) She celebrates her life as well as her art of painting and enjoying in songs, music and dances. She enjoys in such a way: "After dinner Olga paid calls, then she went to the theatre or a concert and did not get home till after midnight. And this went on very day" (p. 72). Her life is full of celebrations and enjoyments in art and glamour. On the other hand, her husband is more devoted on his life as a physician. He himself says, "I don't understand art. I have worked at natural science and medicine my whole life, and I never had any time to go in for art" (p. 72). For him art is unproductive, time-consuming and unworthy business.

Olga represents the world of art while Dymov represents medicine. In the story Chekhov seems to support Olga and her dedication to art, fashion, celebration, gathering with other artists when this contrasts with the doctor Dymov's silent dedication for his work, medical practice with his patients and in hospitals. Dr Osip argues with his wife and says, "Why you and your friends know nothing about natural science or medicine" (p. 72). This deep dissatisfaction of the doctor with his wife and her friends that everyone should understand and respect others profession and discipline is noticeable here. This idea also applies to the doctor too that he also should understand and respect art, literature, music, dance, theatre and other social science subjects. One does not understand and respect next one's job, life career, profession really brings controversy in living life. The contrast between art and medicine is more and remarkable. Medical humanity is a subject and discipline which can bridge between



these two contrasting discipline. Doctor Osip respecting art and theatre and wife Ogla respecting her husband's profession and busyness as a doctor could have maintain their married life in balance.

The relation and conjugal life between them falls in problem due to the lack of humanistic knowledge with the doctor and medical knowledge with wife. In the course of time Ogla becomes busier with her theatre friends as he says, "But they soon forget about him and went on talking about the theatre, music, art" (Chekhov, 1892, p. 73). She is always in the gathering among her colleagues from her field of art and theatre. Dr Osip on the other hand becomes busy in his hospital with patients. Dr says, "I am always busy, and when I have any free time it always happens there is no suitable time" (p. 75). This sort of busyness at their work developed the dissatisfaction, misunderstanding and even quarrelling. This misunderstanding developed as, "a door banged and Olga burst into the room, in a broad-brimmed hat, carrying a box, after her came Ryabovsky, red-cheeked and in high spirit" (p. 75). Here appears a next man Ryabovsky in between the misunderstanding among husband and wife. This misunderstanding is due to the lack of medical humanities knowledge among both.

Medical science studied and practised by Dr Osip does not teach him to enjoy in life. It does not teach him to respect stories, art, paintings and enjoy the songs, dance, music, and theatrical performances. This lack of knowledge and practice on art leads misunderstanding with his wife. Olga, on the other hand, emphasizes on art and glamour. Her view of life does not make co- life successful. Both fail to understand each other and their professions. Olga falls in love with the artist Ryaboysky and spends most of her time with him and her celebrity friends. "It is getting chilly" said Olga Ivanovna, and she shivered. Ryabovsky wrapped his coat round her, saying mournfully" (p. 77). This relational crisis among Olga and Osip

and the entry of Ryabovsky is due to the lack of medical humanism knowledge among them.

Dr Osip gives much time in hospital with his patients and epidemic diphtheria was spreading outside in the community. Hospital is full of such patients and Dr Osip gave much time to them as he lacks love and company at his home from wife. He himself is caught by the disease diphtheria and suffered terribly. He did not get proper bedside love and care by his wife. One of his doctor friend after observing his situation and case remarks, "the doctors keeping watch over him would have discovered that it was not only diphtheria that was to blame" (p. 87). This remark of the doctor clearly suggests that Dr Osip did not get proper love, homely assistance, care, and proper food at his home before and after his sickness. Only diphtheria was not to blame means Dr Osip was not morally and ethically behaved in his life, profession and during his sickness. Love, care and ethical behaviour by the medical and family members to a sick person is medical humanism, which Dr Osip lacks.

The characters Dr Osip and his wife Olga in the story are the contrast and controversy between the moral value, the contribution of art, literature and theatre, compared to the life-saving labour of medical persons like Dr Osip. The doctor died due to diphtheria selflessly when he was contracted while treating patients in the hospital. His life and devotion is the example of the revelation of the nobility and humanism in medical profession. He was a complete medical person to follow the principles of medical humanism but he himself suffered and had died with the lack of humanistic love, care and ethics during and before his sickness by his own wife Olga. Olga also realizes this but very late that she could not provide proper bed side love and care to her heroic husband before and during he suffered from disease. "The walls, the ceiling, the lamp, and the carpet on the floor winked mockingly at her, as if trying to say: "you

have missed the chance" (p. 89). Olga is mocked by everything inside the home that she was in-humanistic during her own husband's illness. Humble service to the patient and ill person is the true principle of medical humanism as suggested by the story "The Grasshopper" by Chekhov which Olga had missed the chance. In this way Chekhov being a physician and a writer, presents a compelling meditation on the ethical weight of professions, suggesting that medicine, grounded in care and sacrifice, holds a deeper, more lasting impact on humanity than fleeting artistic glory.

### Doctors as the Victims of Patients

Disease is the cause which brings life in pain, suffering, trauma, and many more difficult moments in life, family and surroundings. It affects the body, mind, family life, social connections, economic condition and the whole life cycle and process of living. It is certain that the affected person suffers as well as the whole family suffers badly from all the misshapen. Due to the nature of disease the sufferings are varied. In some fatal diseases like cancer and others the individual falls in deep pain and suffering and the family falls on terrible economic and relational crisis. In times of pandemic and epidemic the whole community and the world is affected and suffers badly as in COVID-19 pandemic during 2019 to 2023 in the world. The issue of humanity and inhumanity is also the most critical in times of pandemics. A popular saying of Francis Bacon as collected by Thorney and Roberts (1991) reads like this: "Kill the patient and cure the disease" (p. 32), which means that people also need to be inhuman to save the life of many people by uncaring the sick patient and let him/her die.

Hospitals, doctors, and medical personals are the ultimate hope and assistance for the patients and family members during disease. The humanly behaviour, bedside relationship and their knowledge and wisdom help to heal the

problem of disease. During disease, patients are the sufferers no doubt, but the medical personals also are the potential sufferers of inhumanity during disease and treatment process. The doctor is also a human and s/he needs love, care, assistance, high moral, humanly behaviour, proper respect and praise for the dedication of job. There are many incidents when doctors are under attack physically by the relatives of the patients in times of some casualty. The inhumanly behaviour of the family members decreases the moral strength of the doctor and result is fatal. The ill behaviour of the bedside attendance over the doctor, unnecessary pressure over them, illogical arguments affecting him/her are some of the ill behaviours over the doctor.

Dr Krilov in the story "Enemies" by Chekhov suffers from similar inhuman treatment by an attendance Aboguin. Aboguin goes to the doctor for his sick wife. According to him, her condition is very serious. She is caught by diphtheria which is a serious type of illness that created harsh medical challenge in the contemporary 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia. It is a fatal airborne disease which affects throat, respiratory track, the whole system and even causes death. Doctor Krilov's only six-year son Andrey died of diphtheria very recently (p. 55). The condition of Doctor Krilov's home is so pathetic that dead body of the child son is at the side and his wife is dropped on her knees before the dead body of the child. In such a pathetic condition there is a serious crisis of humanity that the dead body need to be managed, the parents falling in grief need to be consoled and the whole house and grief situation should be managed. No one is there to do all these things but a visitor arrives with a visitor Aboguin for his sick wife.

From the very beginning the visitor makes dominating requests to go, see and treat his lovely wife. Wife is always lovely for all but the visitor requests in such a way that the doctor never gets any chance to speak rationally with the man about his

condition and inability to visit any patient. The doctor says, "Excuse me, but I can't go... five minute ago my .... son died" (p. 57). The doctor is in social, emotional and humanitarian crisis. He himself is in need of humanitarian help. His wife is in need of help. But the visitor becomes so cruel that he speaks rude, requests terribly to go and visit his sick wife and disturbs the doctor's every personal and human right. The doctor also has the right to be sick, his family also falls in problem and he also requires in humanitarian help and counselling. But the visitor gives so ill treat that he cannot give any help and consolation to his wife who has recently lost her only son Andrey. The visitor destroys every condition and destroys the homely environment in the most difficult condition. The argument here is that doctors also are in need of humanitarian help and should be provided.

#### **Patients as the Victims of Doctors**

There are characters suffering from inhumanity and from different diseases. Sometimes they are becoming the victim of cruel and unmedical behaviour by the doctors and sometimes they are suffering from inhuman behaviour by the attendance, relatives, neighbours and even family members. This study discusses a character Lomov, who suffers from heart palpitation problem but misbehaved by his neighbours in Chekhov's play *A Marriage Proposal*. Only the doctors are not the sufferers of inhumanity, sufferings and ill-treatment but also the patients who are also ill-treated by the doctors and medical personnels. This research discusses various types of sufferings faced by the patients and publics in various literary texts. The patients suffer from various ways like; ill- treatment and inhuman behaviour by other publics. In the play, *A Marriage Proposal* (1890) by Chekhov, a character Lomov suffers from terrible heart palpitation, heart attack, heart burst and leg paralyzed. Lomov himself says; "My left leg paralysed.... And you are a schemer.... Oooh! My heart...." (p. 42).

Lomov suffers a lot in the play in front of his own neighbours Choobokov and his daughter Natalia. It is a humanitarian duty of every personal that every human should be taken to the hospital by any attendance.

Lomov falls on the ground because of heart palpitation and heart pain. Heart pain and palpitation is such a serious medical problem that the patient needs to be taken to the emergency medical ward and intensive care. He is unconscious and falls on the ground because of his illness. He gets up again and again and altogether he falls down and gets up for six or seven times in the whole play. Lomov speaks:

LOMOV: Madam, pleeeeeease, keep quiet.... My heart's bursting..... (shouts): keep quiet! (p. 46).

Lomov is so serious that he even cannot listen other's sound. He asks for water for many times but he never gets any humanitarian, medical and formal help by his own neighbours. What a cruel and inhuman society and neighbours, who do not take an ill neighbour to the hospital or medical doctor. Unfortunately, the neighbours even quarrel more with the sick neighbour Lomov about their land property. Lomov further says:

LOMOV: My heart is palpitating..... .The Meadows are mine..... There are stars bursting in both my eyes. (p. 44).

It is most inhuman and cruel activity that a person is medically suffering, falling unconscious for many times but still quarrelling for the ownership of land and other physical property. The urgent requirement is that he should be taken to the hospital and provided intensive treatment. Neighbours have the compulsive duty to take him to the hospital. The patient and neighbour fail inhumanity and relations. Knowledge of medical humanism in people may help to address such inhuman behaviour. Humanity dies in the play among characters. Characters and situations are to be studied and analysed from the perspective of medical humanism through medico- criticism.

The analysis demonstrates that due to the lack of medical humanities knowledge both the doctors and patients are suffering in different situation. The conflict between doctor and patient should be reduced by making the medical humanities popular among people. Dr Osip, Dr Krilov would not have suffered if the publics have some medical humanities knowledge. Likewise, Lomov would not have suffered with the lack of medical service when he was suffering by heart problem. Literature has a potential role to bridge between medical science and literature. Its narrative may contribute to bridge these two disciplines.

## CONCLUSION

This study has developed a concept of medical humanism under humanities as a rational theory to understand human condition and behaviours in illness. It develops the perspective and studies Chekhov's selected stories with the concept. It concludes that illness is one of the remarkable contents in literature. So it proposes a model of medical criticism in literary analysis as a tool. The characters and situations in literature are affected by illness and it affects every aspect of life, which is worth studying through critical analysis. Medical humanism contributes to understand ill life in literature and understands social and humanistic aspect of doctors and patients. It concludes that misuse of medical skills by the physicians is anti-humanistic act, and literature makes the readers more humanistic.

Some of the stories and play of Chekhov and other writers have been analysed from the theoretical concepts of medical humanism. Medical doctors and general patients are found suffering from inhuman behaviour which is bitter and inhuman. Dr Osip in "The Grasshopper," Dr Krilov in "Enemies," Dr Steven Lukitch in the story "The Looking Glass" suffer badly by inhuman treatment by the publics. Likewise, Lomov in "A Marriage Proposal" suffers inhumanly during his illness. This inhuman treatment is because of the lack knowledge in medical

humanism. The literacy on medical humanism on medical persons and general public certainly helps to correct this inhuman treatment and behaviour. By proposing additional theory on the existing scholarship in literary analysis it also opens a new direction for further study, analysis, and criticism of literature from medico- criticism perspective.

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