Originalni naučni rad
Primljen: 4. aprila 2024.
Prihvaćen: 6. decembra 2024.
УДК 821.111(71).09-3 Munro A.
doi.org/10.46630/phm.17.2025.17

Nikola S. Petrović[1*]
Metropolitan University
Faculty of Foreign Languages
https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7500-0606

ALIENATION IN ALICE MUNRO'S SHORT STORY "PASSION"

This paper deals with the phenomenon of alienation in Alice Munro's short story "Passion." In the theoretical part of the paper, the term alienation is explained from the Marxist feminist perspective. The works of authors such as Allison Jaggar, Sandra Lee Bartky and Philip J. Kain are used to improve our understanding of alienation. Attention is especially paid to the sexual and cultural alienation of women in the contemporary society. Additionally, the ways of alleviating their consequences are explored. In the analysis, instances of alienation in the story are identified and explained by reference to the framework established in the theoretical introduction. The main focus is on the cases of cultural and sexual alienation which originate from the demands that come from the roles imposed on women. Finally, alienation is treated as a major driving force of the protagonist's actions, and her life-changing decisions are interpreted as attempts to escape her alienated state.

Key words: Alice Munro, alienation, feminism, Marxism

1. Theoretical Introduction

In his review of Munro's *Runaway*, David Hellman observes how "rituals of flight have been the obsessive theme of many of Alice Munro's short stories" (2004). Munro's heroines embark on an "inner quest from patriarchal domination" (PATNI et al. 2019: 252) so that they "can escape the constraints of expectation imposed upon [them]" (KUDUMULA 2022: 428). Unfortunately, they often merely "come back full circle to origins they cannot escape" (HELLMAN 2004) with the general state of things remaining mostly unchanged. An important problem plaguing Munro's characters, oftentimes responsible for their desire to escape, is a feeling of alienation. This has been a theme connected with Munro since her earlier writings. In her 1976 paper Beverly Rasporich observes how "the sense of female alienation has become increasingly more strident" in Munro's works (1976: 5), and almost half a century later, Revathi Kudumula writes about "the alienated situation of married women" in Munro's *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage* (2022: 424). This paper focuses on "Passion," a story from Munro's *Runaway* in which a feeling of alienation can be most clearly identified and examined. Despite the common connections of Munro's writing and alienation, in the context of "Passion", alienation has been mentioned, but not given much attention. Chen Zhitong remarks how Grace, the story's protagonist, "often feels alienated from the environment she lives in" (2020: 168), and Michael Trussler observes that many of Munro's heroines,

1 nikola.petrovic@metropolitan.ac.rs

including Grace, are "alienated outsiders in their communities as a direct result of their intellectual curiosity" (2012: 191). Neither of the critics, however, closely focuses on alienation, and it remains only an unclear background against which the events in the story take place. In this paper an attempt is made to explain how alienation is the centerpiece of the story, an invisible force that pushes the protagonist to act the way she does. The origins and the consequences of alienation are examined, as well as the mostly unsuccessful attempts of characters to deal with it. Before the problem of alienation in the story is discussed, the concept should be properly defined. In the paper, alienation is approached from the Marxist feminist perspective, as it can provide us with the most comprehensive understanding of the protagonists' situation.

Alienation is a concept with a long history, marked by distinct contributions by various theologians, humanists, and philosophers. Feminists, Marxist feminists in particular, relied heavily on the theory of Karl Marx. While in the pre-Marxist conceptions of alienation the term was generally not entirely negative, but ambiguous, for Marx it was a univocally pernicious phenomenon (SARFRAZ 1997: 45). In his "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," Marx presents four types of alienation, connected to alienated labour of workers. The first variant of alienation is worker's alienation from the products of labour. What the worker produces does not belong to him. Instead, it is unleashed into the world and appears to the worker as something foreign he has no power over, that is, he is "related to the product of his labour as to an alien object" which is "exercising power over him" (MARX 2010: 272, 275). The second type of alienation again concerns the lack of power and control the workers experience, only this time during the process of production. They have no say in the way things are run, how, where, when and what to produce. "If then the product of labor is alienation" Marx explains, "production itself must be active alienation" (Ibid. 274). The third type of alienation is alienation from one's species-being, one's essence, which means that workers do not see themselves in their productive activities and their outcomes. Since his product is taken away from him, and the way he would want to create the said product is outside his control, a working man is alienated from his species life, as it becomes a mere "means to his physical existence" (Ibid. 277). Such man is, thus, no different from an animal. The final type of alienation is alienation from other workers (Ibid.). In the case of this type of alienation, the workers ignore their shared struggles and problems. They fail to see each other as fellow workers with similar dreams and aspirations, and regard each other instead as competitors for those dreams and aspirations.

When it comes to the alienation of women, attempts were made to transfer this understanding of alienation to housework, from the traditionally male to the traditionally female sphere of labour. However, many authors find a great deal of problems with such attempts as the direct projections from one sphere to another do not hold. Philip J. Kain notes how "the houseworker remains in control of the product or result," adding that, unlike the products on the market, "these products do not take on an independent, autonomous life of their own" (1993: 126). Similarly, the labour process is entirely under the control of the houseworker – the decision on how, when, and what housework activities are accomplished lies solely with the houseworker. As both the process and the product belong entirely to the houseworker, Kain concludes that alienation from the species is also

lacking (Ibid.). Finally, the houseworker is the sovereign in her own home, there is no competition with other houseworkers.[2] Some authors have even ascribed a majorly positive role to housework. In "Loving Alienation: The Contradictions of Domestic Work," Martha E. Gimenez points out that housework "may be experienced as a relief from alienated work" (2018: 269).

A large number of feminist scholars have focused on an aspect that was absent from original Marxist thought, and that is sexual alienation. Marxist feminist Allison Jaggar explains how "economic survival requires most women to present themselves in a way that is sexually pleasing to men" (1983: 308). This resembles what Sandra Lee Bartky, in her reading of Marx's concept of alienation, calls fragmentation. Fragmentation stands for the "inner impoverishment" women undergo when "parts of their being have fallen under the control of another," and it includes sexual objectification (BARTKY 1982: 129). Women's own sexuality is not for themselves, rather, it exists for men: "men rather than women control the expression of women's sexuality: women's sexuality is developed for men's enjoyment rather than for women's" (JAGGAR 1983: 309). What is alienating here is that women's own sexuality faces them as an external force that has power over them. Furthermore, Linda Phelps notes how "Sex is reinterpreted to [women] by society in symbolic messages of passivity and conquest," with men being expected to take up the active and women the passive role (1975: 21). Relying on Simone de Beauvoir, Bartky observes how "The gaze of the Other is internalized so that I myself become at once seer and seen, appraiser and the thing appraised" (1982: 134). Such internalization guides a woman's behaviour; consequently, she sees herself not as an agent, but as a passive "object destined for another" (DE BEAUVOIR 1956: 320) who does not act but is acted upon. Instead of actively developing her sexuality, she becomes enslaved by the patriarchal conception of it.

Many similarities with Marx's conception of alienation can be recognised. Just like Marx's worker has no control over the labour process and its product, a woman has no control over the process of development of her sexuality, and the final result faces her as an alien power. For this reason Alison Jaggar holds that "women's sexual situation resembles that of wage workers who are alienated from the process and product of their labor" (JAGGAR 1983: 309). Additionally, trying to fit conceptions of what a woman should be requires significant work on one's body, which, if done "for the sake of another person or end is fragmenting, an instance of narcissistic alienation" (SLAGTER 1982: 159). This is, essentially, a form of alienation from species-life, as the whole process of the creation of the self is done for others, it is only a means of satisfying them, and not an end in itself.[3] Finally, as women compete with other women for male attention (JAGGAR 1983: 309-310), they are alienated from one another and in this aspect they resemble the worker alienated from other workers.

Sandra Lee Bartky notices how "women are clearly alienated in cultural production," and claims that this alienation is one of "distinctively feminine modes of alienation" (1982: 129). She provides an explanation of what she means by this:

2 According to Kain, it is possible for alienation to enter the household if woman's control of it is disrupted by wage labour (1993: 131).

3 Slagter is careful to point out that physical development need not be alienating if a woman engages in it with "the purpose of defining her own goal" rather than for others (1982: 158).

> Most avenues of cultural expression—high culture, popular culture, even to some extent language—are instruments of male supremacy. Women have little control over the cultural apparatus itself and are often entirely absent from its products; to the extent that we are not excluded from it entirely, the images of ourselves we see reflected in the dominant culture are often truncated or demeaning (Ibid.).

Culture is produced by men for other men, and when women are depicted, they are oftentimes molded into what men want to see. In her reading of Marx, Bartky holds that what makes humans different from animals is their ability to "invent modes of cultural expression, such as myth, ritual, and art," and when women are denied those, their humanity is denied as well (Ibid.).

It should be clarified what the roles imposed on women are. Lori Jo Marso observes how "becoming wife and mother" transforms a woman's identity (2010: 146). However, some authors note that this transformation starts long before marriage. As Kate Millet puts it:

> From earliest childhood every female child is carefully taught that she is to be a life-long incompetent at every sphere of significant human activity therefore she must convert herself into a sex object – a Thing. She must be pretty and assessed by the world: weighed, judged and measured by her looks alone. If she's pretty, she can marry; then she can concentrate rate her energies on pregnancy and diapers. That's life – that's female life (1968).

Roles a woman has very little freedom creating are imposed on her, dictating what she should be. Additionally, those who do not conform are scorned by the mainstream society. This is the aspect of alienation Bartky calls prohibition, which pertains to the prohibition of "the exercise of typically human functions" (1982: 128). As a result, a woman's potentials which are not prescribed by her role are not valued. Stephanie Coontz observes how "At every turn, popular culture and intellectual elites alike discouraged women from seeing themselves as productive members of society," and with such prohibition pushed towards marriage and motherhood (2006: 236). A woman without a husband and children is not seen as "psychologically complete", and her life as "empty and meaningless […] no matter what she may have accomplished" (DIXON 1977: 22).

Not only are particular roles imposed on women, but the behaviours connected with those roles are often contradictory. In her essay titled "Female Sexual Alienation," Linda Phelps outlines the essential tenets of Ernest Becker's understanding of alienation. What is relevant in this case is Becker's second point, related to the roles women play, as women "are called upon to play more than one role in life, and sometimes the behavior expected in one role conflicts with the behavior expected in another" (PHELPS 1975: 17). Not only can this role-switching be demanding for the woman, but "the role of woman as a sexual being is subject to contradictory evaluations by society" (Ibid. 20). Simultaneously "sexy" and "pure", women may be alienated in such a way that they are paralysed by these contradicting demands for the different roles they did not create (Ibid. 22).

In his *Marx's Concept of Man*, Erich Fromm observes how the opposite of an alienated man is "the active, productive man who grasps and embraces the objective world with his own powers," (2004: 37). Similarly, Linda Phelps holds that "The opposite of powerlessness[4] is self-actualization; and the healthy, self-actualizing human being

4 Here, Phelps uses powerlessness and alienation interchangeably.

moves through the world as an autonomous source of action, in touch with her/his own experience" (1975: 17). However, for a large number of women, overcoming alienation through self-actualising and being active can be difficult, as there are strong societal impositions which encourage passivity and punish deviations. What is left as a potential solution to some aspects of alienation is what second wave feminists called sisterhood. Sisterhood "extends to female solidarity, which involves more women who benefit from this care and nurturing" (AHMAD, MUSHTAQ et al. 2021: 55). Ideally, sisterhood would alleviate certain symptoms of alienation women experience and help form strong bonds among one another. It would prevent women from seeing each other as competitors for male attention, and establish female companionship.

2. Analysis

Grace, the protagonist of "Passion", is a young woman working at a hotel. She starts dating Maury, but, despite her advances, the relationship lacks any intimacy. At various points in the story, we learn that she is frustrated by Maury, and has doubts about their relationship and where it is heading. She would even rather spend time with his mother, Mrs. Travers, than with him. One day, while spending time with Maury's family, Grace's foot gets injured and Maury's half-brother Neil takes her to the hospital. Mrs. Travers is happy that Grace is spending time with Neil, as that might keep him from drinking. She is proven to be wrong as drunk Neil drives Grace out of town, where the two form an intimate bond. Neil teaches Grace to drive and she takes the two of them back to the town while he is pretending to be asleep. The next day she learns that Neil has died in a car crash. While most see it as accident, she suspects suicide. Grace ends her relationship with Maury and decides to start a new life with the charity cheque Maury's father offers her.

In the story, Grace is alienated from the societal standard of what it means to be a woman. This alienation is twofold and appears as what Bartky calls fragmentation and prohibition. As we have explained, fragmentation is when "parts of [a woman's] being have fallen under the control of another", meaning that they appear as a foreign external power (1982: 129). During Grace's first date with Maury, while the two are watching *Father of the Bride*, Grace becomes agitated. "She hated girls like Elizabeth Taylor in that movie, she hated spoiled rich girls of whom nothing was ever asked but that they wheedle and demand" (MUNRO 2005: 164). While initially a class aspect appears to be the reason for her taking a dislike to the film, she elaborates on her opinion:

> She could not explain or quite understand that it wasn't altogether jealousy she felt, it was rage. And not because she couldn't shop like that or dress like that. It was because that was what girls were supposed to be like. That was what men— people, everybody—thought they should be like. Beautiful, treasured, spoiled, selfish, pea-brained. That was what a girl should be, to be fallen in love with. Then she would become a mother and she'd be all mushily devoted to her babies. Not selfish anymore, but just as peabrained. Forever (Ibid.).

What she dislikes is that what Bartky calls "avenues of cultural expression" such as films, responsible for presenting women, are not for women (1982: 129). They create an image of a woman that becomes imposed onto her, and Grace does not see herself in the im-

posed role she played no part in creating and is thus alienated from the cultural norms and expectations surrounding femininity.[5] She hates that women are "to be fallen in love with," as that deprives them of agency (MUNRO 2005: 164). All they are left with doing is objectifying themselves for the male gaze, that is "present[ing] themselves in a way that is sexually pleasing to men" (JAGGAR 1983: 308). For Bartky, such sexual objectification "is a form of fragmentation," as it includes an "implicit denial to those who suffer it that they have capacities which transcend the merely sexual" (1982, 130).

However, instead of protesting against what she despises, Grace succumbs. Munro describes what Grace was wearing on her date with Maury: "A dark-blue ballerina skirt, a white blouse, through whose eyelet frills you could see the tops of her breasts, a wide rose-colored elasticized belt" (MUNRO 2005: 165). While "nothing about her [Grace] was dainty or pert or polished in the style of the time," Munro explains that "There was a discrepancy, no doubt, between the way she [Grace] presented herself and the way she wanted to be judged" (Ibid.). In spite of her earlier criticism of the cultural prescriptions of what a woman should be, she objectifies herself and begins to visually resemble the prescription. This is an instance of alienation, as it is done "not for the purpose of defining [one's] own goal but in order to please the Other" (SLAGTER 1982: 158).

Another aspect of alienation Bartky identifies is prohibition, connected with the prohibition of "the exercise of typically human functions" (1982: 128). In the case of women, this is most commonly related to the development of their intellectual capacities. We learn in the story that Grace left high school late because she took all the classes that were offered, and even planned to teach herself subjects which were not available. The principal tells her that "this was getting her nowhere," and people see her as "crazy" after they hear her reasoning (MUNRO 2005: 166, 167). The power of societal impositions becomes obvious when one tries to deviate from them. As Dixon explains, a woman's life appears "empty and meaningless if she is not a wife and mother - no matter what she may have accomplished," (1977: 22) and since education provides no benefits to Grace for either of those roles, it is not valued. To Grace, the situation is simple: "she just wanted to learn everything you could learn for free" – she does it for herself, not to satisfy others[6] (MUNRO 2005: 166). We see her frustration in her comments on the movie she watched with Maury, where she complains about how a woman had to be "pea-brained" (Ibid. 164). She realises what path life has set for her and many other women, and hates that she has "to be a life-long incompetent at every sphere of significant human activity" (MILLET 1968).

In an effort to overcome some aspects of alienation in her life, Grace tries to get some control over the relationship. We have explained how the opposite of an alienated man is "the active, productive man who grasps and embraces the objective world with his own powers," (FROMM 2004: 37), and this is what Grace is trying to become in the context of her relationship with Maury. Maury is somewhat of a prude and never tries to make the relationship sexual, so Grace has to take the matter into her own hands. She

5 Media created by men is not necessarily always alienating – Mrs. Travers successfully identifies with various characters from *Anna Karenina* at different points in her life.

6 Mrs. Travers' situation is different – she was "sent to business college instead of a real college because she was told she had to be useful," and wishes "she had crammed her mind instead, or first, with what was useless" (MUNRO 2005: 167).

tries to initiate sex by offering herself, but that only throws Maury off balance. For him, it was "A deliberate offering which he could not understand and which did not fit in at all with his notions of her" (MUNRO 2005: 173). By doing this she has stepped outside the societal prescription for women because she did not try to merely look sexy for him, but to be actively sexual.[7] She appears to Maury simultaneously desexualized, in need of protection, and highly sexual in her approach. As we have established, women "are called upon to play more than one role in life, and sometimes the behavior expected in one role conflicts with the behavior expected in another" (PHELPS 1975: 17). Interestingly, just like Grace is required to be simultaneously innocent and sexualized, Maury is asked to simultaneously be a defender and a conqueror. Unable to fill both roles, he chooses that of a defender. He romanticizes her poverty and "[feels] it his responsibility to protect her," without ever making a move (MUNRO 2005: 173). She is right to believe that he is "rearranging his impressions of his Grace so that he could stay wholeheartedly in love with her" (Ibid. 174). He is in love with an ideal of her he has formed, which she had little agency constructing, an ideal she neither fits nor accepts – a poor, helpless girl in need of a protector. It is not only that he operates within such framework, he, in a way, imposes it on her every time they interact. As a damsel in distress, she is more attractive to him – he sees the power gap between them is part of the attraction and feels he can be the knight in shining armour who will save her and take care of her. After the unfortunate interaction, Grace believes it is "a relief […] to be alone" and tries to "blot the last couple of hours out of her mind" (Ibid. 173).

Grace finds another, temporarily more successful avenue of reducing alienation. In her essay on "Passion," Chen Zhitong focuses on the relationship between Grace and Maury's mother, Mrs. Travers. According to Zhitong, "The close relationship between the two women is a kind of sisterhood, […] which provides a collective sense of unity and purpose and demonstrates the solidarity of the feminist movement" (2020: 167). The two women share similar struggles – both possess intellectual proclivities and have been denied a proper outlet. Grace will not be able to attend college and Mrs. Travers was "sent to business college instead of a real college because she was told she had to be useful," and relates to Grace (MUNRO 2005: 167). Additionally, despite the age difference, both women lack passion in their lives – nothing is happening between Grace and Maury, and Mrs. Travers explains how "Passion gets pushed behind the washtubs" at her age (MUNRO 2005: 172). We can say that their friendship serves Grace as a counter to the alienation that is present in her life. It is an island of tranquillity and mutual understanding opposed to alienation. With Mrs. Travers, Grace is freer from the societal and cultural prescriptions of what a woman should be and, at least theoretically, can construct her own subjectivity instead of being an "object destined for another" (DE BEAUVOIR 1956: 320). Grace even arranges her shifts so that she can spend more time with Mrs. Travers instead of Maury. Zhitong goes as far as to suggest that "What really attracts Grace is not Maury's courtship, but the promise that Maury's family—particular Mrs. Travers—seems to accept and ratify in her" (2020: 168).

7 It should be noted that, while Grace is going beyond the behaviours prescribed for her, at this point she is still operating within the framework that prescribes them and expects "Maury to take over" and act as a conqueror, herself being ready to assume the passive role once that happens (MUNRO 2005: 173).

After some time, however, the sisterhood is betrayed. Xiying Liu and Hongbin Dai write about "an unresolved ethical knot" in the relationship of the two women (2015). Despite the closeness the two feel in their relationship, Grace is "sacrificed" for one of Mrs. Travers' sons – Neil. This event occurs when Mrs. Travers tells Grace to prevent Neil from drinking: "This is very good. Grace, you are a godsend. You'll try to keep him away from drinking today, won't you? You'll know how to do it" (MUNRO 2005: 181). In Liu and Dai's reading, "Mrs. Travers would like to take advantage of Grace and hopes that she could help stop Neil's alcohol abuse" (2015). This is the betrayal of their relationship, Grace is instrumentalised and used to do Mrs. Travers' bidding. With this, the sisterhood ceases to be a refuge from alienation in Grace's life. She is expected to be Neil's saviour, a task she did not choose is imposed on her.

Surprisingly, Grace does manage to achieve an unalienated relationship with Neil. It starts with Neil taking Grace to the hospital where he works to take care of her injured foot. When the nurse enters and informs Neil that Maury has arrived, Neil commands her to lie and tell him he and Grace have already left. Neil then decides to drive her out of town. She shows no protest and is glad that she does not have to think of Maury. During the drive, he licks her hand, takes her to a bar, teaches her to drive, leaves her to buy alcohol for himself, and pretends to be asleep so that Grace drives them back. Looking back, Grace sees leaving with Neil "as if a gate had clanged shut behind her […] [and] the rights of those left behind were smoothly cancelled" (MUNRO 2005: 182). Away from those who did not matter, Grace and Neil develop a sort of intimacy. "I need your company," Neil explains to Grace (Ibid. 185), and given the willingness in participation Grace has displayed, the reverse statement seems to hold as well.

Liu and Dai suggest that Grace is attracted to Neil because he is "a mature man […] with masculinity" (2015), but this statement should be contested. While it is true that Neil is assertive and that his job of a doctor provides him with a respectable social position and income, this is where his similarities with traditional masculinity end. When it comes to other aspects of masculinity, Neil is a failure. He is rarely present as the leader of his family, presumably using work as an excuse to not spend time with them, and tries to find the solutions for his problems at the bottom of a bottle. He is a barely functional alcoholic, unable to act as a reliable figure for his family, as a traditional man would. During the Travers family's stay at the lake, his mother even appoints Grace as his handler to stop him from drinking, completely undermining any independence and respectability connecting him to traditional masculinity.

While there is some attraction between Neil and Grace, it is much closer to intimacy than mere physical attraction. Grace seems to be aware of this – even though she initially compares her driving with Neil to sex (MUNRO 2005: 183), Munro later describes their relationship in the following way: "Mouths, tongues, skin, bodies, banging bone on bone. Inflammation. Passion. But that wasn't what had been meant for them at all. That was child's play, compared to how she knew him, how far she'd seen into him, now" (MUNRO 2005: 193). The absence of any explicitly sexual interaction, which seemed to be the most significant thing lacking in her relationship with Maury, is of barely any importance here. The two share much deeper bond as a consequence of alienation they both feel. Grace is similar to Neil – just as Neil, at first sight, appears as an accomplished

man, Grace also appears as a well-adjusted woman, but both are deeply alienated from the societal prescriptions for their respective genders. As Amanda Frankel observes, "Men create norms which they too must follow to be socially accepted," and if they fail to adhere to "the historical path" of masculinity, they become "dehumanized in the same fashion as women" (2012: 51). Given Neil's avoidance of roles connected with traditional masculinity, his problem seems to be similar to Grace's: he feels that societal roles he personally did not create are a foreign power imposed on him by society. Even his alcoholism might be connected to his feeling of alienation – Calicchia and Barresi find that aspects of alienation such as "Social isolation and powerlessness […] were shown to correlate positively with active alcoholism" (1975: 774).[8] Being with Grace serves as a much needed break from societal duties: "You are a relief, Grace" he tells her at one point. (MUNRO 2005: 192). The differences between Grace's relationship with Maury and Neil are clear: one strengthens her feeling of alienation, and the other one alleviates it.

As we have mentioned, Grace finds neither passion nor fulfilment in being Maury's girlfriend. While she did believe that one day she would get married, she has never really thought about marriage and what it meant. One day, Maury begins to talk about his marriage with Grace: "he spoke of it as of something that she as well as he must be taking for granted. When we are married, he would say" (Ibid. 172). While Grace does not contradict him, she never accepts or agrees that this will happen, she only listens. Marriage does not appear as her choice, but as an economic necessity, as well as a societal convention she is merely supposed to perform that will only cement her relationship with Maury, already plagued with alienation. She is not living, life is happening around her. She is not "an autonomous source of action, in touch with her/his own experience" but a secondary character in her own life (PHELPS 1975: 17). For this reason, while driving with Neil, she ponders: "How strange that she'd thought of marrying Maury. A kind of treachery it would be. A treachery to herself" (MUNRO 2005: 190).

On the other hand, it is "not a treachery to be riding with Neil" (Ibid.) During their drive, she explains that the reason their escapade is not a treachery is because Neil "knew some of the same things she did" (Ibid.). What Neil knows is alienation, and her going with Neil is a protest against alienation she feels in her life. At one point during the ride, he decides to teach her to drive. Neil's lessons symbolically represent acquisition of agency – now she has the power to decide where to drive. Grace becomes aware that something different is possible, a potentially less alienated existence outside the prescribed roles and behaviours. The ride itself is her first experience of this alternative space, it is also where passion finally appears. As already mentioned, Grace compares the bizarre sequence of events during the ride to sex. This passion that emerges away from the world of Maury and *Father of the Bride* is an unalienated experience Grace and Neil have themselves created. Precisely because it is so different from the clichés one sees in movies and magazines, and so dissimilar to what society prescribes, it appears as unalienated to those alienated from society. However, Grace begins to question whether this can last: "Now with the cold of night settled in some other facts became clear to her. That they could not remain here, that they were still in the world after all" (MUNRO 2005: 193). She drives them back to town, but is herself radically changed.

8 Calicchia and Barresi hold that "what is still uncertain is whether alienation is a predisposing condition or a consequential effect of alcoholism" (1975: 774).

The day after the drive, Grace learns that Neil has died in a car accident and is certain it was a suicide. The escapade has served as an epiphany for both participants: from their relationship, Grace gets hope that things can be different, that she can do something to change her circumstances, while Neil kills himself out of despair that things have not been different for most of his life, and are likely to remain the same. Grace is offered money by the Travers family, and, while she considers tearing up the cheque, she accepts it. Marriage to Maury and alienation that comes with performing the roles she did not create or choose are no longer seen as destiny. She might still be "in the world", but she realises that the cheque offers her agency to pursue a better, less alienated life, rather than marrying Maury and risking having the same fate as Neil. We have no knowledge of what Grace has made of herself – the story begins with her trying to find the old Travers' house four decades after the events we have analysed, reminiscing about "a moment of flight [that] changed everything" (HELLMAN 2004). What has happened in between, to what degree has her "inner quest from patriarchal domination" been successful remains a mystery (PATNI et al. 2019: 252).

3. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to demonstrate that alienation is a driving force in Munro's story "Passion". In the first place, insights from various Marxist feminist scholars were used to explain how the understanding of alienation has progressed in relation to feminism. The focus was then shifted towards the sexual and cultural alienation of women in the contemporary society. Finally, ways of dealing with alienation, such as the notion of sisterhood, were explored. The analysis focused on the various examples of alienation in Munro's short story. Instances of what Bartky calls fragmentation and prohibition were connected to the predicament of the story's protagonist. Grace's unsuccessful attempts to alleviate the feeling of alienation by trying to take up the active role in her relationship or form a sisterhood with Mrs. Travers were analysed with respect to the framework established in the introduction. Finally, the unexpected similarities regarding the feeling of alienation both Grace and Neil experience were explored. These similarities indicate that there might be a closer connection in how men and women experience alienation from the cultural prescriptions for their respective genders, which, if researched further, could broaden our understanding of alienation.

Works Cited

AHMAD, MUSHTAQ et al. 2021: AHMAD, Shabbir, MUSHTAQ, Muhammad, and CHAUHDARY, Fariha. "A Study of Alienation in Toni Morrison's Love: Poverty, Patriarchal Institution of Marriage and Female Friendship." *Journal of English Language Literature and Education*, volume 2, issue 3 (January – March 2021): pp. 53-62.

BARTKY 1982: BARTKY, Sandra Lee. "Narcissism, Femininity and Alienation." *Social Theory and Practice*, volume 8, number 2 (Summer 1982): pp. 127-143.

CALICCHIA and BARRESI 1975: CALICCHIA, John P, BARRESI, Robert M. "Alcoholism and alienation." *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, volume 31, issue 4 (October 1975): pp. 270-275. https://doi.org/10.1002/1097-4679(197510)31:4<770::AID-JCLP2270310448>3.0.CO;2-3

COONTZ 2006: COONTZ, Stephanie. "Part THREE: The Love Revolution." In *Marriage, a Histo-*

ry: How Love Conquered Marriage. London: Penguin Books, 2006: pp. 145-297.

DIXON 1977: DIXON, Marlene. "The Subjugation of Women Under Capitalism: The Bourgeois Morality." *Synthesis,* volume 1, number 4 (Spring 1977): pp. 18-30.

DE BEAUVOIR 1956: DE BEAUVOIR, Simone. "The Formative Years", in S. de Beauvoir *The Second Sex*, edited and translated by H. M. Parshley, London: Jonathan Cape, 1956, 415-467.

FRANKEL 2012: FRANKEL, Amanda. "Kept Down By the Man, Damn the Man: The Figurative and Literal Alienation of Women." *Stance: An International Undergraduate Philosophy Journal*, volume 5, number 1 (September 2012): pp. 45-54. https://doi.org/10.33043/S.5.1.45-54

FROMM 2004: FROMM, Erich. *Marx's Concept of Man*. London: Continuum, 2004.

GIMENEZ 2019: GIMENEZ, Martha E. "Loving Alienation: the Contradictions of Domestic Work." In M. E. Gimenez *Marx, Women, and Capitalist Social Reproduction* (Historical Materialism Book Series volume 169). Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019: pp. 257-273. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004291560_013

HELLMAN 2004: HELLMAN, David. "The folly of trying to escape life." https://www.sfgate.com/books/article/the-folly-of-trying-to-escape-life-2632546.php, accessed 22.02.2024.

JAGGAR 1983: JAGGAR, Allison M. "The Politics of Socialist Feminism." In A. M. Jaggar *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Philosophy and Society Series). Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983, pp. 303-351.

KAIN 1993: KAIN, Philip J. "Marx, Housework, and Alienation." *Hypatia*, volume 8, number 1 (Winter 1993): pp. 121-144. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1993.tb00631.x

KUDUMULA 2022: KUDUMULA, Revathi. "Woman as Alienated: A Study of Alice Munro's Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage." *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, volume 10, issue 5 (May 2022): pp. 424-429.

LIU and DAI 2015: LIU, Xiying, and DAI, Hongbin. "Ethical Dilemma and Nihilism in Munro's "Passion"." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, volume 16, issue 5 (December 2015) https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2745

MARSO 2010: MARSO, Lori Jo. "Marriage and Bourgeois Respectability." *Politics & Gender*, volume 6, issue 1 (March 1992): pp. 145-153. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X09990572

MARX 2010: MARX, Karl. "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works Volume 3: 1843-1844*. Translated by Martin Milligan and Dirk J. Struik. Lawrence & Wishart, 2010, pp. 229-326.

MILLET 1968: MILLET, Kate. "Sexual Politics." https://www.marxists.org/subject/women/authors/millett-kate/sexual-politics.htm, accessed 25.03.2024.

PATNI et al. 2019: PATNI, Geetika, NATH, Keshav, SHARMA, Ajay. "Narrative Exuberance and Powerless Female Depicted in Alice Munro's "Runaway"." *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, volume 7, issue 5C (February 2019): pp. 252-257.

PHELPS 1975: PHELPS, Linda. "Female Sexual Alienation." In J. Freeman (ed.) *Women: A Feminist Perspective*. Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1975, pp. 16-24.

RASPORICH 1976: RASPORICH, Beverly J. "Child-Women and Primitives: In the Fiction of Alice Munro." *Atlantis*, volume 1, number 2 (Spring 1976): pp. 4-14.

SARFRAZ 1997: SARFRAZ, Hamid. "Alienation: a Theoretical Overview." *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, volume 12, number 1-2. 1997, pp. 45-60.

SLAGTER 1982: SLAGTER, Janet Trapp. "The Concept of Alienation and Feminism." *Social Theory and Practice*, volume 8, number 2 (Summer 1982): pp. 155-164. https://doi.org/10.5840/soctheorpract1982828

TRUSSLER 2012: TRUSSLER, Michael. "Pockets of Nothingness: "Metaphysical Solitude" in Alice Munro's "Passion"." *Narrative*, volume 20, number 2 (May 2012): pp. 183-197. https://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2012.0016

ZHITONG 2020: ZHITONG, Chen. "The Plight and Choice of Grace: Women's Subjectivity in Alice Munro's "Passion"." *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, volume 6, number 3 (September 2020): pp. 166-169. http://dx.doi.org/10.18178/IJLLL.2020.6.3.270

Sources

MUNRO 2005: MUNRO, Alice. Runaway. London: Chatto & Windus, 2005

Nikola S. Petrović

ALIJENACIJA U KRATKOJ PRIČI „STRAST" ALIS MANRO

Rezime

Ovaj rad se bavi fenomenom alijenacije u kratkoj priči „Strast" Alis Manro. U teoretskom delu rada, objašnjavamo fenomen alijenacije iz marksističko-feminističke perspektive. Radovi autora kao što su Alison Džeger, Sandra Li Bartki, i Filip Dž. Kejn se koriste da poboljšaju naše razumevanje alijenacije. Posebna pažnja posvećena je seksualnoj i kulturnoj alijenaciji žena u postojećem društvu. Pored toga, istražuju se načini za smanjenje posledica alijenacije. U analizi, pozivamo se na teoretski okvir koji smo uspostavili u uvodu da identifikujemo i objasnimo primere alijenacije u priči. Glavni fokus je na slučajevima kulturne i seksualne alijenacije koji nastaju iz zahteva koji dolaze iz društvenih uloga koje su nametnute ženama. Na kraju, alijenacija se tretira kao glavna motivacija delanja protagonist, i njene najznačajnije odluke se interpretiraju kao pokušaji bekstva od alijenacije.

Ključne reči: Alis Manro, alijenacija, feminizam, marksizam