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Coming of Age in Alice Munro's short story *Red Dress-1946*: The Influence of Gender, Society, and the Role of Parents.

An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a

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Submitted by:

Fatiha Ben Ahmed

Supervised by:

Dr. Azzeddine Bouhassoun

Board of Examiners:

President: Ms. Fatima YAHIA

University Centre of Ain Temouchent

Supervisor: Dr. Azzeddine BOUHASSOUN

University Centre of Ain Temouchent

Examiner: Mr. Mohamed Ali TALHA

University Centre of Ain Temouchent

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this extended essay entitled « *Coming of Age in Alice Munro's short story "Red Dress-1946": The Influence of Gender, Society, and the Role of Parents* » was written by me, Miss Ben Ahmed Fatiha, under the supervision of Dr. Azzeddine Bouhassoun. This work is to be submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master's degree in British Literature and Civilisation.

This research is the result of my original work, and it has been written by me entirely. Any source of information that have been used is duly acknowledged. **This work has also not been submitted for any degree in any university before this time.**

Ben Ahmed Fatiha

Dedications

*I dedicate this work to the strong, beautiful, brave women in my life
who inspire me every day and remind me why this work matters.*

To my mother for teaching me the real sense of being “beautiful, smart, and compassionate”, for all that she does and continues to do to remind me who I am, where I am, and what truly matters in the world; and that our relationship with one another is incredibly important, thus establishing the cornerstone for this work.

To my best friend, all my classmates, my aunts, all my teachers, and all my study mentors, all-powerful, graceful persons for paving the way for me to do what I love and fight for that in which I believe.

For all of the people around in my life past, present, and future, who have challenged me, inspired me and left your lasting imprint on my life.

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Abstract

Through fiction, Alice Munro projects to explore and reveal the human complexities in her short stories, especially in a specific stage of life and at the heart of the patriarchal society. The purpose of this research is to reveal the social and other impacts on females, especially adolescent girls, and how this factor touch the family structure to influence their personality and choices. Using analytical method, this extended essay sheds light on a teenage girl and her possibilities to establish her own principles compared to her mother's special qualities and personality, focusing on the role the mother in shaping the *typical choices* for the daughter. The mother within the story was chosen to play the greatest role in directing the girl into the path in which she is the master of her choices. In the end, the girl reaches to control her own life. This study answers the question regarding the correlation between the mother and her adolescent daughter, and how this relationship influences making choice when it comes to establishing the self from childhood into adulthood.

Keywords: Coming of Age, Society, Gender, Mother- Daughter Relationship, Red Dress.

General Introduction

General Introduction

Literature has a central place in our lives and our education. For instance, all of us have read or heard stories. Stories that can be funny, sad, and interesting. The common thing in these stories is that they consist of the same elements, which are plots, characterisation, theme, setting.

Our main interest is the Canadian literature. The short story in Canada has developed during the nineteenth century, starting from the 1830s to the mid nineteen's. Newspapers, magazines, and radio have played a major role in its spread. In fact, there is no difference between the Canadian short stories and short stories from the rest of the world. Canadian short stories writers have the same eclectic approach of the English-speaking world's writers. However, the focus of this contemporary genre goes beyond the sentimentality of romance. It is more about the real life and society.

Some of the bright contemporary short story writers in Canada are Margaret Atwood, Margaret Lawrence, Ken Mitchell, and Alice Munro. Nevertheless, our research focuses on a short story written by Alice Laidlaw Munro (1931-), a Canadian writer, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013. Munro has received an international praise for her tales of struggles, love, and tragedies that have spot the light on women who have lived in the small towns of Ontario in Canada. Munro has succeeded in making a connection between her real life and her work. This connection is apparent as she uses her fictional characters based on her complicated life, and exactly from where she has grew up. It is known that Munro does not only tackle the superficial side of the relationship but also explore its depth. Thus, she is distinctively recognized as the master of the contemporary short story. Several Critics and writers compares her to the Russian master storyteller "Anton Chekhov" and other prominent writers such as A. S. Byatt who has stated that: "Alice Munro is a great short story writer. She is the equal of Chekhov and De Maupassant and the Flaubert of the *Trois Contes*, as innovatory and as illuminating as they are."

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Each published book is a collection of several short stories that are linked to each other. One of these books is *Dance of the Happy Shades*, a book made of fifteen short story : *Walker Brothers Cowboy, The Shining Houses, Images, Thanks for the Ride, The Office, An Ounce of Cure, The Time of Death, Day of the Butterfly, Boys and Girls, Postcard, Red Dress-1946, Sunday Afternoon, A Trip to the Coast, The Peace of Utrecht*, and *Dance of the Happy Shades*.

Munro's short story retell experiences that seem familiar to the reader, especially the stage that every girl go through. Thus, it easy to comprehend the story regardless of the difference in culture and history. In fact, when reading, I have felt motivated to explore Munro's short story because of the similarities between some incidents in the story and some points in my adolescence. Reading the short story has triggered in me several moments and flashbacks from my life. From the way I have perceived and have dealt with everything that happened to my life and my relationship with my mother. My mother used to be a dressmaker as the main character's mother. She also has her same passion, the same image, and even the same appearance and attitude. I share the same way the narrator looks at her mother, the same treatment, and the same way of dealing with things as well.

Parents in the first place then society influence both children and adolescents. Teenagers are willing to learn more and experience everything new in order to fit in society, and create their own personalities. This stage is well illustrated in Munro's short story *Red Dress-1946*. One can clearly see the impact of the social pressure presented by her mother, friends, environment and high school. The young narrator undergoes a confusing journey in her way to reach her new identity, surrounded by two imposing sides; her mother and her culture.

Alice Munro in *Red Dress-1946* (1968) presents a teenager making her first steps from adolescence toward adulthood, portraying this stage as a very sensitive period, full of fears and insecurity. Furthermore, the short story focuses on the girl's dreams and expectations to fit in

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society. There is a crucial event that is considered as a test to whether she can succeed or fail to reach her goals, which is the dance party.

The story is chronologically ordered according to three main scenes, before, during, and after the party. The first scene, before the party, turns around the preparation of the dress in general, and focuses mainly on the narrator. Some details occur such as flashbacks from the narrator's childhood, description of girl's feeling, and the relationship between the mother and her daughter. Lastly, the preparation for the party where the girl is trying to get sick and skip the big day. In the second scene, during the party, the narrator is going through three different events, before meeting Mary fortune, meeting her, and the moment of choice where she has to decide whether to go with Mary fortune or accept the boy's request for the dance. The choice ends up with choosing the dance. The third and the last main scene, after the party, is a description of the protagonist coming back home, feeling relieved, and finally reaching home.

Munro's stories mainly focus on the theme of feminism, self-made women and the motherhood. As a result, this extended essay main interest is the role of the mother, and how she influences her daughter's life and decisions.

Our main purpose is:

- 1) To investigate whether there is a relationship between gender, family, and society.
- 2) To provide a clear explanation about the role of parents in shaping their children's personalities.
- 3) To explore the narrative techniques used by Munro, and the way she portrays the mother-daughter relationship.

To conduct this research, three questions worth asking:

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- 1) How does our young female narrator in this short story acquire her gender identity during her adolescence?
- 2) How does the narrator establish her own identity and principles?
- 3) What is the intention of using the red color and what does the dress symbolize?

To answer the mentioned questiones, the following hypotheses are suggested :

- 1) Society, culture, and family are the main factors that influence the developement of gender identity.
- 2) The mother plays an important role in shaping the narrator's identity and beliefs.
- 3) Since Munro relies on objects, colors, and images to portray the psychological state of her characters, the red color is used to highlight the disturbance between the mother and the daughter.

Structurally, this research work consists of three chapters. Chapter one introduces the concept of gender, and how both society and culture support the emergence of stereotyped qualities for both sexes especially the female. It also highlights the concept of realism in literature, and the influence of gender on the female character, both in reality and the short story. In addition, it illustrates how the adolescent girl is restricted to gender stereotyping, and how she struggles to be accepted in society.

The second chapter is an analytical part of the relationship between the narrator and her mother since the young girl is trying to create her own personality according to her mother's personality.

The third chapter aims to discuss the narrative technique used in the story, starting from the title, and to reveal the artistic touch Munro used in describing her characters

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This research paper is written following MLA 7th edition style format. A quantitative research approach is used to explore and study the data in hand, based on the analytical investigation on the relationship between the mother and her daughter.

Chapter one:

Gender and the Female Adolescent

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Newborn babies, boys or girls, are concerned with gendered dichotomies in any society. This gendered classification helps children to follow a traditional model that their family expects in order to blend into the society; children are endowed with the readiness to acquire expectations so they unconsciously internalize gender dichotomies into their attitudes and thoughts.

1.1. Gender and Identity:

1.1.2. Gendered Identity:

According to Simone de Beauvoir (1949) and, from the moment parents know that the newborn baby is “a girl”, the process of gender socialization starts. He sees that a girl is not born to act like a girl; instead, she is informed and taught how to be a girl. Moreover, through this socialization process, girls acquire how to be girls, and boys develop how to be boys (de Beauvoir 331).

1.1.2.1. Gender from Early Childhood:

The first thing to be asked by family members and friends about a newborn baby is his / her sex. At a very young age, children act normally away from sex or gender dichotomies, where, as soon as parents in the first place then people around them, start to teach them how to act according to their gender, they easily learn their gendered identity (de Beauvoir 672).

The way of holding, speaking to children with a specific intonation, and even using adjectives for their characteristic’s description when interacting with them contribute in the process of treating girls in a different manner by which they are called “girled,” starting from their first moments of life, according to Judith Butler. Moreover, this can lead to the notion of gender socialization according to the critical feminist theory, and the role in which take the main part in adolescent girls personas.

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1.1.2.2. Gender in The Family:

Feminism interprets and maintains that there are several basics that banish girls to a lower level of society starting from an early age, basics as the family, dress, and even the games played by children. The family contributes in a way or another in the development of the gendered identities and the socialization of children at their young age. Being a *girl* is something learned by the actions made in her home environment, by the way, her parents talk to her, through the pressures made by them, and the ways they push her to act.

Through the games and the toys that girls are urged to play with, gender roles are fixed and reinforced coinciding their growing up and even compliments and blames for involving in behaviors related to the adequate gender when playing, are considered as the common ways for gender to be reinforced. These social expectations of how girls should act even in casual contexts play the main role in their social growth, where there are central powers standards. The typical female behavior is rooted with variable cultural directions that support male superiority over women, from the young girl's trained ways to speak and seem, to the ways she is told to think, act, and play (de Beauvoir 350).

From an early age, parents, siblings, and other family members develop gender to children. Usually, when it comes to gender, father's beliefs are more rigid than mothers are. As a result, fathers are more likely to amend a boy if he is playing in a *girly manner* than a girl involved in a male play behavior. For male, femininity "sounds like an insult" (de Beauvoir 41). This variation illustrates boys who act *like a girl* is something despicable and shameful, whereas acting like a boy is normal and acceptable.

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Secret messages like this play a major role in reinforcing dominant values in society, that girls internalize it very well. These stamp behaviors go together with how they show aggression in adolescence.

1.2. Gender Roles and Gender Stereotypes:

1.2.1. Feminist Theory:

The feminist approach is classified as a theoretical framework for this study because gender has been theorized as being a negative result in a society that keeps excluding young women less power than their male peers, resulting in the pervasiveness of the issue. The continuations of negative, binary gender stereotypes are just one *traditional* concepts of femininity have been learned and master it by ritualistic repetition in society (de Beauvoir 343). One of the main points within feminist theory in which is related to gender includes binary gender stereotypes.

1.2.2. The Binary Gender Stereotypes:

The feminist perspective sees that the extensive gender stereotypes in the society and the way it bolts both men and women into *normal* behaviors, principles, and reflections have negative predatory impacts on both boys and girls (de Beauvoir 331). These pervasive stereotypes shape children to fit into the masculine or the feminine gender on what will become the continuity of the gendered identity. Even if parents try not to affirm gender while raising their children, once they go to school and mix frequently with teachers and schoolmates, they are unfolded to normalized binary concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Gender is replicated in the classroom in an inevitable way, whether intentionally or accidentally. Boys are formed to take risks and act in a roughly and wildly, while girls are taught to be more submissive and silent both inside and outside of the classroom. On the one hand, boys

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are guided toward domains and disciplines such as science, engineering, business. On the other hand, girls accept that they are *naturally* weak in these specific academic fields. Thus, both girls and boys may turn from feeling frustrated into the feeling of being classified in a world dictates the way they must act, talk, think and reflect, dress and appear, and what they will become (de Beauvoir 332-333).

Actually, stereotypes are the typical image of a society's common knowledge of traditions, legends, beliefs, religions, and sciences and art. It is within this knowledge that a person creates and develops a stereotype or a certain belief about a certain group. Socio-psychologists assume that stereotype is one part of the individual's social knowledge. Due to their knowledge, or the lack of it, these stereotypes have an impact on their social behavior.

Stereotypical behaviours can be related to the way that the stereotype is acquired, learned, transferred, and changed that is a part of the socialization process too. The culture also influences stereotypes through details and messages that are received from indirect sources such as parents, friends and peers, teachers, political and religious leaders and through (de Bouvoir 617).

To understand stereotyping, one must know the definition of a stereotype. A stereotype is defined as a regular form or pattern, especially a fixed or a common notion or conception of an individual, group, idea, etc, held and preserved by a group of people, and which it allows neither the individuality nor the critical judgment. However, socio-psychologists have a various approach to determining a stereotype. They define a stereotype as a cognitive framework including the perceiver's comprehension, beliefs, and expectations about some social group.

These two definitions above could spotlight the various features of stereotyping. Actually, stereotyping arise in society all the time. People stereotype others for several reasons; one of the reasons is the gender. Males are strong and the breadwinner of the family, Women takes care of

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the children and cleans the house. People get stereotyped also because of their age. Older adults think that younger adults cannot understand what is responsibility and are irresponsible, while the younger adults do not think that the older listen or appreciate them because of their age.

Several features that concern stereotyping such as races, cultures, economic and social statuses, appearance and hairstyles, manners or behaviors, languages, functions, weights, etc. Stereotyping is how we see each other, especially strange individuals or people outside our group. Believing in what is “normal” is related to people around us. Which are usually our friends and our social networks.

1.2. Society and gender:

1.2.1. Gender Socialization:

Though people continue using *sex* and *gender* in a comparable manner, the significant difference is in that sex is the biological nature that defines the baby whether a boy or a girl, while the gender is a social conception. Yet, these notions are associated with each other because the gendered identity exists with the existence of the biological and physiological features of sex (de Beauvoir 341).

Despite the fact of many theories that upholds the physiological, morphological, and the biological distinctions between sexes, generally, scholars have accepted that gender is a social production where starting from an early age, girls learn specific behaviors, how to act and react, dress, and even how to speak.

The final product of socialization is the way we are, behave, act, and reflect. Since the moment we are born, we are molded into what society requires us to be. By socialization, we also learn what is relevant and inappropriate for both genders.

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As Freud sees, gender is the first thing to determine when meeting someone new. Actually, it will probably bother us if we cannot recognize his gender. Perhaps, the need to know the person's gender is related to how to act to him.

According to psychologists, for instance, Sandra Bem, one of the human's cognitive processes that seem nearly determined is to divide humanity into groups based on race, age, religion, etcetera. Yet, gender is the dominant way in which we usually split people. This process of classifying others in terms of gender is both automatic and permanent.

When dividing the world into two groups, male and female, we tend to see all males are similar, and all females are similar too, while the two categories of *male* and *female* vary from each other. In real life, the characteristics of women and men tend to interfere with each other in reality. Unfortunately, however, gender extension usually creates an artificial space between women and men. Considering the patriarchal society appreciates competition and individual's success on their own, women's trend for caring for others and establishing the community is considered as less important. This is reflected as gender roles in which are established by the culture.

Our different expectations for female and male behavior are related to gender stereotypes in which are related to this cognitive process.

Gender variance is consequently explained in terms of the way female differs from the norms. For instance, research usually shows self-confidence as a gender difference. However, these studies, almost every time, ask about the lack of self-confidence in females, related to the male norms. In addition to gender, humans use several other bases for feeling superior: appearances, money, education, social position, profession, race, nationality, religion, morals, size, talent, etc. In addition, talking about the male dominance and being superior to woman, obviously, not all

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men have the power and rule women. In fact, according to the feminist Warren Farrell, many men are dominated by *the system*, while, women can have some positions as an advantage and are protected in many ways that men do not have. Farrell asserts that assuming (falsely) that men having the power and advantages leads women to feel *oppressed* and *angry* (Farrell 36). As a consequence of women's depression and critique, men feel unrecognized. completely, the misunderstandings between the genders are keeping these two apart. Clearly, both male and female use power in a particular way, but this latter did not reach equality yet.

Even today, within the gendered old rules continuity that still serves to *put down women and keep them in their place*. The cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead states that, based on what other cultures achieved, that it was not innate for men to be decision-makers and workers or for women to be submissive, obedient, and raise children. But, our culture continues to urge the conformity of these gender roles, making women do what are *supposed* to do. Actually, the social, family, and friends expectations become internalized as our own self-expectations. As a result, these gender roles control and impose us to be what others want us to be.

1.2.1.1. Social Interaction:

In society, the way in which a girl learns to be a “girl” affects her attitudes and responses and how she acts in an aggressive manner. From her initial age, the girl is disclosed to a definite, permanent subject that develops and promotes her gendered position in the world. Hence, gender is learned through social interaction, in which, it is the mean that reproduces and preserves the gender standards. As Jean-Marie Charon states “The definition of who women are in the world may have originally arisen among men, or even between men and women, but over time that has influenced the views that women have of themselves” (221). Women and girls internalize the

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gendered association with the world through their socialization; this also notifies how people in society expect them to behave.

Critical feminists have argued that social traditions concerning femininity are considered severe, oppressive, and restrict women and girls. Starting from their childish age, girls discover that they must act in a calm, polite, and obedient manner, and not to act in an overtly aggressive manner (de Beauvoir 76).

1.2.1.2. Promoting the Difference:

Social expectations for girls influence all of their behaviors and attitudes, including the ways that they seem aggressively to each other. The direct and indirect interaction with others creates and reinforces gendered attitudes, beliefs, and values. Thus, Gender is also reproduced through factors beyond interpersonal participation. One of the complicated places that reinforce the generalized notions of femininity is schools. The impact of schools is easy to reveal but difficult to direct because they are very extensive and profoundly blend into the cultural frame.

1.2.1.3. Learning Gender in Schools:

When children start to attend school, interact with friends and teachers, gender is added to a hidden syllabus. This hidden curriculum made by the schools introduces the classroom values and learning issues that are not clearly accepted by teachers or learners since children, in a way or another, are aware and notice the differences. Examples of the hidden curricula are present when a teacher asks a *strong* male student to move a desk or tells a *kind* female student to look after the classroom pet or flower. For instance, a teacher might reward boys for showing friendly behavior in class but criticize girls for acting the same way. From an analytical view, the hidden curriculum helps as a system to continue social differences and inequalities that contribute the social conformity. In this way, these curricula reproduce the cultural values of the powerful

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group through consensual practices of formal education, even if it is unintentional. Especially, girls are influenced by the hidden curriculum since it teaches them how to internalize an inferior position in society.

Mann sees that "Some classroom sexism is subtle, but it is constant and pervasive. Some of it is blatant, so ruthlessly destructive to our daughter's ambitions, that it ought to be indicted as malicious and wounding" (79). According to her, girls are damaged by the personal dynamics in the schools. They enter schools ready and eager to learn, with higher ability than boys of the same generation. From birth, girls are advanced in cognitive growth more than boys are and usually, are more mature, and in their initial primary classes, outscore boys on grouped examinations.

However, everything changes by high school. Girls' graduation from high school comes after their lower test scores and loss of self-esteem, which is deeper than boys. The social justice lens sees that the school experiences have a returning result on young women and that should be investigated with the same critical perspective that looks at differences in the results of minority and at-risk learners (de Beauvoir 381).

1.3. Social Gender and Power :

Gender socialization and social expectations play a main part in the girls' identity creation and their relationships with each other; the excessive power specified to girls in society is one of the elements that provides to relational aggressiveness in adolescent girls. Actually, the inequality of power between girls and boys is systematically reinforced in society. From a very early age, children internalize the social layered system where girls "naturally" are inferior and less power than boys (de Beauvoir).

1.3.1. Female Passivity And Male Hegemony:

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1.3.1.1. Female “passivity”:

During childhood, girls get the idea that they should act in a more reserved manner than their male peer; boys are encouraged to be both reckless and adventurous. De Beauvoir writes about the difference between what boys are encouraged to do and what girls are allowed to do:

For one thing, they suffer under the rule forbidding them to climb trees and ladders or on roofs. Adler remarks that the notions of high and low have great importance, the idea of elevation and space implying spiritual superiority, as may be seen in various heroic myths; to attain a summit, a peak, is to stand out beyond the common world of facts a sovereign subject (ego); among boys, climbing is frequently a basis for challenge. The little girl, to whom such exploits are forbidden and who, seated at the foot of a tree or cliff, sees the triumphant boys high above her, must feel that she is, body and soul, their inferior. (348)

Climbing trees is a metaphor that may seem less important today; thus far, girls are still taught to be submissive, loyal and obedient, while boys are taught to be ambitious and adventurous, and far less power is downgraded to girls than to boys. Boys are the ones who act, while girls are the recipient of the action. Passive-aggressive behaviors are the major features of the adolescent girl's relations, which are learned from the cultural messages about how girls should act. (de Beauvoir 46).

1.3.1.2. Masculine Hegemony:

Gender establishes the notion of the differences between male and female under what is called *patriarchy*, as a system where the hierarchy classifies the masculine quality over the feminine with privilege.

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In this hegemonic structure, women and men have been assigned to various ability and authority in the society and both of them were taught to follow their particular roles, usually, it is done unknowingly. According to McLaren “Hegemony is a struggle in which the powerful win the consent of those who are oppressed, with the oppressed unknowingly participating in their own oppression” (67).

1.3.1.3. Submissiveness Leads to Aggression:

The extensive gendered differences in which allocate women as the inferior and the weaker is deeply established in our society. Thus, many women became members of confessing and reproducing these generalized subjects of femininity. Those femininity's generalized themes created a limitation for femininity, which does not count the complex reality of women's lives in the modern world. These themes include ideas that women should represent conformity, obedience, assistance, seduction, and be available to men. As a reaction, Lyn Mikel Brown has shown a strong feminist position on the systemic conditions for girls' oppression in society:

Fundamentally, it's a political story about battling the surveillance and control of girls' bodies, minds, and spirits, a story that varies with social context, with race, class, and sexual orientation. It's a story about containment and dismissal that gets acted out by girls on other girls because this is the safest and easiest outlet for girls' outrage and frustration. It's a story about who gets taken seriously and listened to; a story about rage at the machine channeled through relationships and performed in the everyday spaces that girls occupy. And it's a story about justified danger at a world that devalues girls and encourages them to distance and disengage themselves from all things feminine. (02)

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These declarations sound profoundly with the critical feminist discourse and reveal how relational hostility is widespread in a society where women are defeated by male hegemony.

At its center, this chapter discusses the profound relationship between gender as a feminist issue and its relation to society. When investigating the literature on gender, an important point to focus on is the girl's socialization. Gender is both socially established, and culturally fixed and reinforced. Consequently, girls have exposed to concepts of typical *feminine* behaviors in several cases of their lives.

Chapter two:

Coming of Age and Other Impacts

Chapter two: Coming of Age and Other Impacts

Several subjects are tackled by literature concerning the teenage characters and their way of seeking their own voice and identity. For instance, “*The Bell Jar*” by Sylvia Plath, the story that addresses the question of socially accepted identity. Despite its status as a modern classic, it continues to be relevant to teenagers today. since, every teenager struggles with the direction of his future feel scared, alienated and overwhelmed like Esther Greenwood (Cain).

“*The TulipTouch*” by Anne Fine, where the protagonist Natalie loves her new friendship with Tulip, the beautiful and most daring girl. But at a moment Natalie has to decide who she is and how she can be her own-self after being Tulip a different evil person (Cain).

“*The Weight of Water*” by Sarah Crossan, the true, rare, and beautiful story of this book that speaks straight to the rawest emotions that come with having a new home and creating a new identity in a strange land. The story is brought by Kasienka's experience. She speaks directly to the reader about what it is like to have to reinvent self in a new language, culture, school, and home(Lipinski). And “*Permanent Record*” by Leslie Stella, the story of an Iranian-American teenager who strives at school and faces more pressures, even with the new name that his father has given him in order to make things "easier" for him to fit in (Lipinski).

By coming of age process, these characters are often challenging and confronting discourses of identity that has been already set, like gender, race, class, and revealing the functional power that is defined by others, together with defining themselves. The domestic environment plays a huge and important role to push the adolescent into building his own personality.

2.1. The Role of Parents:

The growing up as a female child is a matter of family concern.

Chapter two: Coming of Age and Other Impacts

Through Munro's story, the reader explores the process of communication between mother and her adolescent daughter concerning their daily life issues regarding their circumstances and their age changes. Actually, the changes that occur during this time period can serve to understand and promote the process of communication between these two, or it may lead to a gap between the two if they fail to create and develop a way of protecting themselves and one another.

Since one of the major roles of the family is to protect the members, parents are concerned about their children and they want to ensure them, especially adolescents. In all cultures and families, the time when the girl child matures, she causes concern. That is why, parents, especially mothers, seem to be the suitable ones for educating their adolescent girls about their issues and behaviors.

2.1.1. The Mother's Role:

Parent-adolescent communication, specifically between the mother and her daughter, can help and push to reduce the vulnerable behaviors. Actually, the fact that both mother and her daughter are facing a storming stage of life, the communication ability can be affected by the progress in which the two are making through the life-changing process.

Adolescents and parents go through many life processes. This study spotlight on some changes going on with the mother and her daughter as they are influenced by the sensitivity of adolescence. As there are many different behaviors from the mother's hope to push her daughter, to the way the girl perceives her mother's deeds.

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Normally, the relationship between the mother and her daughter is evolved and they are related to each other to reach a tipping point. Yet, in the study of this sample story, the relation is differently set.

They turn into imbalance. They pass through various processes and found some fragility marked by some events that seem to be important to the girl. This can lead to remind the reader or the researcher to the Native American story of Changing Woman. The mother portrays the woman's older cycles as a developer of wisdom, while the daughter draws the younger cycles, and this gives what is known by the changing women.

In this study, the adolescent girl wants to rapidly grow from a child into an adult. So does the mother, she is also going through changes of her own. She needs to create and develop a new parenting way for her new emerging adult and continue to develop her life outside her motherhood space. Due to these changes going on within the mother and her daughter, the relationship between them is changing too.

The stepping out from childhood into adulthood is a complex time period in the life of both mother and her daughter. The changes that the narrator is passing by through this sample short story represents only one small part of this complex time period of adolescence.

2.2. The Narrator's Coming of Age:

Coming of age as a stage means the transition to grown-up status, signs from the dependent child into an independent adult.

Of the stories of the collection of *Dance of the Happy Shades*, *Red Dress-1946* reveals the story of a daughter who is the first person narrator, and who feels that she should act and become like her peer. The daughter prefers to separate her self from her mother's world where she feels

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uncomfortable and hesitates to join to. She thinks that she can deal with more important issues that sound appropriate for her age, away from her mother's environment and control. The mother's attitudes push her to look after new experiences in the new external world that deals with her expectations and looks more authentic and ideal for her.

Based on the narrator's ambivalent attitudes and feelings and the short story, the female characters may be classified into two types represent the diverse positions of women in the patriarchal society:

2.2.1 The Mother:

The first type who tries to perform the femininity that her daughter and people around her expect but fails to conform to it completely. Through the beginning of the story, our narrator's mother is usually busy sewing complicated dresses, that despite she has good ideas like we are told in the short story, she is "not a really good sewer." (Munro 75). Another thing to mention is the mother's being disappointed to the point of feeling victimized, though she promptly performs the typical motherly role, she exists as being "virtually bodiless" (Redekop). Also, the mother's care is regarded as annoying and does not serve as a model for the daughter about becoming a woman; she is not a good caregiver, but an ineffective laborer. Our narrator watches her mother busy toiling away, "getting to her feet with a woeful creaking and sighing," (Munro 75) all the while making remarks such as "I doubt if she appreciates it." (Munro 75)

Although the mother in Munro's story devotes her life to her family, her attempts turn out to be either excessive or awkward and do not interpret naturally into maternal love. The narrator as a child, cannot understand why her mother makes efforts to be more than her self, she complains about her mother's unnatural appearance and unnormal behaviors, which does not -according to

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her- cohere to the typical motherhood. She is also annoyed by the mother's deep attachment to the past "All the stories of my mother's life which had once interested me had begun to seem melodramatic, irrelevant, and tiresome."(Munro 75), especially when the mother keeps recalling her days and seems to long for it "Well nobody ever made me a dress when I was going to high school," my mother said, "I made my own, or I did without." (Munro 75).

According to the narrator descriptions, the mother acts in an exaggerated manner and feels nostalgic about the past, because she does not know how to adapt to the present environment, where she feels she does not belong to or does not have the mother's qualities; she somehow resist the fact of being useless to her daughter, she is acting younger even though the age gap between her and her daughter. As a result, while describing how absurd and unsettled her mother is, the girl automatically shows the inadequate position between the typical woman and her mother.

I think that the mother unintentionally remonstrates against any unjust evaluation of her based on her daughter and her social status. In other words, her remarkable behavior is a sign that proves how repressed she feels now.

To conclude, the mother in Munro's story becomes "bodiless" in the central event. The mother's 'bodiless character' is not only proof of her failure to adopt the socially approved gendered identity, but it also reveals the gendered norms that are burdening her life. Furthermore, since she is according to her daughter *not really a good caregiver*, and demonstrate control over her behavior and mind, she loses "hegemony to provide a moral and philosophical context for social relations" (Jenks). Most of all, Munro's mother's unnatural performance of the maternal role dramatizes how she is unsatisfied and sad in her patriarchal society. Describing all of her

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mother's uneasy experiences and awkward attitude, the girl unconsciously reveals the irrationality of the gendered norms in which her mother has to play the role in the patriarchal society.

2.2.2. The Daughter:

The young female narrator, the other type who notices everything around her, feels awkward and burdened, unhappy with her status, unsatisfied, anxious to make a step away from her mother's usual world, terrified, dropped under the watch of her *fragile* and at the same time *oppressive* mother. She is looking to become an adult, to leave her mother, not to become her mother. She even feels embarrassed and annoyed "I was embarrassed by the way my mother crept around me" (Munro 75). In other words, she thinks she is older enough to make her own decisions, "Now, grown wiser" (Munro 75), so she is looking for something personal, new, and better.

Chris Jenks states that "children practically have 'need' of their parents and adult companions, a need that is a combination of the material, physical, emotional and so on" (Jenks). According to his opinion, the teenager can loathe her situation because she does not receive the appropriate care from her mother, instead, all she receives is her mother's exaggeration while dealing with her. So that the daughter can not learn the characteristics of motherhood from her mother. That is why the young girl is ignoring her mother and looking for the right model she can follow in her future life. For example, she thinks that Lonnie, her best friend has more adequate qualities that can be considered as the appropriate feminine qualities: "I wished I was like Lonnie" (Munro 75).

The teenager in Munro's story can explore the surface of reality and examine things authenticity that she already took for granted. Within the most interesting changes, she can build her own

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basics and that oppose the typical gender identities and social interests. The reason that leads the young girl to reach new status is that she has grown in all along experiencing her everyday life overlaid by her mother's hysterical world, a world made of interventions, super excitement, and fatal love.

By moving from the mother's world into the high school world, the daughter recognizes that the reasons behind her mother's excitement are that the mother longs to support with any possible manner, while the young girl sees that her mother's exaggeration in her reactions is unnecessary and useless. Thus, she is no more than that little girl who foolishly admires her mother, and she can see the "dialectic between present and past, between experience and understanding" (Ducan). For instance, at the beginning of the sample story, the young female narrator expresses her fears because she is about to explore a new world -the high school world- she tries to skip the dance party and stay at home: "It was that I did not want to go." (Munro 76). Instead, her mother who looks more excited tries to encourage her daughter by making her a dress. The narrator at that moment thought she can not make it to the dance party. From her perspective, she thinks she cannot go since she is not satisfied with the dress, plus, she is already poor and not popular among her colleagues. So here it gets clear that the girl feels embarrassed and not satisfied with her social status, her mother, and her self too.

After all, the high school territory, and especially the dance party are the new adventure that motivates her to make the first step into a new different world, especially after meeting the junior student Mary Fortune, who represents new different feminine qualities, in which makes the girl feel some kind of temporary satisfaction.

2.3. Mother-Daughter Relationship:

Within the coming of age process, the mother has special characteristics, so does the girl. Features like releasing her control and protecting her daughter, while the girl is engaged in discovering who she is, and sweeping into an adult relationship. It is obvious that through this process, both the mother and her daughter are aiming to have new relationships and both want trust and respect. They moved into something new while they are separated. One aspect of this change was that the girl wants more freedom to make her own decisions, as she wants to be someone separate from her mother. While the mother is helping her daughter to face and accept the facts that, despite the separation she deserves respect. Both mother and daughter are trying to trust and respect one another and at the same time, they almost try to separate themselves one another. They are developing a new relationship that contains freedom, trust, and respect.

Munro's focus in this short story and the example of the relationship between the mother and the daughter is to reveal the lack of communication between the family members, she also exposes the social pressure that makes the individual suffer to adapt into the social standards, and his failure to make his own life.

Through this story, the experience of the adolescent girl dealing with her family, in our case, the girl's attitude and the influence of her mother, turns into a divergent relationship between the two, and this relationship seems to assert the difference between them. However, their conflicting relationship leads to the possibility of keeping some distance between the daughter and her gendered identity. Also, this antithetical relationship helps the daughter to have a clear idea about how to become an adult in the future and make the right decisions. Though, the figure of the mother in the story shows how each woman supports the poor position of her daughter, so that they live together in their society.

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The daughter wants to live in a way that differs from her mother's in order to avoid the extreme difficulties she has witnessed while growing up. Noticing how her mother suffers in a way that goes beyond the normal, affects the rest of the family members. The daughter expresses the desire to avoid falling in the same destiny that defines her mother's character and her normative role.

Another point is that the relationship between the female characters, especially between the mother and her daughter shows the importance of the mutual trust among women, for example in this short story there were some critical moments that raise the need to emphasize on this point. I may focus on mutual trust because a girl may easily grow up into a distorted woman, either because of the gendered identity, or social values. Two examples in the short story "Red Dress-1946" are mentioned to portray the distorted women. The mother in the first place as powerless, confused, and the one who suffers to encourage the other - in this case, the mother encourages her daughter-. The second is Mary Fortune, who represents the independent woman, the one who is freed from all the bonds and is considered as the danger zone when it comes to trust according to the narrator.

2.3.1. The Mother:

2.3.1.1. Losing Control:

Throughout the maternal process, the mother recognizes that her daughter is distancing herself, desiring to become more independent from her family while feeling free doing more activities with her friends. The mother meanwhile, realizes that her girl is changing so that her role as a mother obliges the change for the continuation and the growth of their relationship. There is a transitional stage between the letting go of how things used to be before and the new mothering

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mode though it is a painful process, where communication tends to decline for a variety of reasons, such as the lack of communication between the mother and her daughter, or that they having difficulties communicating about topics like for instance sexuality issues.

2.3.1.2. Protecting:

The mother feels responsible for protecting her daughter even though her daughter is distant from her, losing her grip, and letting go. But the problem occurs since the daughter does not realize that she needs protection. The mother is worried about how she is going to protect her daughter without smothering her while the daughter is trying to become free and distant.

despite the great difference in the beliefs of the mother, all that she wants is to define the best way of educating her daughter about the life issues and try to protect her.

2.3.1.3. Aiming Toward an Adult Relationship:

During the adolescence, there is a technical swinging relationship between the mother and her daughter. Being the one who leads and the other who follows is not necessarily a rule for the continuation of the relation, but, there are times they switch roles. Though the mother at some points loosens her government, she still continues her protection until she sees that her daughter can manage her self and gets more independence. When the daughter proves herself, the mother will push and continue to let go until the day her daughter is a self-governing woman. The mother's purpose from this is an adult relationship between her and her daughter.

2.3.2. The Daughter:

2.3.2.1. Throwing Off the Bonds:

The daughter creates her way in the adolescent years, she strives for more independence.

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Her needs were provided only by her mother since her father is absent, such as shelter, clothes, food, but she did not feel that she needed much else from her. For the girl, her mother's protection is either like sheltering or smothering. She wants to go out and experience life on her own, though she generally seems loath to declare that she needs protection.

2.3.2.2. Discovering Oneself:

The self-concept is the idea of who I am, it is like a self-reflection of one's well being. The daughter is trying to find her self and identity, that is the thing that probably her mother can not guess while taking in her girl's actions and deeds dealing with her daily matters. The daughter does not feel that her mother is useful, as she could learn new thing from school, magazines, and books, or from her friends.

The daughter also discusses the moves between her and her mother especially as their relationship becomes more distant and difficult during the stage of coming of age, and then begin to be clear as she assumes after experiencing the dance party.

2.3.2.3. Sweeping Into an Adult Relationship:

In the late passage from the short story, the daughter realizes that her mother was not out of the domestic pace to get her, embarrass her, or even ruin her life, and here, their relationship began to improve. The moves and changes between the mother and the daughter began to transform into a dynamic routine. With things going better after the dance party, the daughter who attempted to get freedom has finally reached it. This somehow gave the girl to have the needed trust so she can enter the adult's world with no fear even with her mother who was the big obstacle in her life.

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Through those two main characters, we illustrate the rapid changes concerning both the mother and her adolescent daughter during a specific stage of the daughter's life and the way these two twist during these changes.

The daily struggles can be hard and messy, as evidenced by some of the dialogues from both the mother and the daughter in the short story. sometimes, even if they are intertwined with each other, there is a gap and isolation in which it may take a lot of time and energy to reconnect. however, these struggles help the daughter become an independent adult, and ready for the new life experiences. Actually, these struggles can create some difficulty for both the mother and the daughter, however, the important thing is the daughter's change and her growing up into an adult. the difficulty can appear also to the mother since she is the one who must improve her motherly roles, but the daughter is the one who needs more assistance to move toward independence.

**Chapter Three: Images in “*Red
Dress-1946*”**

Chapter three: Images in “Red Dress-1946”

Munro style knew a different way in which she created her characters; a clever step she made allowed the reader to reach a full idea and a complete developed image to pursue the sequence of the story. Alice commented about her style in an interview with Graeme Gibson, declaring that she simply cannot describe directly the character's mood and his inner thoughts, instead, she rather, go directly and describe the character's surroundings, their own small details, and "other around them" (Gibson). Those other things surround the characters; contribute to give a realistic picture that develops into images that enrich Munro's subjects, which are dramatically presented in Munro's collection *Dance of the Happy Shades*.

3.1. Imagery:

The author's subject may propose a direct check and study the individual's thoughts and motivations, but Munro presents another genius and complex technique of studying human situations and states. Munro makes clever use of imagery that sounds complicated after several images that link and interfere with her stories; each story's result is the evidence of what each individual passes under the usual *surface of life* and discovers the struggles, the isolation, and the depression familiar to all life partners.

Within the story, Munro does not examine the girl's state of mind; instead, she mentions the details of things around her that she responds to and reacts against: it is the images that describe the unusual temper and tension that exists in the family and between the mother and the daughter. The images are raised by the natural presentation of the female narrator and are not distorted by the assessment or perceptions frequent in the adult's mind. This series of images are introduced by the narrator, for instance, when she describes the way her mother was making her a dress "... surrounded by cut-up red velvet and scraps of tissue-paper pattern. She worked at an old treadle machine pushed up against the window to get the light, and also to let her look

out...,it pulled, and the style my mother had chosen was not easy either. She was not really a good sewer. She liked to make things; that is different”. (Munro 75)

The narrator's response to her mother is physical and sensual; she actually rejects the taste, colors, and her mother's freaky actions. As a result, the dress is the object in which she carries the blame on her mother. The girl finds that her mother is a source of embarrassment, so that she expressed her dislike at the beginning of the story, saying that she is embarrassed by the way her mother “... crept around me, her knees creaking, her breath coming heavily She muttered to herself. Around the house, she wore no corset or stockings, she wore wedge-heeled shoes and ankle socks; her legs were marked with lumps of blue-green veins” (Munro 75)

It seems that the mother is ignoring her appearance and she is always busy with making her *different* ideas for dresses. So taking into consideration the social norms, she is not concerned and tries not to bother her with it. Instead, she desires to introduce her daughter in the appropriate way to her *own* ideal social patterns and tries to make her daughter appears like the smartly dressed, socially accepted adult and women.

From the girl's examinations of her mother's appearance and behavior, the reader is able to have some intuitions into the character of the mother. Therefore, this young adolescent is at the sensitive stage where she admires and idolizes the perfect fashionable women in which both of the mother and the girl fail to have, "I wished for dresses like those my friend Lonnie had". (Munro 75)

Instead of giving some analytical explanations of their relationship, Munro suggests images that provide a deeper understanding and full idea about this relationship among the family members.

On the one hand, the images that surround the narrator's life sometimes show the girl's tiredness and disgust for her situation "I felt like a great raw lump, clumsy and goose-pimpled" (Munro75), feels over controlled by her mom "My mother pulled me ... pricked me... made me turn around... made me walk away... made me stand..." (Munro 75) since her mother treats her not as a teenage girl who would enter the adult's world, but as a little baby "She enraged me, talking like this to Lonnie as if Lonnie were grown up and I was still a child" (Munro76). That is why "Lonnie and I went upstairs to my room. It was cold, but we stayed there" (Munro 76) the narrator's room is the only space where the little girls feel normal and free to act according to their age, no mother's control, and no supervision. Other different times where our narrator feels uncomfortable "There was a carnival atmosphere of brutality in the room at such times, scaring weak and suspect people like me" (Munro 76). Her hesitation is related to her feeling awkward and anxious, unstable in the high school territory, the narrator described the scene with:

At the high school, I was never comfortable for a minute... my voice was apt to come out squeaky, or else hoarse and trembling. My hands became slippery with sweat when they were required to work the blackboard compass. I could not hit the ball in volleyball... I hated Business Practice ... when the teacher looked over my shoulder all the delicate lines wobbled and ran together. I hated Science; we perched on stools under harsh lights behind tables of unfamiliar, fragile equipment, and were taught by the principal of the school, a man with a cold, self-relishing voice-he read the Scriptures every morning- and a great talent for inflicting humiliation. I hated English ... the teacher, a stout, gentle girl, slightly cross-eyed, read Wordsworth at the front. (Munro 76)

On the other hand, the mother is surrounded by images of superficiality: her actions "She muttered to herself" (Munro 75) and her freaky exaggerating movement "getting to her feet with a woeful creaking and sighing" (Munro 75) are easily provoking the daughter. For instance, when the mother used the “traditional farewell” of the girls, the narrator comments on her action saying that “it sounded foolish and desolate coming from her, and I was so angry with her for using it.” (Munro 77)

This distinction is made by the girl while observing her mother, the simple dressmaker who "worked at an old treadle machine pushed up against the window to get the light, and also to let her lookout" (Munro 75), and who had "no patterns made to match the ideas that blossomed in her head" (Munro 75).

3.2.Colors in “*Red Dress-1946*”:

Human form derives from a reflexion of the energy that shapes their life or what we call ‘Human Aura’. Munro has the ability to shed lights on this sample by showing exceptional care for the description in the story using colors that match with the character's personalities, their backgrounds, their moods, and even their level of knowledge. The lights and colors that accompany the human aura cover all the known colors. These colors mark a dominant feature of a person’s psychological state, spiritual happiness, and individual power. Each color of the human aura signifies a distinguishing meaning or a changing label. These colors differ from natural light. It includes strong, daring, and clear primary colors combinations that reflect the hidden aspects of human characters and their emotions. In addition, it can be easily affected by different factors like age, gender, ethnicity, and self-control (Human Aura Colors and Meanings).

Within this system, Munro has the exact ability to create an indirect way that gives a specific *identification*, so that each character is unique and easily identified (Human Aura Colors and Meanings). It is easy to find the use of colors while dealing with the storylines, especially two main colors: red and blue.

3.2.1. Red Color:

This aura color is related to the physical body. The red color is a sign of strong emotions like violence and anger, love, and satisfaction. It is also the most central color that reflects the need for acting aggressively or shows a personal strength.

The deeper red light means powerful primal emotions. But through the story, we don't have an idea if it is “light” or “deep” color; however, the significance of this color can be negative like having a fear concerning a specific performance, or positive like being deeply affected by the possibility of finding true love.(Human Aura Colors and Meanings)

- Energy and Aggression:

The red color is related with energy and aggression; it influences our physiological status since it raises heart rate and breath. Red is a very prominent color, so overusing it is considered as disturbing or provoking aggression. The young girl through the story shows the aggressive manners toward her mother; for instance, ignoring her mother's attempts and efforts:”I tried to keep talking to Lonnie so that her attention would be taken away from my mother as much as possible.”, “She enraged me,” (Munro 75), “...I was so angry with her for using it that I did not reply.”(Munro 77). The mother expresses her despair over her daughter's action, declaring that with “I doubt if she appreciates it.”(Munro 75)

The red color makes a person feel more dynamic, aggressive, and stronger, increasing 'testosterone', but it also reduces other's perception. Through the story the girl states “I had to try it on.” (Munro 75), revealing the mother’s dominance over her, since she considers her a little girl who has nothing to do with decision yet.

- Passion:

This color is associated with sexuality, passion, and desire. People wearing red are systematically considered more attractive by others (Human Aura Colors and Meaning). The mother’s desire to suit the dress with the red color was her attempt to push her daughter to be more attractive during the party dance, because she is aware that her daughter lies to hide and fears openness to the outside world, making some excuses to escape the dance party: “It was that I did not want to go.” (Munro 76).

Symbolizing danger, red intertwines the body’s "fight-or-flight" reflection. Therefore, too much red makes the person feels not only alert but also stressed out. Considering red as the color that draws attention, it’s easy to see why it’s so often used in warning signs. (Human Aura Colors and Meanings)

- Life and Love:

Red symbolizes life and passion, also to the bonds of romance and familial love. It is usually used in romantic presents, like Valentine’s Day, red roses, etc. The red color throughout the story refers to the mother’s love to her daughter, and symbolizes the motherhood passion.

An important point to mention is that this color has variations, and these variations cover many colors. The notion of each variation differs. Darker colors represent an advanced sophisticated and limited action. Brighter shades indicate more energy and less dominance.

Overall, red color has both positive and negative notions. The positive part represents love, passion, energy, consciousness, and power. The negative side indicates aggressiveness, a dominance that leads to anxiety, insecurity, and stress. It is a major, central and important color, but it needs to be used regularly. (Human Aura Colors and Meanings)

3.3. The Red Dress Significance:

3.3.1. The Dress:

The dress actually symbolizes sexuality and womanhood.

From the end of the 1930s to 1940s, most dress styles look similar and took inspiration from men's wear. With the approaching of WWII, the women's ultra-feminine style shifted to the practice one. Since the 30's dresses were long and required too much material, hemlines shortened to the knee to save on fabric and to make women feel free to work. These dresses with no embellishments, reserve more simple and economic look.

Fashion in the 1940s was a good mix of comfort and attraction. There were specific clothes that were designated for specific times. Some of its designs look completely smooth and modern even by today's standards.

When men were still pretty dressed up, suits, ties and hats were commonplace in public, women wore dresses and skirts, and they still did not wear slacks yet. Women's dresses in the 1940s were very bright and colorful. Whenever it is brighter, it is better. Women's shoes were often one of three popular color choices: red, white, and blue.

3.3.2. Why Is Red?

Munro intentionally nominates the color red for the dress in order to give the exact psychological detail and the full description and to reveal the situation for the girl and her

mother. She somehow selects this color to make the reader reach the point of that, the mother's motivation is her own bad childhood and the disadvantages she had as a child, the thing that creates the desire to give her daughter everything she did not have as a child. So here, the red dress is chosen to represent the mother's love for her daughter, since she was never able to have a dress, as one of the disadvantages she had in her childhood.

Since the narrator is unconfident and hesitant of herself in her relationship with her mother, her friends, and boys. Red dress symbolizes her struggles and attempts to adopt, or “*try on*” different roles, covering the social failure and the reject. Several passages from the sample short story reveals the role of the rejection in shaping the gray cloud in the narrator’s life and her hesitation to experience new things; for instance her being in high school and the way the atmosphere influences her: “There was a carnival atmosphere of brutality in the room at such times, scaring weak and suspect people like me.”(Munro 77), especially during the dance party stating that: “During the dances, I listened to the music which I liked but had no part of anymore. I was not going to try anymore. I only wanted to hide in here, get out without seeing anybody, get home.”(Munro 76), but after meeting Mary, the girl who changed everything Upside down: “It was Mary Fortune....I was surprised at her, an older girl, taking this time to talk to me.”(Munro 77). The narrator has a cruel and a hesitant connection with boys, since she is a person who has low-self esteem: “To have to dance with a nonentity like me was as offensive to him as having to memorize Shakespeare. I felt this as keenly as he did and imagined.”(Munro 76)

The red dress contributes in role of the rebellion, creating her independent *own self*, and the self-confident person . In an attempt to prove herself, our narrator during this stage showed

her position toward what the others do, she even made some reactions based on her own decisions:

“I had not smoked before except the cigarettes Lonnie and I made ourselves using papers and tobacco stolen from her father...” (Munro 75). Learning the new person she becomes: “I had worn these clothes...when I was unaware of the world’s opinion. Now grown wiser, I wished for dresses like those my friend Lonnie had, bought at Beale’s store.”(Munro 75). To reach in the final stage of her external experience to the tipping point where she realizes how easy things are, and go beyond her fears: “...was it possible, could I believe it, was there nothing the matter with me after all?”.(Munro 81)

The dress took a part in the promotion of the *ordinary teenaged girl*. After long stress the young girl faced in her previous stages, she finally could get through it. By having at least, the confidence to move on, she is ready now to live the moment with no fears, believing in her ability to pass over the anxiousness she kept holding all the time: “We moved to the middle of the floor. I was dancing. My legs had forgotten to tremble and my hands to sweat...”, “I went around to the back of the house to the back door, thinking, I have been to a dance... It was all true. My life was possible...” (Munro 81)

Munro takes a special paint to describe the affection between the daughter and her mother. Their relationship seems has never been completed, that the girl's perceptions of her particular reality surrounding her allow a possible explanation. The daughter has already related an eccentric vulnerable image with her mother and further, she remembers the assumptions that arise; what her best friend Lonnie and her peers in high school would say of her.

Besides the strangeness of the mother, the young female narrator intuitively senses that there is something different about her mother that she would not accept. The reader from these images receives a picture of the mother as a woman, not simply a homemaker and dressmaker, but a woman who beneath the surface of pretend and exaggeration, is straining against her relationship with her daughter. The physical reality of the dresses and colors is actually a depiction of the girl and her mother. Each of these matters signifies something more than it signifies and offers more typical and ordinary meaning and it can change with the human emotion changing. These images are the scale which uncovers the strains between the mother and her young daughter, as well as the social variations which the young girl is about to realize.

The images of anxiousness and stress at the beginning of the story are replaced by a sense of reality at the end of the story "It was all true. My life was possible." (Munro 81) where the girl finally overcomes the foolish panic and is enabled to login into the world of adult experience.

Alice Munro's ability to use imagery to create the tension between the reality of the girl's world, her everyday experiences and future expectations with strain and confusion leads to the success of this story. The young girl discovers that there is something to be learned behind the usual everyday life and often, this discovery leads to an experience that the narrator, her mother, and the reader can share.

Chapter three: Images in “Red Dress-1946”

General conclusion

General Conclusion

The Canadian writer Alice Munro is one of the most contemporary writers who has given birth to new ways and techniques in short story writing. She is considered as the master of storytelling and has received several awards and positive reviews from critics, which strengthened her position in the literary scene. She has focused mainly on the relationships of the family members in a deep manner. Munro's stories highlight the quotidian everyday life, taking into consideration several factors that influence this relationship like gender and society.

Munro occupies a solid spot among the writers who coincided with the artistic creativity, social and political coming of age in Canada after World War II, especially during the 1960s where the short story reached its heights. She belongs to the group that has defined their works by their own vision and experience, finding their strong points on both regionalism and realism.

Living in a patriarchal society where the masculine qualities are considered as number one is something unfair to classify the feminine qualities as the inferior one. Actually, Munro set her stories in the rural areas intentionally, in order to shed light on the facts of how girls live and get influenced by the gendered dichotomies from birth to death.

In a creative manner and taking inspiration from her early life, Munro has made the reader see the familiar with fresh insight and sympathise with the characters. One of the closest stories to the author's personal life in the collection *Dance of the Happy Shades* is *Red Dress-1946*. The inspiration and the scenes came from her mother's sewing her dress. As a matter of fact, Munro calls her stories as *personal* because they portray remembered and real events. She reshapes and recombines them so as she can transfer her emotional experiences.

Through the analysis of the given works, Alice Munro succeeds in connecting her personal stories, her characters, and the real life. In the short story *Red Dress-1946*, for instance,

General Conclusion

Munro reveals the connection between the family members, especially the imbalance between the mother and her daughter. Portraying her character's way of living, she exposes the struggles in which every girl is facing, starting from her home with her family members, moving to the external world, the mother's obsessions, the daughter's fear, employing the mentioned narrative techniques. In addition, Munro makes her readers living the story and following the girl's journey into experiencing new things. Moreover, Munro uses aesthetical devices such as imageries, and colors to make the short story looks like an artistic piece of painting, so as the reader can reach the full image.

In short, I agree that away from gender and society, parents are the first ones who influence their adolescents. In effect, the relationship between parents especially mothers, and their young daughter is a very sensitive relation. Through *Red Dress - 1946*, the goal is revealed, where the mother in the story lives an unstable relationship with her daughter. Though she gives a lot, all that she receives is her daughter's neglect.

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