

**Children and Parents in the Short Story:****Alice Munro's 'The Eye' and Katherine Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree' in Comparative Perspective****علاقة الأطفال والآباء في القصة القصيرة:****'العين' لـأليس مونرو و'شجرة التفاح' لكاثرين مانسفيلد من منظور مقارن****Prof. Dr. Fuad Abdul Muttaleb**

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**Abstract**

Parenting and role models are important in influencing how children develop into healthy individuals. Children often watch their parents and model their behavior after them. This educational-psychological and socio-cultural process has been noticed and portrayed by writers of short stories. The development of mother– daughter or father– son relationships has increasingly drawn the attention of the readers and critics, both in literature and in applied criticism. This study critically tackles the parent – children relationship in two short stories: Katherine Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree' and Alice Munro's 'The Eye.' In connection with Mansfield's tale, the phrase "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" is an age-old yet true comparison among people and how children are viewed in relation to their parents. It implies that apples (children) are not all that different from their parents. The narrative addresses the intricacies of this long-standing relation. Munro masterfully tackles the subject of mother-daughter relationships in her story 'The Eye,' the most grandiose monument to memory. The setting and the mother's and daughter's characterizations serve to emphasize this. The narrative illustrates how, in the face of death, imagination triumphs over reality. The study is carried out through a descriptive and analytical approach using the two stories as primary texts and other critical works produced on them as secondary sources. It ends with a comparative statement that the two stories actually share some characteristics but differ in certain aspects, as regards the techniques and values implied in the two stories.

**Keywords:** Children's story, Munro's 'The Eye,' Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree,' parent-child relation. Flashback in the short story, children comparative literature.

**ملخص**

تضطلع القدوة والأبواة بدور مهم في تشكيل نمو الأطفال ليصبحوا بالغين أصحاء. غالباً ما يراقب الأطفال والديهم وتأثير سلوكاتهم الأخلاقية وفقاً لتفاعلاتهم. وقد لاحظ كتاب القصة القصيرة هذه القضية النفسية - التربية والاجتماعية - الثقافية وصوروها في أعمالهم الإبداعية. لقد جذبت العلاقة بين الأم والابنة أو الأب والابن اهتمام القراء والقاد بصورة متزايدة، سواء في الأدب أم في النقد التطبيقي.

تناول هذه الدراسة بشكل نقدي العلاقة بين الوالدين والأبناء من خلال الإشارة إلى قصتين قصصيتين شهيرتين: 'شجرة التفاح' لكاثرين مانسفيلد و'العين' لآليس مونرو. في قصة مانسفيلد، لا يسقط التفاح بعيداً عن الشجرة، وهذا قول وتشبيه قديم، ولكنه دقيق فيما يتعلق بالناس وكيفية مقارنة الأطفال بآبائهم. ويشير إلى أن التفاح (الأطفال) يشبهون نسبياً المكان الذي أتوا منه (آباءهم). وتطرق القصة الثانية لهذه العلاقة المتتجذرة وتعقيداتها، وتعد 'العين' من أروع آثار مونرو فيما يتعلق بالذاكرة في تعاملها الفني مع موضوع العلاقة بين الأم وابتها. ويوضح ذلك من خلال توصيف شخصيتي الأم والابنة والمكان المحيط في القصة. وُظهرت القصة كيف يستسلم الواقع للخيال في مواجهة الموت. أخبرت الدراسة بإعمال منهج نقدي وصفي وتحليلي لتحليل القصتين بوصفهما نصين أوليين والأعمال النقدية الأخرى الصادرة عنهما بوصفها مصادر ثانوية. وتنهي بخلاصة مقارنة، فيما يخص التقنيات القصصية والقيم، تفيد أن القصتين تشتراكان في بعض الخصائص، ولكنهما تختلفان في جوانب معينة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** قصة الأطفال، 'العين' لمونرو، 'شجرة التفاح' لمانسفيلد، العلاقة بين الوالدين والأبناء. الاسترجاع في القصة، أدب الأطفال المقارن.

## Introduction

This study critically considers two important stories by two literary celebrities: Katherine Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree' and Alice Munro's 'The Eye' and then tries to compare them. All references will be made to the two stories as published in A. J. Mohammed and F. A. Muttaeb, eds., *Short Way to Short Story* (2016). Though their subjects are different, a comparison of Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree' and Munro's 'The Eye' reveals that both stories examine intricate child-parent interactions from the viewpoint of the child. While Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree' depicts a child's internalized view of the world and the complex, occasionally constrictive bond with a parent, Munro's 'The Eye' emphasizes a child's unsettling awareness of their own separate existence from their mother and the emotional complexities that arise with new siblings.

The author of the first story, Katherine Mansfield Murry (1888 – 1923), is a pivotal character in British modernism, authored poetry, short tales, correspondence, journals, and reviews. While she was still living, three story collections were published, and two were after her death. Using literary impressionism, free indirect discourse, and inventive use of time and symbolism, Katherine Mansfield became one of the most significant early proponents of the

modernist short story. The works of Katherine Mansfield focus on initiation, loneliness and isolation, class differences, the struggles faced by the impoverished, and human instincts. They were all connected to the modern as well as to her personal experience. Regarding her art and her short but turbulent life, a great deal of critical literature has been written. Though compared to another story, it is hoped that this study is another little addition to that literature.

The author of the second, Alice Munro, born in Wingham, Ontario, on July 10, 1931, is a Canadian short story writer whose deftly rendered narratives won her renown across the globe. When she won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature, the Swedish Academy hailed her as a 'master of the contemporary short story. 'Dance of the Happy Shades' (1968), 'The Moons of Jupiter' (1978), and 'Dear Life' (2012) are only a few of Alice Munro's collections of short stories. Munro is known as the 'Master' of the Short Story and has won the Nobel Prize in literature. The novelist is just the 13<sup>th</sup> woman to win the honor in her more than 60 years of writing. The last four parts of Alice Munro's most recent (and maybe last) book, 'Dear Life,' take readers back to the childhood tales that influenced 'Dance of the Happy Shades' and 'Lives of Girls and Women' (1971), two of her earliest books. Munro's work, however, is so remarkable because of her recurring and deeply personal themes, which include the complexity of female sexuality, the awakening of the creative impulse, the rejection of provincial anonymity and conservatism, and the refusal to be constrained by traditional definitions of womanhood. Though Munro writes realistic stories that are not overly sentimental, she often adopts a peculiar writing style.

Can we consider such a work a comparative literary study? This important question may be raised at the beginning since a kind of comparative outlook is thrown on the two short stories produced by two writers belonging to two different countries that used to be British colonies: New Zealand and Canada, largely influenced by British language, traditions, cultural and educational norms. The peculiarities of both literatures written in English, which both writers belong to, are quite obvious, but one hundred years ago they were less obvious. Historically and artistically, Mansfield, died in 1923, is generally acknowledged as one of the successful modernists of her time; while Monro is still living today and definitely belongs to the noted short story writers of postmodern age. This is almost the same amount of time that separates the writing of both stories. A renowned comparatist, Henry H. H. Remak, aptly summarizes this situation in his illuminating essay "Comparative Literature: Its Definition and Function," writing, "What are we to do with authors writing in the same language but belonging to different nations? We should probably not hesitate at all to assign a comparison between George Bernard Shaw and H. L. Mencken, or between Sean O'Casey and Tennessee Williams, to comparative literature, but when we go back to English and American literature of the colonial period, the case, as Wellek has suggested,

becomes much less clear-cut... To what extent should legal naturalization be taken into account? There is surely a difference, in the consequences for their literary work, between the British citizenship of T. S. Eliot and the American citizenship of Thomas Mann" (Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz, 1973, 9).

Comparisons are useful because some of the literary works become clearer when we compare them. In the sense that to compare two or more literary works does not only mean to find out the similarities and the differences in these works, but it also means seeing or trying to make sense of the one in the light of the other. Specifically, when we compare two literary works, "we build sense, for comparison is a cognitive operation, and a connection between at least two elements transforms both elements. A literary comparison is, therefore, reading a work through other works and reading those other works through the work at hand" (Cesar Dominguez et al., 2015, xi).

### Discussion:

#### Father-Children Relationship in Katherine Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree':

Katherine Mansfield Murry is a prominent New Zealand modernist short story writer who was born and brought up in colonial New Zealand and wrote under the pen name of Katherine Mansfield. She can be described as a qualified national icon. As an expatriate in London and manifesting European movements of thought, she had little connection with early New Zealand writing, which accorded her little recognition. She was a close associate of the British authors D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Her work provides a rich account of a modern woman's engagement with love, art, solitude, impending death, and war. Mansfield passed away at Fontainebleau in 1923, a few weeks before the publication of *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, which confirmed her place among the Modernists of her generation.

The apple tree is considered one of the sacred mythologies in ancient times, and it represents happiness and good health in the future. It has also been referred to as the 'Tree of Love' from antiquity and is connected to the goddess of love, Aphrodite. Greek mythology places significant importance on this tree. Since the image of the apple can signify love, wisdom, and death, in Norse mythology, as in the Greek, apples suggest immortality. It may be said the plot of Mansfield's story 'The Apple-Tree' follows the 'fall from innocence' archetype. This archetype revolves around the idea of beginning in a state of innocence and purity and then losing that innocence due to a momentous event—typically a temptation or transgression. In the story, because the father prevents the children from eating the fruit of the tree, the author refers to the apple tree as the Forbidden Tree. Since eating the fruit of the forbidden tree is regarded as man's first act of disobedience against God, the forbidden tree is a highly significant symbol in

Within the religious context of Christianity, the apple tree indicates temptation and original sin. An attractive tale, 'The Apple Tree' is told from the viewpoint of a little child whose father finds out he has a precious and rare apple tree growing in his orchard. The first crop of the magnificent and miraculous apples is eagerly anticipated by the family. When the family chooses to taste the apple, the action reaches its climax. As the apples begin to ripen, there is a second rising movement. When the children bite the apple, the falling movement happens. The first rising action takes place when the father discovers the prohibited tree. And when they discover that the fruit does not taste like apples, the father stops considering the apple tree as he thought. The true nature of the fruit is in opposition to the illusion that it is an apple. A kind of limit is put on the neighbors' participation in the apple tree conversation. The reasons reflect a broader concern over the interpersonal boundaries and human interactions, which center on the need for fellowship against upheld tradition.

The original English saying, "Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree," was coined by Ralph Waldo Emerson, who is credited with using the phrase for the first time in American culture in 1839. But it seems he was inspired by an old German saying that goes, "As men say, the apple never falls far from the stem." The saying briefly refers to how parents' traits are typically passed on to their offspring.

Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree' is considered one of the best short stories of hers to this day. The main subject of the story is concentrated upon the deception of appearance, how looks can be deceiving, or the conflict between ignorance and reality. In this way, the writer introduces the nature of the relationship between father and children. There will be a discussion, in this section, of this relationship and how it can affect the readers' moral attitudes towards their children or vice versa.

The father, in a patriarchal society, is always considered the head of the family, and it is often believed that he is the protector of the family. In the portrayal of a father figure, Mansfield presents in a different role a character such as a protector, a teacher, and a counselor who leaves an impact on the process of the children's psychological development. Specifically, in our story it is the father-children relationship that concerns us most. Mansfield, in her short story 'The Apple Tree,' focuses on the role of a protector father, who views the world by the measures of those who benefit his children and their interests. The nature of the father-children relationship is illustrated through the story of the apple tree in the 'wild' orchard of the old house; an implied lesson is given through the idea that high expectations can lead to disappointment, or do not judge anything until you experience it. Natalya Davidko says: "The boys are obedient and do not touch the apples, but

their reward is the disgusting taste of the fruit. The Father is disappointed, too: no promised benefits from being the owner of a rare tree. Things are not what they look" (2021, 247).

The author starts by describing the setting located in an old house ostensibly in New Zealand that has two growing orchards nearby in order to pave the way for the events of the story. Even though both orchards are mentioned in the story, only one is spotted. The characters in the story are the father, whose character is known by its hardworking nature, richness, and the fact that he is a self-made man and centered on money. We know that when the narrator says, "Father was a self-made man, and the price he had to pay for everything was so huge and so painful that nothing rang so sweet to him as to hear his purchases praised. He was young and sensitive still. He still wondered whether in the deepest sense he got his money's worth." (Mohammed and Abdul Muttaleb, 115).

The description of the setting provides at the beginning of the two orchards that grew in the narrator's house is indicative: one orchard is 'wild,' and the other one is far away and hidden from the house. The first orchard is described by the narrator as "one, that we called the 'wild' orchard, lay beyond the vegetable garden; it was planted with bitter cherries and damsons and transparent yellow plums" (114). The second orchard is described as "But the other orchard, far away and hidden from the house, lay at the foot of a little hill and stretched right over to the edge of the paddocks-to the clumps of wattles bobbing yellow in the bright sun and the blue gums with their streaming sickle-shaped leaves" (114). This orchard includes a valuable apple tree that a friend, 'Jonny from England,' positively envied! (115). Although the two orchards are mentioned, the story focuses on one of them. As for time, it can be understood that it is wintertime when apples ripen. Also, there are other references to time as Sunday afternoon, Sunday after church, etc.

The two children are Boggy and the narrator, but the name of the narrator is not mentioned. The rising action starts when the father and his friend discover "the apple-tree-like the Virgin Mary" (117). As described, the father did not recognize the name of the apple tree due to his unawareness of all types of fruit— "He knew nothing whatever about the names of fruit trees" (115). Firmly, he forbade his two sons from touching or eating from this tree, the very thing that reminds us of the Biblical story: "Don't touch that tree! Do you hear me, children...?! If I catch either of you touching those apples you shall not only go to bed— you shall each have a good sound whipping!" (115-116). The climax appears when the fruit ripens and they bloom, the enthusiastic family finally goes to taste the apples, everyone takes a bite from apples which taste horrible, and the two sons decide to lie to their father that the fruit tastes great, but soon their deceit is revealed because the father figures out the truth and the reality; he spits it out of his mouth, and they never come back to the apple tree again.

In 'The Apple Tree,' the imageries cannot be ignored throughout the story, aesthetic and sensory: the smell "He put it to his nose and pronounced unfamiliar word. Bouquet" (117); the visual "The apples turned from pale green to yellow, then they had deep pink stripes painted on them, and the pink melted all over the yellow, reddened, and spread into a fine clear crimson" (116); and the obligatory, in the story we read, "and then he handed to Bogy one half, to me the other... I kept my eyes on Bogy. Together we took a bite. Our mouths were full of a floury stuff, a hard, faintly bitter skin- a horrible taste of something dry" (117).

One hint about the relationship between the father and his sons consists of a mixture of strictness, seriousness, imitation, obedience, high expectations, and mercy in the act of how they treat each other. Strictness starts as he forbids his sons from eating apples from the tree. He is strict by warning them not to eat from the tree, or else he will prevent them from sleeping as well as punish them as mentioned at the beginning. And this type of traditional firm attitude of a father was quite known from long ago. The Bible scholar Jonathan Stairs explains:

In fact, there was a Latin term for this family dynamic. William Barclay describes it as "'patria potestas,' the father's power. Under the patria potestas, a Roman father had absolute power over his family. He could sell them as slaves, he could make them work in his fields even in chains, and he could take the law into his own hands, for the law was his own hands" (2021).

Another hint about the relationship is seriousness which occurred in their hard work, when they took good care of the tree considering that they kept making sure that this tree is in good condition all year long, actually, they were checking it every Sunday after church and the two kids were enjoying this habit just because they are doing their duties. This leads us to what is stated by Chana Stiefel: "What drives children's imitation? In part, it's the instant connection that mimicry creates between parent and child," so they kept a close eye on their father doing what he does and imitating his desire to collect and pick a well-grown fruit (2012).

Additionally, in this literary work, certain characteristics can be inferred: the sons ordinarily obey the father no matter what; even if parents are right or wrong, children mainly toe the line of parents; thus, this is clarified all over the story, especially since they carry out the father's orders and understand how very protective??? he was of the tree. As illuminated, the idea of obedience is levitating to insure how very important it is for sons and daughters to obey parents because it reflects the relationship with God and it is a sign of faith. Agreeably, Jonathan Stairs (2021), in his article "Why Should Children Obey Their Parents?" believes that "children are obeying their parents because they are obeying God." Thus, children were well-mannered.

Furthermore, the family puts high expectations on the blooming of the fruit, but they do

not know that judging by the way things look does not guarantee the way they are; the taste of the fruit is bitter and awful. This change in colour and smell is clearly presented in the story (116-117).

### **Techniques, Values, and Messages in Mansfield's 'The Apple Tree':**

The narrative device used in the story is mainly flashback. That narrator recalls, in the company of his brother, an experience of his early life with his father. The tone of the story is somehow humorous as well, as a child narrating his story affects the reader to a large extent. This is shown through the way he tells his experience and the way his father used to react, from the point of view of a superior knowledge of life, knowing what is better and what does not fit his sons. On the other hand, values are also significant to the story, there are so much obedience, honesty, and hard-work. Obedience is obviously reflected in the characters of Bogey and the narrator. They both are obedient children to their father. But why is this obedience? Where does it come from? Obedience in the story appears clearly through the way the children look to their father and how they appreciate his hard work. Hard work is conveyed in the story, and it is reflected in the image of the father. He is a hard-working father, and this is reflected in the stability of his family's life and their obedience, from their assurance of confidence in their father; the father implemented this value in his children, and the readers are aware of their father's long experience in life.

This literary fine work offers valuable insights and lessons for readers to learn. Given that the morals and ethics were obvious and real, it may be argued that this is an excellent children's narrative that helps children learn some lessons: the story indicates that nothing is ever as good as it seems and that we should be content with things as they are rather than getting our hopes up based only on how they appear. Moreover, we are unable to appraise something before experiencing it. Furthermore, temptation takes us in unexpected directions.

It seems that Mansfield hopes to convey a message through this tale that there is a significant divide between the worlds of children and parents. The grownups desire for the children to remain outside of their own world. But the children are indirectly harmed by this attitude. The children frequently are expected to become somehow agitated and harbor a kind of animosity toward their superiors. On the other side, the tale may seem to be suggesting the lesson of the apple tree and the boy: although it may seem that the boy is being unkind to the tree, all of us do the same to our parents. Before it is too late, we always take them for granted and fail to recognize the kindness they show us.

Mercy cannot be absent from the morals the children possessed; while the fruit tasted bitter, they insisted on lying that it tasted great just because they were well-mannered and knew how

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much it could hurt their father mentally. As Amy Novotney stated, “The parent-child emotional link isn’t a one-way street” (2010). A psychologist may explore how children can affect their parents’ mental health, even after they have entered adulthood. Thus, both of them determined not to tell the truth.

Moreover, there is an important theme in the story, that of ignorance, and how it influences the relationship between fathers and children. Ignorance can blind us from seeing reality. A man’s unawareness of reality would lead him to misfortune. Thus, human beings must be aware of their reality.

Some may relate ‘The Apple Tree’ to the story of Adam and Eve and their disobedience, and here comes the effect of parents on their children and the result of children’s obedience to their parents, because they know better. God know more and better than Adam and Eve. When He had forbidden them to approach the apple tree, He knew the consequences of their disobedience. But they were tempted and refused to obey. This is the way with fathers and sons. Fathers always know better. They have experienced life. They are the protectors, and they seek their children’s best interest. In the short story, the children obey their father, by not coming around the apple tree and not touching it; hence, they are rewarded for obeying their father, letting them taste it once it was ripe.

#### **Parents and Children Relationship in Alice Munro’s ‘The Eye’:**

Alice Munro is a Canadian short story writer and the 2013 Nobel Prize winner. Her writing has been described as having revolutionized the architecture of the short story, especially in its tendency to move backward and forward in time through narration, flashback, and memories. Munro’s stories often show an endeavor to explore complexities in human relationships in an uncomplicated prose style. Her writing has ensured her a place as one of the best contemporary writers of fiction. Her 13<sup>th</sup> collection of short stories, *Dear Life* (2012), includes her mother-daughter theme story ‘The Eye.’

In ‘The Eye,’ Alice Munro narrates the story through the eyes of a child, a five- or six-years-old girl, and this affects the way we as readers will view and interpret her story. On the first page of the story, readers are immediately presented with an interesting narrator, one who says her mother’s certainty that a baby brother is what she “had always wanted” is “fictitious but hard to counter” (139). The narrator thus draws the attention of the readers to something that most of them have experienced in childhood: our mothers speaking on behalf of what we may think about. Munro, through her narrative choice, let readers directly experience a child’s move from dependent thought to independent thought. At the end of the story, Munro succeeds, through her narrator, in helping the readers see how a child moves from believing in something irrational (that Sadie’s

“eyelid on my side moved”) to the more rational of not “[believing] it anymore” (Mohammed and Abdul Muttaeb, 15-151). Munro shows her mastery by using a limited omniscient narrator who can tell us how a child sees things while, at the same time, allowing her, by using memoir, to show an adult’s insights.

A child’s world naturally differs from that of an adult, just as a child’s view of life differs from that of an adult. As a child is not fully aware of the social norms and ethics of the community it lives in, and it cannot judge any situation and distinguish all the time right from wrong, the truth from falsehood, and bad from good. The very first effect on the child often is that of its parents and family members as it reacts emotionally to the experiences of their elders and then tries to figure them out in their own simple and innocent way. Every child is introduced to the ways of life and good manners of society by the elders, especially the mother. As a natural phenomenon, the child is mainly influenced emotionally by the power of intuition of perceiving and usually imitating to a great extent. In an interview with Jeanne McCulloch, Alice Munro stated that she “can’t make a story without a woman” (137), thus skillfully introducing girl-child narrators who are ingested with the art of intuition.

Motherhood is often considered a woman’s highest attribute. Being a mother is one of the most rewarding human jobs; besides, it is one of the most demanding tasks. Traditionally, the roles of women were restricted mostly to being a wife and a mother, with women being expected to dedicate most of their efforts to these roles and to spend most of their time taking care of the household, fulfilling the primary role in raising up children. The social role and experience of motherhood differed to a good extent depending upon their geographical locations and times.

In her essay, “Daughters of Saturn: From Father’s Daughter to Creative Woman,” Patricia Reis (1995) debates the role of father in the development of a daughter’s personality. She stresses the point that despite the changes occurring in gender roles, fathers are still experienced by daughters as a symbolic link to the outside world. It is well understood, both subjectively and objectively, that a daughter’s relationship to her father can make or break her feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence, her understanding of herself as a woman, and her belief in herself and her own independence as she enters into the world. It is an important responsibility of a father to teach his children and let them be aware of their own reality. Directions about reality from various points of view, especially the changes that occur during the teenage years.

A model of negative interaction by a parent with their child is child neglect. Child neglect is the result of parents’ failure to meet their children’s basic physical or psychological needs. Child ignorance of essential facts of life is the most common and most destructive form of child life. ‘The Eye’ essentially concerns a little girl, who views her mother through her gradual awareness that

exists separately from her mother's hopes of her. In the family, the type of relationship that exists between the parents and children usually tends to have an effect on the children's lives in the future. It is either a good or bad relationship, or the effect of the relationship on the children is either happy or sad. It is to be noted that the mother "holds her own propositions upon her daughter without taking care of her daughter's feelings and thoughts. She feels insecure when she realizes that her daughter is being too attached to her babysitter. She is a mild yet hard character; kind yet unkind, possessive yet indifferent." (Ahmed Chandio & Sajid, A., 490)

Alice Munro has always been known for reworking personal material in her stories. On different occasions she admitted very clearly to adopting some of her real experiences into her writing, yet at the same time she states that her writing is still fictional, not autobiographical. However, the writer's behavior seems to have changed with the publication of *Dear Life* (2012), supposedly the last book in her career. In the note preceding the last four stories in the collection, she declared that they constitute her autobiography, including 'The Eye.' She herself declares that the "final four works in this book are not quite stories. They form a separate unit, one that is autobiographical in feeling, though not, sometimes, entirely so in fact. I believe that they are the first and the last – and the closest – things I have to say about my own life" (Munro, 2012, 255).

In her story *The Eye*, sensuous qualities go from the subtle feeling of being manipulated and misunderstood or misinterpreted to a feeling of anticipation for upcoming changes. When the narrator talks about how she had "never been aware of feeling different from the way my mother said" (139), it illustrates an awakening of a realization that there might be more that was not exactly the way her mother presented it. For instance, when she laughed at the story of Alice in Wonderland even though she 'really felt miserable,' and when her brother arrived as 'some sort of present' for her, she accepted that her mother's notions about her and her own are different. And it made her ready for the arrival of 'celebrity' (114). Sadie also showed her to be herself by allowing her to dry the floor by skating on rags, for example. It is very significant for the reader to feel this anxiety to understand the little girl's confined behavior towards her mother later on in the story.

It could be an echo of a conflict or tension between Alice and her mother. Both of them, it seems, have round and complex characters. The mother is forcing her ideas into Alice. She is trying to shape her daughter's personality as she pleases. Unfortunately, she ignores Alice and her needs. She keeps her away from the society and prevents her from making friends. Instead of understanding and accepting her for what she is, she dictates almost everything to her. Alice doesn't see her mother as a sympathetic and loving mother. She knows that something is wrong with her mother. She is also distracted and wondering if she is a good girl or not; I got it from the

sentence that she says: “A boy would not be so complicated.” (145) It seems her mother always describes her as a complicated and unusual child. The mother also does not allow the father to interfere in the issues, which are related to Alice and her mother, so the father always shows himself impartial.

Dear Life

‘s four final pieces deal with Munro’s childhood, it is natural that their major part is devoted to young Alice’s relationship with her family. Actually, they are about the relationship with her parents, since the author chooses not to give much information about her siblings. As Thacker has noticed in reference to the author’s older stories, “Munro has largely left her siblings out of her fictionalized memories” (2011: 52). In real life, Munro is five years younger than her brother William, and six years younger than her sister Sheila, yet in the latest stories she only mentions them briefly. As she reveals in

Dear Life,

the birth of her siblings

clearly unsettled her happy life of a “sheltered, cherished only child” (Ross 1992: 34). In ‘The Eye,’ Munro writes, “When I was five years old my parents all of a sudden produced a baby boy, which my mother said was what I had always wanted. Where she got this idea, I did not know (...) Then a year later a baby girl appeared, and there was another fuss but more subdued than with the first one.” (2012: 257). As the final four stories progress, ????

ince ????

Dear Life

‘s four final pieces deal with Munro’s childhood, it is natural that their major part is devoted to young Alice’s relationship with her family. Actually, they are about the relationship with her parents, since the author chooses not to give much information about her siblings. As Thacker has noticed in reference to the author’s older stories, “Munro has largely left her siblings out of her fictionalized memories” (2011: 52). In real life, Munro had a five years younger brother William, and a six years younger sister Sheila, yet in the latest stories she only mentions them briefly. As she reveals in

Dear Life,

the birth of her siblings

clearly unsettled her happy life of a “sheltered, cherished only child “ (Ross 1992:

34). In 'The Eye,' Munro writes, "When I was five years old my parents all of a sudden produced a baby boy, which my mother said was what I had always wanted. Where she got this idea, I did not know ( . . . ) Then a year later a baby girl appeared, and there was another fuss but more subdued than with the first one" (2012: 257).

As the final four stories there is an external conflict between the two main characters—the daughter and her mother. The small girl is a lonely child because she does not have "any town friends at Sunday school" (p. 144). Also, her relationship with her mother is not close, because the mother does not pay much attention to her daughter because she does not have any time: "No time for her to manage that anymore" (p. 144). Moreover, the reader can see that the mother is not trying to understand her daughter's feelings and opinion; she obliges the child to say what she wants to hear. So, as the daughter says, "something in me was turning traitorous, though she didn't know why, and I didn't know why either" (p. 114). The small girl needs a friend, and Sadie becomes her close friend instead of her mother. This feeling, the need for a friend, actually results from loneliness and neglect. This is why many children sometimes take the wrong track in life; they just follow those in the way. They feel that they are close to them because they miss their adult loving parents' existence around them. It seems that the mother in the story should have given the little girls more effort of her loving, caring, and friendship energy. The girl loves Sadie; she even worships her. The mother doesn't like this situation; she guesses that her daughter finds her replacement in Sadie. This is the conflict of the Munro's sad story.

### **Conclusion:**

As a youngster gets older, it could seem like a straightforward matter of blowing out a different number of candles annually. However, this procedure involves a number of psychological elements. Parents' or family pressure, the society in which the child is reared, the type of education the child receives, media, and other outside influences are among the variables. These elements combine to influence how a child develops psychologically and socially. Specifically, parents' involvement in the child's life is one decisive factor. From birth, parents are viewed as a child's support system and role model. Their behavior and attitude serve as a role model for children, teaching them the distinction between good and bad. They offer love, care, wisdom, and experience in assistance. Though they offer all these, they also enforce rules and discipline. Since parents are unique people with varying behaviors, levels of education, and mentalities, no two parents are alike. However, there is one trait that all parents have in common: a strong sense of protectiveness, orientation, and instruction. Some facets of the complicated bond between children and parents are depicted in 'The Eye' and 'The Apple Tree,' which are primarily childhood recollections. A child's

experience with one of his parents is conveyed through the use of memory or flashback as an artistic means to achieve a moral end.

It is clear from an initial comparison that both stories are written by two authors who belong to two different countries that used to be British colonies; though local color and tone can be felt, they are to a good extent framed by British cultural, educational, and social traditions. While the two short stories show some differences, they also have certain things in common. Parents ostensibly work hard and try to fulfill their roles and responsibilities to their families. They are usually consistent with their children and strive to guide them through their life experiences. Even though the children in both stories appear to not comprehend their parents very well, they nonetheless submit to them. In Mansfield's story they are almost totally submissive; in Munro's story the child appears hesitant to submit. Although Alice Munro obeys her mother, it appears that she doesn't feel much sympathy for her in the specific episode depicted in her narrative. The children in 'The Apple Tree' obey their father despite not understanding his deep concern and care for the apple tree. From the children's point of view, the substance of the interaction between parents and children will never be comprehended. It is difficult generally for young people or children who are still developing to understand their parents' perspectives on life, things, and their experiences because they are living in their own tiny bubbles. When the apple tree was ripe, the father's love for his children was evident, as they were the first to taste it, even before the one who protected it. In 'The Apple Tree,' the father's protective instinct is even reflected in the apple tree itself. There is a sense that the tree should be avoided not touched so that neither the children nor anyone else could spoil it.

Readers can take good advantage of, and a lesson from, this literary work. It may be suggested that it could be a good children's story to acquire values and ethics easily, as they were clear and authentic. However, the writer states that nothing is as good as it seems and that we shouldn't get our hopes up by the way things look but more by the way they are. Moreover, we cannot judge things before experiencing them. Temptation leads where we do not expect.

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