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**A Cultural Reading of Alice Munro's Selected Short  
Stories in Dear Life Collection (2012).**

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## **Dedication**

To my parents who have shown a great understanding in hard times : I finished this work to be honored with your presence and your tender tap on my head.

To my dear sister Sara, and my brothers Hocine and Youva for their support, no one could have your noble motives.

To my beloved husband Nadir for his unconditional support.

To my little daughter Celine.

To my friends Dalila, Katia, Lamia and Lydia who care about me.

To my dearest mate Ania.

*Sylia*

To my dear mother.

To the memory of my dear father

To my beloved sisters: Razika and Chanez.

To my beloved brothers: Driss, Bobkeur, Abd Errahman, Ali, Billal and Lyes.

To my beloved Fiancé Lyes.

To all my friends especially Damia

All those who love me.

To my dearest mate Sylia.

You reader.

*Ania*

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## **Abstract**

*The following research paper is devoted to a cultural reading of the selected short stories in Alice Munro's Dear Life (2012) Collection. Our dissertation unlike previous works aims at studying the cultural issues and the cultural struggle in the Canadian society. The two levels of culture show the dominant institutions, that role the society by its powerful institutions as: church and school. The way of life of people and their lived experience can express culture through the relationships and the personal values. It purports to examine the two aspects of culture the Residual and the Emergent and their influence on the way of life of people and their behaviour. It also aims at studying the classification of individuals in their society according to their reaction to the social forms and values. The importance of this dissertation is to raise reader's awareness on how the two levels and the two aspects of culture that are the Residual and the Emergent cultures represented in the Canadian society in terms of social class. Also, the way the individuals are classified in society according to their reaction to social norms and values. To achieve our purpose we have relied on Raymond Williams' theory of culture The Long Revolution (1961) and Marxism and Literature (1977). . Being primarily concerned with the cultural reading of Alice Munro's short stories, this paper has demonstrated the different aspects of culture and the influence of the emergent and the residual cultural behaviors on societies. The analysis of these selected short stories has highlighted the interaction between individual and society. We have concluded that Alice Munro's short stories have, to a great extent, corroborated Raymond Williams's concepts about cultural development within western societies.*

**Key words:** Selective Tradition, Structure of Feeling, Social Class, Residual, Emergent, Individuals, Societies, Subject, Servant, Rebel and Exile.

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## **I.Introduction**

From the beginning of times, culture has existed in every human society. This word is defined from different points of view, and the most popular definition is that culture is: a system of beliefs, behaviours, traditions and customs, which are displayed by individuals within their society. Culture has undergone several changes and development throughout times.

From the 1960's onward, culture has become a source of conflict. In terms of cultural struggle the world has known social upheavals as a result of the Cold War. In the western society, at that time some people were fighting against oppression, and materialism, while others argued to maintain the traditional family and values. Raymond Williams has contributed to the development of cultural studies particularly in Britain, making culture interfering in many fields. Enriching Antonio Gramsci's theory of Hegemony, he developed new concepts to this notion. Thus, he defined three levels of culture as the culture of 'the selective tradition' in relation to the dominant institutions of society, aiming at providing a better understanding of the great cultural changes in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The culture of the period he later called the 'structure of feeling', wherein he puts emphasis on individual's experience in life and their way of life, and also discussed the concept of the Social Class.

Moreover, the work of Williams kept evolving as he developed new categories for culture, where he distinguished between the residual culture and the emergent culture and studied the different aspects of the two kinds.<sup>1</sup> Therefore; within culture we discover problems that have been the subject of the traditional debate. Among these problems, the relationship between the individual and his society, due to the different dominant forms that the society tries to impose, constitutes a major issue. As a result, Williams categorises the individual into five characters as the member, the subject, the servant, the rebel and the exile.<sup>2</sup>

We propose to read Alice Munro's work from the cultural perspective as explained by Raymond Williams. Munro is one of the few Canadian women and short story writers to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013. In addition, in her last work *Dear Life* (2012), a collection of short stories, she examines the Canadian society and culture during the Second World War and in the post-war period and shares her own experience in life since she grew up in rural Ontario, where most of her stories take place.<sup>3</sup>

In sum, our present dissertation aims at studying *Dear Life Collection* (2012) selected short stories from a cultural and social perspective, relying on Raymond Williams's theories of culture in *The Long Revolution* (1961) and *Marxism and Literature* (1977).

## Review of Literature

Alice Munro's *Dear Life Collection* (2012), has been a subject to many critics and involving the debate among theorists and authors all over the world. Susan Sheridan in her essay "*Radiant, everlasting: Dear Life by Alice Munro*" (2012), dealt with Munro's *Dear Life collection* in terms of art. She writes, "She uses ordinary characters and events to explore the human condition. The situations they enter into are banal like marriage and adultery, conflicts between parents and children, ageing and its discontents, loneliness in many forms". That is to say the characters and the circumstances Munro is displaying present human experiences.<sup>4</sup>

Another critic, Eilis ni Dhuibhne also criticized Alice Munro's *Dear Life Collection* (2012) at the level of characters, as she said that there was a certain repetition of the characters in most of Munro's books and collections. In fact the readers may fall in confusion since he finds characters that have been used in other short stories, so she writes:" Character types we have met in other books recur like old acquaintances whose faces we half recognized, one is the reliable. Husband with his crew-cut hair...we met him first in the Beggar Maid as Patrick, this time Peter is his name"<sup>5</sup>

In almost of Munro's short stories in her *Dear Life Collection* (2012), the mother is always mentioned. Kate Kellaway discussed this theme in her *Alice Munro's Legacy: The Final of Dear Life*. The relationship of the narrator with her mother is often marked as complicated though she describes her mother in a beautiful image, but also describes her as unfulfilled mother and often shows that she is not close to her mother and she almost times fights with her, instead she helps her father with whom she had more rapport.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, the Irish theorist Raymond Williams has been criticized by several other theorists and writers. Peter Jackson in "*Raymond Williams and Local Culture*" shows the role of Williams and his influence in the cultural studies by providing some connections and concepts like the 'structure of feeling' by considering it as the core of analyzing the

experience of any living individual. He writes “the importance of Williams’s concept of a ‘Structure of feeling’ in offering the potential for the examination of the patterning of experience and its relation to place”.<sup>7</sup>

Edward Thompson in his article *The Long Revolution (Part I)* has reviewed Raymond Williams *The Long Revolution*(1961) in the New Left Review. He writes “I have no need to insist upon the importance of Raymond Williams ‘achievement. Even a brief passage of his writing has something about it which demands attention, a sense of stubborn, unfashionable integrity, a combination of distinction and force”. That is to say he discusses the importance of Williams’ impact on the development of the cultural theory and on cultural studies.<sup>8</sup>

### **Issues and Working Hypothesis**

The previously reviewed critical studies dealt with a cultural study of the Canadian culture and society, and shed light on the cultural function of literature in this cultural analysis. This is well illustrated by the work of Alice Munro’s *Dear Life* (2012) selected short stories. Relying on Raymond Williams’ theory of culture as explained in *The Long Revolution* (1961) and *Marxism and Literature* (1977), we have focused on some concepts in order to analyze the work of Alice Munro and reveal the influence of the cultural aspects in the Canadian society.

In our research paper, we will study the two levels of culture’ ‘Selective Tradition’, ‘Structure of Feeling’, before examining the sense of ‘Social Class’ as a way of life. We will deal with ‘Residual’ and ‘Emergent’ cultures as two types of culture. Finally, we will analyze the individuals categories ‘Servant’, ‘Rebel’, ‘Subject’ and ‘Exile’ in relation to the interaction with the society in which they live.

## Materials and Methods

### A. Materials

*Dear Life* (2012) is a collection of short stories, that contains fourteen short stories in which Munro summarised the social life in general and her living experience in particular. In this collection, we choose to discuss four short stories, *Dear Life*, *The Eye*, *Pride* and *Gravel*.

#### a. *Dear Life*

*Dear Life* opens in rural Ontario where the narrator and her family raised. She did not like the primary school she attended, so her father bought an old shed in town and paid taxes in order to attend the town school where she knew her friend Diane. She used to go with her to Dian's house but her mother forbade her to go there since her mother had been a prostitute. The narrator completed the high school and liked to help her father in the farm, but later she had to stay at home to help her mother though she was marked by quarreling with her. Later the narrator's father fur business failed so he had to find another job and became a watchman as well her mother started to have Parkinson's disease and her health was getting worse. The narrator married and moved to Vancouver, but still had the subscription to the weekly paper that was published in the town where she grew up, the same did Mrs. Netterfield's daughter who had written a poem about her childhood in which she described the place where she lived; it was the same place where the narrator lived .She wishes she could go to see her mother in her last illness or for her funeral, but she could not because of the travel cost could not afforded.

#### b. *The Eye*

*The Eye* starts with Alice, a young girl at the age of five years old,narrating her childhood and her relationship with her mother especially with the birth of her younger brothers that Alice began to accept and understand the difference between her mother's thoughts and hers. Her mother needed help at home since she was busy with her babies, so

they hired a young woman Sadie who was a celebrity she was singing popular songs and playing guitar in a radio station in their town but only farmers liked her songs as she sings about disappointment of their lives and the war news.

When Sadie works in the narrator's home she was enjoying her job there and doing it with confidence and was talking about life, and the dance halls she went every weekend and how she dances by herself, she also declared that she didn't want to marry. When the school started the narrator went to school with her mother, there she met two boys that seems she did not liked them and who did same .she also met their guiding women who looked hating Sadie.

One night Sadie was killed by a car that had hit her when she comes out of the dance hall. The narrator and her mother went to Sadie's funeral, where she saw a dead person for the first time though her mother told her to close her eyes. The story ends with the narrator an adult now and telling that by the time goes she did not believe in what she had thought.

### ***c. Pride***

*Pride* is a classic Alice Munro story published in April 2011. It is exemplary of her work, examining social class, love and death. It is about two characters from a small town in Ontario; a rich girl named Oneida, she is the daughter of a bank manager. Oneida studied in a private school and her statue in the town keeps her from being close to anyone, she is more reclusive. The other character is the narrator, who is considered as an outcast due to a physical deformity that keeps him far from the others. They lives in the same town and the action centers on their life. The narrator feels sorry for Oneida since she did not look unhappy for her situation but she has something different, he says, a kind of flustered graciousness.

During the war years, farmers 'sons were exempt from service and it is the case for the narrator, he says that if someone asks him why he is not in the service, he can answer that he has to look after books. He is speaking about his mother and how he spent time with her.

When Oneida's mother dies and the same for the narrator's mother; she comes to ask his advice about selling her house and he advises her not to do but she sells it anyway. After they begin to spend time and watch television in his house, they do not go out because they do not want to meet other people.

One evening he became ill and Oneida is taking care of him and because his feeling of a small child, he is embarrassed that she has cared for his intimate hygiene needs, so all the things she does let him want her to leave, and she does so. But when she stays alone she always cares for him if he became sick again, and to let her far from him, he says he has to sell his house. At the end, Oneida seems unhappy when she shows up at his house while he is packing then she is laughing soundlessly which indicates that she was in pain.

#### ***d. Gravel***

The story opens with a little family, a couple with their two daughters, living beside a gravel pit. They moved and live in a trailer house with their mother after her separation with her husband. The mother leaves everything behind and chooses to live her life in her way, she started to work on the theater as an usher where she met Neal, an actor, then he came and lived with them in the trailer.

Then, the narrator tried to remember their old life in the town with their father, but her sister Caro does and tells the narrator about it. Their mother's dog Blitzee moved with them in the trailer, Caro likes him and doesn't like that he brings dead squirrels at home, but Neal said that that is dog's behavior and that is something in which she doesn't worry about it, but she refused. The mother's narrator is pregnant; this is when the mother and Neal move to the trailer in the country. The narrator says that even if they live with Neal but never view as a father figure.

Furthermore, it is spring and the gravel pit fills with melt water, Caro wants to play in it and asks her mother about this, but she refuses and tells to keep Blitzee away from it, then

Neal says that dogs can swim, and there is no worry about it. The narrator tells her mother that Neal gives a cigarette to Caro and she warns him about that thing. The two girls and Blitzee go to play and then Caro tosses the dog into the water and then dives into the pit to retrieve him. The narrator returns to the trailer but does not remember what happened next.

The funeral is made a week before the new baby Brent is born, then after that, Neal bows out. The story ends with the mother returns to the theater and became a business manager; the children spend more time with their father and Josie now. The narrator's mother goes sometimes to the gravel pit and disapproves the development there.

## **B.Methods**

Our research paper is an attempt to examine the cultural aspects in the Canadian culture through the analysis of the selected short stories of the collection *Dear Life* (2012). We have opted for two theories we suggest appropriate to our study, Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution* (1961), and *Marxism and Literature* (1977).

As a theory, *The Long Revolution* analyses the British culture and society of the sixties. In this book Williams develops some important issues of culture and society, mainly where he distinguished between culture as creative activity and culture as a way of life, which is our main subject of analysis. This sense is recognized in his work particularly in the Analysis of Culture chapter, where he studied culture as complicated word that is difficult to define, later he distinguished between three levels of culture: the recorded culture, the culture of the period that he conceptualized to Structure of Feeling, and the culture of the Selective Tradition. What he defines as follow:

We need to distinguish three levels of culture, even in its most general definition. There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture of every kind, from art to the most everyday facts: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition.<sup>9</sup>

Hence, in *The Long Revolution*, Williams developed in relation to history some most distinctive concepts such as '*Selective Tradition*', '*Structure of Feeling*', '*Social Class*'. Tradition to Williams is a selection made in the present by the dominant class through some of its powerful institutions like church, universities or schools. As for the 'structure of feeling', it is essential for us to get and understand the sense of any lived experience. Culture which is defined by Williams as way of life is he also explained by the concept of Social Class, which represents the culture of each class in society including the upper class, the middle class, the low class and the working class, in which Williams put great attention. All this is well summarised as he writes:

Finally, third, there is the 'social ' definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but;"also in institutions and ordinary behavior. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, in the theory of cultural materialism: *Marxism and Literature* (1977) Williams distinguished between the '*Residual*' and the '*Emergent*'. The residual' represents those cultural aspects that continue to be experienced actively in the present though they are part of a past social and cultural institution. It also challenges the contemporaneous dominant institutions by proposing new alternatives to the actual cultural hegemonic wholeness. This oppositional characteristic leads to 'the emergent' undertakes a kind of reworking of the selective tradition the 'emergent' threatens to destabilize the dominant cultural certainties of the bourgeois life.

Finally, he turns to the experience by examining the relationship between the individual and his society in *Individuals and Societies* chapter beginning by the description of the member .For Williams a member is an individual who has a positive identification in his society. Then he mentions the **subject** that is an individual who must obey the social rules and must conform to his society in order to be not rejected by it. The **servant** like the subject he is not

given choice , and he has to accept his place in society as he is .For the **rebel** he is deferent from the previous individuals in that he is totally against his society, he is always criticizing its rules , instead he tries to provide it with new way of life. The **exile** likely to the rebel both of them are not accepting their society and their way of life but the exile is not fighting instead he goes away and escapes. In the following quote Williams claims: “To the servant, society is an establishment, in which he finds his place. To the subject society is an imposed system, in which his place is determined. To the rebel, a particular society is a tyranny; the alternative for which he fights is a new and better society.”<sup>11</sup>

These two books the long *Revolution (1961) and Marxism and Literature (1977)* reveal the cultural issues that Williams debated in his theory, through Alice Munro’s *Dear Life* selected short stories.

### **C.Methodological Outline**

At the methodological level, our research paper is undertaken following the IMRAD system. Our work is composed of five parts. The first part contains an Introduction, review of literature, issues and working hypothesis, materials and methods and result. The introduction states our main purpose. The review of literature deals with some critics of the work. For materials, it includes summaries of the short stories, *The Eye, Dear life, Pride and Gravel*. As for methods which include the explanation of Raymond Williams’s theory of culture *The Long Revolution (1961) and Marxism and Literature (1977)*.This part is also including a methodological outline and a biography of the author. The second part is the result part; it is the final findings of the research paper. The forth part is the discussion, it will comprise three chapters, the first one introduces the Selective Tradition and the Structure of Feeling, the second one deal with Social Class, Residual and Emergent culture. The third chapter introduces types of individuals, the Subject, the servant, the rebel and the exile. Finally, our

dissertation ends with a General Conclusion that sum up the main issues dealt with in this piece of research.

## **Biography of the Author**

Alice Munro also known as Alice Ann Laidlaw is one of the most known Canadian short story writer, was born in Wingham, Ontario, Canada on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1931. She attended the University of Western Ontario, where she studied English and published her first short story in the university's literary magazine. Her first book entitled *Dance of the Happy Shades* was published in 1968 in the United States of America. Munro's notable works are *Lives of Girls and Women*, *Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You*, *The Moons of Jupiter*, *The Love of a Good Women*, *Runaway*, *Too Much Happiness*, and *Dear Life*.

Some of its stories had been published in such Canadian periodical as *Tamarack Review*, *The Montrealer* and *The Canadian Forum*

In 1951, she married James Munro and co owned a book shop and moved to Victoria, British Colombia. Then in 1972 she divorced and moved back to Ontario to start working as writer.

In 1976, she married Gerald Fremlin and moved to his hometown Clinton. During her distinguished career she has been the recipient of many awards and prizes, including three of Canada's Governor General's Literary Awards in 1986 and two of its Giller Prizes, the Rea Award for the short story, the Lannan literary Award, England's W.H. Smith Literary Award, the United States' National Book Critics Circle Award. The Edward MacDowell Medal in literature, O Henry Award in 2006, and the Man Booker International Prize in 2009, Henry Award in 2012, . Finally she won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013<sup>11</sup>

## II. Results

This section of research is concerned with the stating of the major findings, that we have reached after our study of the work of Alice Munro's *Dear Life* (2012) selected short stories: "Dear Life", "The Eye", "Pride" and "Gravel". Our research paper analyses the cultural and social issues in the work of Munro, relying on Raymond Williams theory of culture, focusing on the theoretical concepts the Selective Tradition, the Structure of Feeling, the Social Class, the Residual and the Emergent, which have been the subject of the traditional debate.

In the first chapter of the discussion section of our dissertation, we have dealt with the Selective Tradition that represents the culture by its dominant institutions in society. The Structure of Feeling that Williams considered as the values, meanings which are explored through any lived experience. Social Class is another concept discussed in the second chapter as a whole way of life. We have also dealt with the Residual and the Emergent culture; the Emergent refers to new meanings of culture, and the Residual which includes the old cultural aspects. *Dear Life Collection* of short stories depicts the previously mentioned types of culture, as it explored the Canadian culture and society at that time.

In the third chapter, we have analysed the individual's struggling with his society, where we have cited four categories of individuals: the Servant, the Rebel, the Subject and the Exile. These four characters are well represented in the selected short stories, through their roles and the way they react to the social norms either by accepting or refusing them.

We have come to conclusion that culture can express the way of life of people through any lived experience, as it can express some dominant meanings and values by its elements and traits. That is what Munro assembled in her short stories.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: The Analysis of Culture* (Harmondsworth Middlesex: England Penguin Books Ltd, 1961),66

<sup>2</sup>Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: Individuals and Societies* (Harmondsworth Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd 1961),110

<sup>3</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/11/books/alice-munro-wins-nobel-prize-in-literature.html>

<sup>4</sup>Susan Sheridan, *Radiant, everlasting: Dear Life by Alice Munro*, Sydney Review of Books, March5, 2013)

<sup>5</sup>Elis Ni Dhuibhne,1.396,2012,<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/review-dear-life>.

<sup>6</sup>Kate Callaway, Dear Life by Alice Munro-review, (December 28,2013), <http://amp.theguardian.com/books/2013/dec/29/alice-munro-dear-life-review-reference=http://www.google.com&csi=0>.

<sup>7</sup>Jackson Peter, ‘*Raymond Williams and Local Cultures*’, SAGE Journals 23, no 2 (February1, 1991):229-238,<https://doi.org/10.1068/a230229>.

<sup>8</sup>Thompson Edward, “*Raymond Williams: The Long Revolution (PART 1)*”, NEW LEFT REVIEW(February,1961),<http://newleftreview.org/issues/ic/aeticles/Edward-thompson-the-long-revolution-part-i>.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: The Analysis of Culture* (Harmondsworth Middlesex England: Penguin Books Ltd, (1961), 66.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 57.

<sup>11</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: Individuals and Societies*, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth Middlesex, England (1961), 106.

<sup>12</sup>Hooper Brad, *The Fiction of Alice Munro: An Appreciation* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008), 1

### III. Discussion

#### Chapter One: The Selective Tradition and the Structure of Feeling

##### 1. The Selective Tradition

This part of our discussion will deal with the study of the Selective Tradition, the Structure of Feeling, Social Class, Residual and the Emergent culture. The previously mentioned concepts are developed by Raymond Williams and discussed in Alice Munro selected short stories: “*Dear Life*”, “*The Eye*”, “*Pride*” and “*Gravel*”, are well presented in each story through different situations and experiences lived by different characters.

The selective tradition is one of the three levels of culture, Raymond Williams’ term The Selective Tradition is a selection of orders and legacies of the past to explain some practices of the present, these selections are made by the dominant class through some of its powerful institutions like church, universities or schools, this is well explained in his work as he writes:

The selective tradition thus creates, at one level, a general human culture; at another level, the historical record of a particular society; a third level, most difficult to accept and assess, a rejection of considerable areas of what was once a living culture. Within a given society, selection will be governed by many kinds of special interests, including class interests. Just as the actual social situation will largely govern contemporary selection, so the development of the society, the process of historical change, will largely determine the selective tradition. The traditional culture of a society will always tend to correspond to its contemporary system of interests and values, for it is not an absolute body of work but a continual selection and interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

In “*Dear Life*” we notice that the narrator mentions the primary school and the high school in the very beginning of the short story as important elements in her town and then continued describing the primary school that she attended for two years; the one seems undesirable for her, the fact that made her father buy an old shed in the town in order to attend the town school , this shows the importance of school and its valuable place in her society as being one of the most powerful institutions and this is clearly shown when she said :There

was a school which I had attended for two years of my life and wished never to see again. After those years my mother made my father buy an old shed in town so that he would pay town taxes and I could go to the town school.<sup>2</sup>

Though the narrator left the old school but she remains remembering it and describing every part in it and telling every single event that she lived at the school, and the time she spends at the high school with her classmates. Not only this, yet the school is marked as a valuable reference for the narrator as she asserts: “Her struggle to get to high school. The school where she taught, in Alberta, and where the children arrived on horseback. The friends she had at normal school, the innocent tricks that were played.”<sup>3</sup>This quotation indicates the crucial place that school takes in their society, from the past at the times when her mother was studying and when she was teaching despite the troubles she faced to join the school as was the case for children at that time but they defeated those conditions.

Regarding the narrator’s conditions she is passing through and the country state during World War II when war was declared with Germany, but she completed the high school and this shows her extreme interest in studies though she is helping in households but she kept reading books as she asserts: “I sat down with my feet in the warming oven, which had lost its door, and read the big novels I borrowed from the town library: *Independent People*, which was about life in Iceland, harder than ours by far, but with a hopeless grandeur to it, or *Remembrance of Things Past*”<sup>4</sup>

“*The Eye*” is another short story which depicts the notion of the selective tradition by the dominance of school; this is well represented in the story by the narrator as she says:

Now school has started. It started some weeks ago, before the leaves turned red and yellow. Now they were mostly gone. I am not wearing my school coat but my good coat, the one with the dark velvet cuffs and collar. My mother is wearing the coat she wears to church, and a turban covers most of her hair.<sup>5</sup>

We deduce from this passage that school has a main position in the society as it is explained by the narrator, that she and her mother set special clothing for school. From this we conclude that there is a strong link between education and culture, therefore schools contribute in the spread of culture in general and the culture of the selective tradition in particular and this is well summarized by Williams as he writes:

In theory, and to limited extent in practice, those institutions which are formally concerned with keeping the tradition alive (in particular the institutions of education and scholarship) are committed to the tradition as a whole, and not to some selection from it according to contemporary interests.<sup>6</sup>

Religion and culture cannot be separated since religious ideas, norms and values represent culture and more specifically a cultural tradition in any given society, this can directly guided us to think of the concept of the selective tradition which can be also presented by the domination of church as a powerful institution in the society in relation to the time in which that selection of orders and mainly that institution takes place. In the previously dealt short story “*Dear Life*”, the dominance of church is clearly appearing in the Canadian society more exactly in Southwestern Ontario during World War II, when war was declared against Germany. In the story there had been a debate over a woman who died because of prostitution illness and who wanted to be buried at home but some people in that city refused that to be done, but the church has done its duty and forced its laws, as the narrator states:

I did not find out then, and don't know when I did find out-that Diane's mother had been a prostitute and had died of some ailment prostitutes caught. She'd wanted to be buried at home, and the minister of our church had done the service. There had been controversy over the text he had used. Some people thought he should have left it out, but my mother believed that he had done the right thing.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the crucial place of the church in the story we notice that the society where the narrator grew up focuses more on church than on other institutions and this is clearly shown in her words when she says:

We didn't know exactly when it had been built but it had to be less than a century old, because 1858 was the year the first settler had stopped at a place called Bodmin \_which had now disappeared\_ built himself a raft, and come down the river to clear trees from the land that later became a whole village. That early village soon had a sawmill and a hotel and three churches and a school the same school that was my first, and so dreaded by me.<sup>8</sup>

Due to the setting that “*The Eye*” short story takes place during the depression in southwestern Ontario where most of Munro's stories take place, at that time the protestant church was dominating the society by its traditional values, rules and ideas<sup>9</sup>. The fact that the church was a center of power and has a notable authority, people should obey and subject to whatever law established by that authoritative institution; and it is the case in the story and well depicted by narrator's mother who selects a special uniform rather than putting ordinary clothes when going to the church and school when she says: ‘My mother is wearing the coat she wears to church, and a turban covers most of her hair.’<sup>10</sup> From this quotation we deduce that the church has a high position in society at that time. Moreover church does not only control people but even the other institutions like school.

## **2. The Structure of Feeling**

Structure of feeling is a concept coined by Raymond Williams in the 1970s in his work *The Long Revolution (1961)*, which is used to describe what is called the lived culture, it is related to the meaning and values which are lived in work and relationship and it can also be used to describe a particular sense of life or particular community of experience hardly needing expression. It can be understood as the culture of period. He says:

The term I would suggest to describe it is structure of feeling: it is as firm and definite as ‘structure’ suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and last tangible parts of our activity. In one sense, this structure of feeling is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization.<sup>11</sup>

“*Pride*” is the work which exposes the life in society, a history of the middle of the past century. The story is told by a man with harelip, it is about a wealthy family in the town: Oneida and her father; Horace Jantzen who is a bank manager.

Oneida is one of the central characters. Her name and her money keep her apart from the rest of the town; as the narrator says:

Oneida didn't go to school with the rest of us, anyway. I mean that nothing could have happened there, to set her up for life. She went to a girl's school, a private school, that I can't remember the name of, if I ever knew it. Even in the summers she was not around much. I believe the family had a place on Lake Simcoe.<sup>12</sup>

He also says; “they had a lot of money so much, that they weren't in a category with anybody else in town, even the well-to-do”.<sup>13</sup> From this quotation, we understand that this family has money and that Oneida goes to a private school rather than a public one, and she is not in the town in the summer, so all these things make of Oneida a reclusive woman.

Despite the scandal caused by her father and being demoted; Oneida never feels abashed or diminished by this fact; in fact, she continues in living her life and trusting in people and with her sense of pride, the narrator asserts; “so it might seem strange that I could feel sorry for her, the way she was all in the surface of things, trusting.”<sup>14</sup>

In addition to this, she is his driver, she never seems sad in doing that, but it is the contrary, she is always trying or pretending that she is doing that with pleasure, as the narrator says:

If I picture Oneida and her father on these journeys to and from Hawks burg, I see him riding in the backseat, and her in front, like a chauffeur. It may have been that he was too bulky to ride up beside her. Or maybe the beard needed space. I don't see Oneida looking downtrodden or unhappy at the arrangement, nor her father looking actually unhappy. Dignity was what he had, and plenty of it. She had something different. When she went into a store or even walked on the street, there seemed to be a little space cleared around her, made ready for whatever she might want or greetings she might spread. She seemed then a bit flustered but gracious, ready to laugh a little at herself or the situation. Of course she had her good bones and bright looks, all that fair dazzle of skin and hair.<sup>15</sup>

From this quote, we realize that the girl has her own way of life and her feelings, she does not care for whatever the others say, because of her wealthy upbringing and the way she looks, stirs awe and admiration in all those around her.

Structure of feeling can also be represented by another figure that has an important role in the story which is the narrator, a man with a harelip. He has finished the high school and become a bookkeeper, a work that doesn't involve much talking. Despite his deformity, he is able to make a place for himself in the town; he points:

Because I graduated from high school, and I had to think about earning a living if that was possible. My impediment, even with the lip stitched up, ruled out anything that involved a lot of talking, so I settled for bookkeeping, and that meant going out of town to apprentice to an outfit in Goderich.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, because of his harelip, the narrator is exempted from the service in the Second World War and that he feels isolated from men of his own age what is not something new for him, in that he says; “I felt cut off from men of my own age, but my being cut off in a way was nothing so new”.<sup>17</sup>He adds, “I knew that if anybody asked me why I was not in service it would be a joke. And I was ready with the response that I had to look after the books. Krebs’ books and soon others. Had to look after the figures”.<sup>18</sup>from these two quotations, we notice that the narrator accepts himself for who he is and does not feel sorry for him even though he is not like other people in his age, he also does not need someone to provide him with a good image of himself.

In the story, the narrator speaks about his deformity and why should a harelip stay at home without doing anything, even the fact of being exempted from everything in his life, like the army or a work that would require him to talk. In addition to this, talking about his mother, he mentions that he was the reason why she never wants to have other children and that she lost a man when she informs him about her son's state. So all these things show the influence of the social life of the narrator on him and that his life was always stumbled. In this he says:

“I’ve asked myself sometimes, Why should a harelip, decently if not quite cleverly tidied up, and a voice that sounded somewhat peculiar but was capable of being understood, have been considered enough to keep me home? I must have got my notice, I must have gone to the doctor to get an exemption. I simply don’t remember. Was it that I was so used to being exempted from one thing or another that I took it, like a lot of other things, completely for granted? I may have told my mother to be quiet on certain matters, but what she said did not usually carry much weight with me. Invariably she looked on the bright side. Other things I knew but not from her. I knew that because of me she was afraid to have any more children and had lost a man who was once interested in her when she told him that.<sup>19</sup>

A relation between Oneida and the narrator started just after the death of her father and his mother when she asks him for advice about selling her big house. Then little by little, it became a habit for both of them to pass time together in watching TV and eating. One day, because of the narrator illness, Oneida stays in his house and taking care of him.

After that, he is always trying to hide his feeling of embarrassment and that he is recovered so that she can return home. He says:

When I first really felt better I was too lazy to acknowledge the fact that I had spells of feeling like a small child again. But of course she was not my mother, and I had to wake up one morning and realize that. I had to think about all the things she had done for me, and that embarrassed me considerably. As it would any man, but me especially because of remembering how I looked. I had more or less forgotten that, and now it seemed to me that she had not been embarrassed, that she had been able to do things so matter-of-factly because I was a neuter to her, or an unfortunate child<sup>20</sup>

Taking care of him, makes him feel like a little boy who needs his mother and this was the thing which lets him having the feeling of embarrassment. Another thing which let the narrator see himself as neuter to her, is when she asked him to live together like brother and sister and that people would accept that thing easily, so all these things make his personal feeling broken, when he says,

We had a certain feeling for each other, she said. We had a feeling which was not just the usual thing. We could live together like brother and sister and look after each other like brother and sister and it would be the most natural thing in the world. Everybody would accept it as so. How could they not? All the time she was speaking I felt terrible. Angry, scared, appalled. The worst was towards the end, when she was talking about how nobody would think a thing about it. At the same time, I could see what she meant, and maybe agree with her that people would get used to it. A dirty joke or two we might not even get to hear. She might be right. It might make sense. At

this I felt as if I had been thrown down into a cellar and a flat door slammed on my head.<sup>21</sup>

This quotation reveals the feeling of the two characters especially the narrator. Thinking about society whether it accepts their relation or people talk about it, as John Elridge in his book *Raymond Williams Making Connection* argues that:

Alongside the concept of structure of feeling is that of community and the later notion of the 'knowable community', a concept central to Williams' contemplation of the relation, or lack of relation, between the individual and society as this is expressed through the drama. New ways of thinking about and experiencing the world give rise to changes in this relationship.<sup>22</sup>

Oneida passes through many experiences in her life which are not really good at all. Selling their big house after the death of her father is her big mistake. The buyer plays a trick on her, saying that he likes the place and wants the house for his family but this was all stupidities. The narrator advises her to do not sell it and that the man is not truthful but it is done. This mistake lets her in a state of shock and regret; because she cannot retrieve her house, when the narrator says:

I wasn't used to entertaining, so I didn't offer any refreshments, just gave her some serious and cautionary advice about selling and kept reminding her that I was no expert. Then she went ahead and ignored everything I had said. She sold it at the first offer and did that mainly because the buyer went on about how he loved the place and looked forward to raising his family there. He was the last person in town I would have trusted, children or no children, and the price was pitiful. I had to tell her so. I said the children would make a shambles of it, and she said that was what children were for. All banging around, the very opposite of her own childhood. As a matter of fact, they never got a chance to, because the buyer proceeded to pull it down and put up an apartment building, four stories high, with an elevator, and turned the grounds into a parking lot. The first genuine building of this sort the town had ever seen. She came to see me in a state of shock when all this began and wanted to know if she could do something—have it declared a heritage building, or sue the buyer for breaking his never-written word, or whatever?<sup>23</sup>

The representation of values is shown in the story through the wealthy man or the man of power, Horace Jantzen, who was not in category with the other people in the town. But after his mismanagement and the loss of all the funds of the bank, he is demoted to a small bank in

a little village. The narrator says that he could refuse his demotion but all this refers to the title of the story '*Pride*', the narrator asserts:

Surely he could have refused, but pride, as it was thought, chose otherwise. Pride chose that he be driven every morning those six miles to sit behind a partial wall of cheap varnished boards, no proper office at all. There he sat and did nothing until it came time for him to be driven home.<sup>24</sup>

“*Dear Life*” is a story which portrays the life of the narrator from her childhood until her teens, where first she narrates her experience at school and her relationship, where she mentioned the friends she met who were disturbing her at the old school, she mentioned even the friend Diane she met at the new school. The narrator keeps telling about her experience at the high school, she also tends to express her seriousness, hard working and her feeling after she completed her studies where she writes: “I felt as if I were a lifetime away from most of the people I had known in grade nine, let alone in that first school”<sup>25</sup>. The narrator seems caring even about her father’s feelings who seems unhappy for living the way his parents wanted him to live and to follow their way of life in the farm although he wanted to live in the city, and this is well illustrated when she says:

It wasn’t as if he had been content to live the way his parents had expected him to live, taking over their decent farm. When he and my mother left their communities behind and brought this plot of land at the end of a road near a town they didn’t know, their idea was almost certainly to become prosperous by raising silver foxes and, later on, mink. As a boy, my father had found himself happier following a trap-line than helping on the farm or going to high school\_ and richer, too, than he had ever been before \_and this idea had come upon him and he had taken it up, as he thought, for a lifetime.<sup>26</sup>

The quotation above clarifies and describes the way of life of her father, which in fact depicts the structure of feeling.

The relationship of the narrator and her mother is marked as being unstable from her childhood until becomes teenage, she disagrees her mother’s ideas and fights with her almost

times to an extent that she thinks of escaping from home after her father beats her as she asserts:

Later on, I had to stay in the house to help my mother, and I was full of resentment and quarrelsome remarks. "Talking back" it was called. I hurt her feelings, she said, and the outcome was that she would go to the barn to tell on me, to my father. Then he'd have to interrupt his work to give me a beating with his belt. (This was not an uncommon punishment at the time.) Afterwards, I'd lie weeping in bed and make plans to run away. But that phase also passed, and in my teens I became manageable, even jolly, noted for my funny recounting of things that I had heard about in town or that had happened at school.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, her father's beatings and the bad way her mother treat her, stuck in the narrator's memory the thing that made her make some poems up in the hometown paper as she says:

In fact, I had once made up some poems myself, of a very similar nature, though they were lost now, and maybe had ever been written down. Verses that commended Nature then were a bit hard to wind up. I would have composed them right around the time that I was being so intolerant of my mother, and my father was whaling the unkindness out of me. Or beating the tar out of me, as people would cheerfully say back then.<sup>28</sup>

This quotation shows the experience of the narrator with her family and expresses her feelings and emotions, the fact that let her write some poems to the hometown paper. The story ends with the narrator's feeling of deeply regret and the wish to see her mother in the deathbed, at least in her final days of illness and for being not able to go to attend her funeral, the fact that let her say:

I did not go home for my mother's last illness or for her funeral. I had two small children and nobody in Vancouver to leave them with. We could barely have afforded the trip, and my husband had contempt for formal behavior, but why blames it on him? I felt the same. We say of some things that they can't be forgiven, or that we will never forgive ourselves. But we do we do it all the time.<sup>29</sup>

To conclude, "*Dear Life*" short story's title itself reveals a story of life and provides indications of the way of life, also hints to a specific feeling which is regret which is finally expressed at the end by the narrator.

“*The Eye*” short story is rich of feelings and emotions, since it assembles the experience of the narrator, Sadie and their relationship together, that are expressed by both of them. Sadie was a famous girl who plays a guitar and sings songs in the radio station of their town. Songs which were full of feelings which represent the emotional state of the farmers and the state of their town during the war. This is well shown when she asserts:

Those people listened to a Toronto station that broadcast popular songs of the day three little fishes and a momma fishy too\_ and Jim Hunter hollering out the desperate war news. But people on the farms liked the local station and the kind of songs Sadie sang. Her voice was strong and sad and she sang about loneliness and grief.<sup>30</sup>

.She adds:

This was what Sadie sang with such sorrow in a full-throated alto, but in her job with us she was full of energy and confidence, happy to talk and mostly to talk about herself. There was usually nobody to talk to but me. Her jobs and my mother’s kept them divided most of the time and somehow I don’t think they would have enjoyed talking together anyway.<sup>31</sup>

There is no doubt that the narrator’s relationship with her mother is not enough good, she is insisting on mentioning that in every situation she lived, either at home or when she goes with her outside, the fact that let her does not get close to her mother and does not agree with her, even at the least the things her mother does or says to her and let her express her feelings, this is well appearing when she says: “I was my mother’s business, except for later on when I got really mouthy and had to be punished.”<sup>32</sup>

And as she says:

Come now, she said to me. Her gentleness sounded hateful to me, triumphant. She bent to look into my face, I was sure, was to prevent me from doing what had just occurred to me\_\_keeping my eyes squeezed shut. Then she took her gaze away from me but kept my hand tightly held in hers. I did manage to lower my lids as soon as she took her eyes off me.<sup>33</sup>

And when she says: “Here we are then”. Her voice seems meant to be encouraging. She touches my hand to give me a chance to hold hers, but I pretended not to notice and she takes her hand away.<sup>34</sup>

The different experiences that the narrator lived, which are mostly based on her surroundings and on her daily life, like her childhood experience at school which is firmly marked in her memory and affected on her feelings particularly, the reason that pushed her to convey what she passed through at school and her relationship with children there, as she claims in her words:

I notice that there are two other children there. Boys. I know them from school, one being in the first grade with me, and the other one older. They are peering out from what is likely the kitchen. The younger one is stuffing a whole cookie into his mouth in a comical way and the other, older, one is making a disgusted face. Not at the cookie stuffer, but at me. They hate me of course. Boys either ignored you if they met you somewhere that wasn't school (they ignored you there too) or they made these faces or called you horrid names. If I had to go near I would stiffen and wonder what to do.<sup>35</sup>

The first time to see a dead person seems something new and as a new experience that the narrator has never lived. Going with her mother to the funeral, is the idea which makes her afraid and wonders not to do that since she fears. Later on she went with her mother and she talks about her feeling and her impression, when she saw dead Sadie and this is what she claims:

When I had realized that we are going into Sadie's house I longed not to go, but didn't see any way to get out of it except by behaving with enormous with indignity. Now after the old woman's outburst it seemed to me we might turn around and go home. I would never have to admit the truth, which was that I was in fact desperately scared of any dead body. Just as I thought this might be possible, I heard my mother and the woman she seemed now to be conniving with speak of what was worse than anything. Seeing Sadie.

Yes, my mother was saying of course, we must see Sadie.

Dead Sadie.

I had kept my eyes pretty well cast down, seen mostly just those boys who were hardly taller than I was, and the old, people who were sitting down. But now my mother was taking me by the hand in another direction.

There had been a coffin in the room all the time but I had thought it was something else. Because of my lack experience I didn't know exactly what such a thing looked like.<sup>36</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: The Analysis of Culture* (Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth Middlesex, England 1961), 68

<sup>2</sup>Munro Alice, *Dear Life: Dear Life* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2012), 163.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 163

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 168

<sup>5</sup> Munro Alice, *The Eye*, 143

<sup>6</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 68

<sup>7</sup>Munro, *Dear Life*, 164.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 166.

<sup>9</sup>DicklerAwano Lisa, *The Golden Eye: Alice Munro's Dear Life "Finale"*

<sup>10</sup>Munro, *Dear Life*, 143.

<sup>11</sup>Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: Individuals and Societies* (Harmondsworth Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1961), 64, 65

<sup>12</sup>Munro Alice, *Dear Life: Pride*, ALFRED A. KNOPS, NEW YORK (2012), 75

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 75

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, 77

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, 77

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, 76

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, 77

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 77

<sup>19</sup>id, 77\_78

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 82

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, 83

<sup>22</sup>Elridge John and Elridge Lizzie *Raymond Williams Making Connections: Culture and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994)

<sup>23</sup>Munro Alice, *Dear Life: Pride*, 79,

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid*, 76

<sup>25</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Dear Life*, 165

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 165

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 166

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 172

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 173

<sup>30</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: The Eye*, 140

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 141

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid*, 143

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid*, 146

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid*, 143

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid*, 144

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid*, 145

## Chapter Two: Social Class, the Residual Culture and the Emergent Culture.

### 1. Social Class

Class has variable meanings, it describes social position, and it also refers to political and cultural organization. At the social level Williams defines class as that division of society into social classes as: the Aristocratic, the middle and the working class. Every class possesses a social character which interacts between each others<sup>1</sup>. Culture is related to social interests that include class interests, as it is well explained by Williams in his words:

According to Williams, in its modern usage dates back to 1740, with varying permutations as time goes on—lower classes, upper classes, upper middle classes, the lower middle classes. Class is an elastic word more indefinite than rank and points to a changing social structure and changed social feelings.<sup>2</sup>

In Alice Munro short story ‘*Pride*’, class is represented by two characters, Horace Jantzen and his daughter, Oneida. Starting by the father, a wealthy man who is not in category with the other people in the town and a man of power as he is described in the story, as the narrator asserts:

Ida’s father ran the bank. Even in those days bankers came and went, I suppose to keep them from ever getting too cozy with the customers. But the Jantzens had been having their way in town for too long for any regulations to matter, or that was how it seemed. Horace Jantzen had certainly the look of a man born to be in power. A heavy white beard, even though according to photographs, beards were out of style by the First World War, a good height and stomach and a ponderous expression.<sup>3</sup>

Then after his failure in putting all the funds of the bank in the steam car operation because of his mismanagement, he lost everything and then given a fake job which didn’t fit to his class in a small town, the narrator says:

There was talk not of cheating but of mismanagement. Somebody had to be punished. Any ordinary manager would have been out on his ear, but given that it was Horace Jantzen, this was avoided. What happened to him was almost worse. He was switched to the job of bank manager in the little village of Hawksburg, about six miles up the highway. Prior to this there had been no manager there at all, because they didn’t need one. There had just been a head cashier and an underling cashier, both women.<sup>4</sup>

He even says, “Oneida’s father had hardly been seen or heard of during the last year of his life”.<sup>5</sup>

These quotations show the way Horace Jantzen moves from the upper class to the lower class. After his luxury life, a good job and his place in the town, he become like all the ordinary people there.

The second character is Oneida who is from a wealthy family, living in a big house studying in a private school and always in a good look, like the narrator depicts, “Of course she had her good bones and bright looks, all that fair dazzle of skin and hair”.<sup>6</sup> He also says; “They had lots of money—so much, in fact, that they weren’t in a category with anybody else in town, even the well to-do one”.<sup>7</sup>

The death of Oneida’s mother and father led her to sell their big house to a liar man who in fact rips down the house and builds another one. So here appears the issue of class because after selling the house; Oneida rent an apartment on the top floor. In that, the narrator says, “then when all the apartments were finished what she did do but move back into one of them, on the top floor. I know for a fact she did not get a reduced rent, or even ask for one.”<sup>8</sup>

The issue of class is explored in the story by Oneida and her father, through the changes happened in their social life and their social feeling. Both Oneida and her father moves from the upper class to the lower class, or more specifically the downward mobility.

“*The Eye*” short story is a work that most of its events take place in the country where the narrator lived with her family, but this does not prevent the country people to go to the town. There, they find what they don’t have in the country like entertainment facilities and other facilities. In the story Sadie the servant, goes to dancing halls every weekend by herself, she and other countrymen go to the town ones, she once told the narrator that there is another town dancing hall which name is Royal-T, this one separates the town people from the

country ones, this shows the town people were seen as the upper class while the country ones were considered as the lower class in the society. That is well shown in the story as the narrator says:

The other dance hall was just out of the town on the highway. You paid at the door there and it wasn't for one dance but the whole night. The place was called the Royal-T. She paid her own way there too. There was generally a better class of dancer, but she did try to get an idea of how they managed before she let the other place them take her out on the floor. They were usually town fellows while the ones at the other place were country. Better on their feet\_ the town ones but\_ it was not always the feet you had to look out for. It was where they wanted to get hold of you. Sometimes she had to read them the riot act and tell them what she would do to them if they didn't quit it.<sup>9</sup>

The family where the narrator grow up seems to have a high position in society, and this appears in being able to hire a servant Sadie who would help her mother and do household works, while her mother takes care of the small babies. The narrator's mother looks an educated and a respectable woman through the way she talks and how she acts and by her characters as the narrator mentioned when she says:"she was an authority"<sup>10</sup> and she adds:

My mother was a serious person as I have indicated, one who used to teach school before she taught me. She maybe would have liked Sadie to be somebody she could help, teaching her not to say"youse". But Sadie did not give much indication that she wanted the help anybody could offer, or talk in any way that was different from how had always spoken.<sup>11</sup>

Not only at home that the place of the narrator's mother appears important, but it is also clear and appeared in the way they treat her at school for example, when she went to school where her daughter studies, they welcome her best and a woman who is working their helped her to take off her coat. This shows the class of the narrator in the society, this it is well explained when she asserts:

Then a woman who is rather dressed up comes and speaks to my mother helps her off with her coat. That done, my mother takes my coat off and says to the woman that I was especially fond of Sadie. She hopes it was all right to bring me."Oh dear little thing", the woman says and my mother touches me lightly to get me to say hello.<sup>12</sup>

From the analysis of Raymond Williams of the social character where he distinguishes different classes in society, Williams shows a great interest and puts an important focus on the working-class, he mainly focused on this category and influenced by it, since he grew up in a rural area in Wales. In his work he explained and analysed the situation of that class and the way they are treated in their society by the other classes, especially by the sophisticated class or the upper class as Williams called it, he also tended to base on the view of the other classes over them and how they suffer because of their position even though they play a vital role in every economy. This is well illustrated in his words when he declares:

As the victims of repression and punitive rehabilitation, of the gospel of success and the pride of birth, of real nature of work and the exposure to suffering, working-class people were beginning to formulate alternative ideals. They had important allies from the interaction of the other systems, and could be major force either in the Corn Laws repeal or in the Factory legislation, when these were sponsored by different sections of the ruling class.<sup>13</sup>

In the story, Sadie's songs were heard by the countryside people and especially liked by the farmers or the working class, this class which is generally oppressed by the other classes and by the sophisticated people of the society, this is what the narrator Williams cited above

And half an hour later it was, "Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye, everybody." In between she sang songs that were requested, as well as some she picked she picked out herself. The more sophisticated people in town tended to joke about her songs and about the whole station which was said to be the smallest one in Canada. Those people listened to a Toronto station that broadcast popular songs of the day\_\_ three little fishes and a mamma fishy too\_\_and Jin Hunter hollering out the desperate war news.<sup>14</sup>

## **2. The Residual Culture**

In the context of cultural struggle and in terms of hegemonic senses, Raymond Williams developed the notion of residual and emergent cultures in his book *Marxism and Literature* (1977). These two concepts represent two kinds of culture; we start with the residual culture which refers to those cultural aspects, values and beliefs that continue to be

experienced actively and effective elements of the present though they are part of a past social and cultural institution. This is what he explained and clarified in his work when he claims:

By 'residual' I mean something different from the 'archaic', though in practice these are often very difficult to distinguish. Any culture includes available elements of its past, but their place in the contemporary cultural process is profoundly variable. I would call the 'archaic' that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined, or even on occasion to be consciously 'revived', in a deliberately specializing way. What I mean by the 'residual' is very different. The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present. Thus certain experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture.<sup>15</sup>

Alice Munro's *Dear Life Collection* of short stories depicts the notion of the residual culture in different ways and several aspects. That is what we will analyse and discuss throughout Munro's stories, which tend to show how the residual culture influences in the Canadian society especially in rural areas where the stories take place. In fact, country people were more attached to the old values and relationships which are considered as a part of their historical and cultural heritage that is inherited from their ancestors.

To begin, '*Dear Life*' a short story that represents the life of the narrator and her family by its different situations and experiences, it is also a story which shed lights on a rural family that preserves its traditions and adheres to ancient ideas and systems of life, though when changes are available through time and place. After the narrator and her family moved to the town searching for better life conditions and guarantee the best education for their daughter, the narrator still remembers the old school and still wondering to know if it is changed by time or did not, even though she liked the new school and the town. All this is summarized in her words when she says:

I don't know if the school toilets had improved by then or not, but they had been the worst thing. It was not as if we didn't resort to an outhouse at home, but it was clean and even had a linoleum floor. At that school for reasons of contempt or whatever, nobody seemed to bother to aim for the hole. In many ways it wasn't easy for me in town, either, because everybody else had been together since grade one, and there were many things that I hadn't learned yet.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, not only the first school of the country which stuck in the narrator's memory, but also many other locations still come in her mind and could not be erased. Those locations that are colored by childhood memories and images, which in turn tell about their habits and some beliefs they used to believe in, like the old house where she spent her childhood remains irreplaceable in her memory, even after she got married and moved to Vancouver, then she stills remember their old house and keeps asking questions, this is what the narrator tells: "This woman said that she was born in 1876. She had spent her youth, until she was married, in her father's house. It was where the town ended and the open land began, and it had a sunset view. Our house."<sup>17</sup>

She adds:

There were several verses, and as I read I began to understand that she was talking about the same river flats that I had thought belonged to me. "The lines I am enclosing were written from memories of that old hillside," she said. "If they are worthy of a little space in your time-honored paper, I thank you"<sup>18</sup>

The quotes above, shows that the rural community which is one of the residual traits of culture that Williams discussed, is of a great importance as it is defined "Williams considers organized religion, rural community, and monarchy three important residual traits of culture"<sup>19</sup> This is well shown in the story since the narrator belonging and lived in a rural area in Canada before moving to the city.

In addition to this, the fact that the narrator still subscribed to the weekly paper that was published in the town where she grew up, indicates that she wants to be up to date with the town news and keeps the thread of attachment that created with her city since she was young and this is what the narrator declares:

After I was married and had moved to Vancouver, I still got the weekly paper that was published in the town where I grew up. I think somebody, maybe my father and his second wife, made sure that I had a subscription. Often I barely looked at it, but one time, when I did, I saw the name Netterfield. It was not the name of someone who was

living in the town at present but had apparently been the maiden name of a woman in Portland, Oregon, who had written a letter to the paper. This woman like me still had a subscription to her hometown paper, and she had written a poem about her childhood there.<sup>20</sup>

This is what Williams explained as the influence of the residual culture on societies in general and on individuals in particular, as it is argued: “Is the influence of old cultural practices on modern societies, consciously or unconsciously and is built into the infrastructure of the dominant culture.”<sup>21</sup>

In “*Gravel*” short story, the theatre which is a cultural institution portrays the residual culture. The narrator’s mother who was living with her husband and her two daughters near the gravel pit decided to change her way of life, consequently she joined the town theatre, where she met Neal and got pregnant of a boy from him. After the death of her daughter Caro and after Neal left her and her son, she retrieved her old job as an usher in the theatre, though she changed and renewed her way of life. This is what the narrator says:

My mother went back to her old duties at the theater. At first she may have worked as she had before, as a volunteer usher, but by the time I was in school she had a real job, with pay, and year-round responsibilities. She was the business manager. The theater survived, through various ups and downs, and is still going now.<sup>22</sup>

In the light of what is said before, we will understand that some values which are created in the past, still existing in the present as a continual process.

### **3. The Emergent Culture**

Emergent culture defined by Raymond William as those new meanings, values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship that are newly created. It is difficult to distinguish between the dominant culture and those which are oppositional, since the residual culture is easier in understanding that some meanings and values are generated and which are neglected and opposed by the dominant culture. That is what Williams explains in his work, when he asserts:

By 'emergent' I mean, first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created. But it is exceptionally difficult to distinguish between those which are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture (and in this sense 'species-specific') and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it: emergent in the strict sense, rather than merely novel... In the subsequent default of a particular phase of a dominant culture there is then a reaching back to those meanings and values which were created in actual societies and actual situations in the past, and which still seem to have significance because they represent areas of human experience, aspiration, and achievement which the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses, or even cannot recognize.<sup>23</sup>

*Dear Life Collection* of short stories is a work which captures the life of ordinary people who must keep and follow some traditional values and meanings in terms of relationship. But that didn't prevent them from discovering new ideas, new values and new beliefs in the town where they made new relationships, which is what they considered as starting point for changing by new encounters and chances to renew their life and get off from the old and traditional beliefs and limits.

In "*Dear Life*" short story, the narrator seems happy in her new school of the town and to leave the old one, which is located in the country which she described as uncomfortable. This shows that the narrator appreciated the new school as a result she made a friend there for the first time that is what she mentions: "but it was a comfort to see my new school unsoiled seats and to hear the noble urban sound of its flush toilets"<sup>24</sup>

Besides, there had been some changing and redecoration in the house of the narrator in that summer, where everybody seem excited for that, for instance when her father added new paint over the old one, also some interior changes in rooms were done and that was the thing that most pleased her, because she had bad memories there when she was young, this is what the narrator explains when she says:

Because that was the summer my father fixed up the house, adding a layer of brown paint over the traditional redbrick. There was some problem with the way the bricks and boards were fitted; they did not keep out the cold as well as they were supposed to. It was thought that the coat of paint would help, though I can't recall that it ever did. Also we got a bathroom, and the unused dumbwaiter became kitchen cupboards, and the big dining room with the open stairway changed into a regular room with enclosed

stairs. That change comforted me in some unexamined way, because my father's beatings of me had taken place in the old room with me waiting to die for the misery and shame of it all. Now the difference in the sitting made it hard even to imagine such a thing happening.<sup>25</sup>

At the end, the narrator's satisfaction by the new things she discovered at the town and elsewhere as well by the new practices and activities she learned at the high school where she realised that now she has more capacities than before, this is well summarised in his words: I was in high school and doing better every year, as activities like hemstitching and writing with straight pen were left behind, and social studies became history and could learn Latin.<sup>26</sup>

Emergent culture is demonstrated in "*Pride*" short story through some events happened in the society. The narrator says that the new building is something new in the town, and that no one has built a building with an elevator before, so it is something seen for the first time, as he says, "as a matter of fact, they never got a chance to, because the buyer proceeded to pull it down and put an apartment building, four stories high, with an elevator, and turned the grounds into a parking lot. The first genuine building of this sort the town had ever seen".<sup>27</sup>

In "*Gravel*" short story, people have many activities to do in the town. Theater is something new for them, there some people who are in favor with and others who have fear. The narrator says, "In town there was a professional summer theater, a new thing at the time, which some people were enthusiastic about and others worried about, fearing that it would bring in riffraff. My mother and father had been among those in favor, my mother more actively so, because she had more time".<sup>28</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Longhurst B, *Raymond Williams and Local Culture: Environment and Planning A* (Salford, England: University of Salford, 1991)

<sup>2</sup> John Elridge and Lizzie Elridge *Raymond Williams Making Connections: Culture and Society* ( London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 46

<sup>3</sup>Munro Alice, *Dear Life: Pride*, 75

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 76

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 78

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, 77

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 75

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 79

<sup>9</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: The Eye*, 142

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, 140

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 141

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, 144

<sup>13</sup>Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: The Analysis of Culture*, 78

<sup>14</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: The Eye*, 140

<sup>15</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1977). 122

<sup>16</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Dear Life*, 163

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, 172

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 172

<sup>19</sup> <http://org703.wordpress.com/202/understanding-Raymond-Williams-Emergent/>.

<sup>20</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Dear Life*, 171

<sup>21</sup> <http://org703.wordpress.com/202/understanding-Raymond-Williams-Emergent/>.

<sup>22</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Gravel*, 60

<sup>23</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1977). 123

<sup>24</sup> *Dear Life: Dear Life*, 163

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 167

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 167

<sup>27</sup> *Pride*, 97

<sup>28</sup> Munro, *Dear Life: Gravel*, 53

### **Chapter Three: The Servant, the Rebel, the Subject and the Exile.**

Alice Munro in her almost works focuses on the study of characters; *Dear Life* Collection is a vivid example of that. In this collection and throughout her stories, we notice her main interest in the life of the characters and seems caring about their feelings and some of their sensory details as well, she attempts to discuss and narrates their way of life, sometimes their life in the country particularly in the old Canadian farms and some others in small towns that defy urban reality. Yet she is interested in conveying the narrators' different experiences at school or at home that were the most central places where the characters lived with their families from childhood up to teens. This is what Brad Hooper explains when he says:

From the beginning, Munro's stories primarily were character studies, the chief way of describing them. From the start, she strove to arrive at the best way to capture and delineate the essence of character. The result is the "going after something different"...; Munro manipulated the form's traditional structure to accomplish an intense study of character.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Munro's autobiographical stories which represent the everyday life events of the Canadian ordinary people during the war era, when they were striking against some values that the society imposes over them while some accepted that or just must accept and obey because they have no choice. That is what Williams discussed in his work, where he analyzed the relationship of the individual and his society in terms of culture which embodies some kinds of conventions and institutions that rule that society. But this fact led to create tensions between the individual and his society, as it is well explained by Williams in his words as follows:

Culture is our name for this process and its results, and then within this process we discover problems that have been the subject of traditional debate and that we may look at again in this new way. Among such problems, that of the relationship between an individual and his society is evident and crucial.<sup>2</sup>

Besides, the individual cannot be separated from his society, indeed he is in interaction with his society and this is what made Williams separate two models of individual's attitudes towards his society that of 'Conformity' which means that individual who is responsible and abides to the laws set by society, for the 'Nonconformity' he is pointing to that individual who either seeks for freedom or calls for change by opposing the laws of his society. As a result he distinguishes different types of individuals in the society and classifies them in terms of their ways of thinking which makes them behave and act in different ways in the society in which they live. As well he named the subject, the servant, the rebel and the exile which will be our discussion in this chapter.

### **1. The Servant**

The servant is one of the individuals that Raymond Williams identified in his theory *Individuals and Society*. This type is described as that one that is in some ways or said to be free to identify himself in the society in which he lives conditionally by including his place in that society. He is sometimes considered as a member since he is serving his society and has an important place in it, in view of the fact that it is the only way to survive, as Williams writes:

The servant, in the other hand, may come to identify himself with the way of life that is determining him; he may even, consciously, think of himself as a member (indeed the old sense of 'member' allows this, for if the individual is an organ of the organism that is society, particular individuals will be higher or lower organs yet still feel themselves as true parts).<sup>3</sup>

In *the "Eye"* short story Sadie represents the servant and she is indeed a servant who occupies of the house works like cooking and laundry, while the narrator's mother takes care of her small children. Sadie though her role was limited to serve that family, she is trying to live and act like the other people or individuals do, since she was going to the dancing hall every weekend without being accompanied by anyone, dances by herself and pays for herself. This reflects that the servant Sadie is trying to free herself and working hard to show off that

she is independent and able to do what she wants, while in fact it is not so, since in the dancing hall some people laugh at her as she is acting alike. The fact that Sadie is explaining why she is in the Royal-T hall and that she is paying by herself there, shows that she is in fact not free so she is just obeying in order to enjoy herself, this is what Williams defines as the servant as he claims:

In the case of the servant, the pressure is less severe, though still, to him, irresistible. The subject has no choice; the servant is given the illusion of choice, and is invited to identify himself with the way of life in which his place is defined. It is an illusion of choice, because again, like the subject, he has no obvious way of maintaining his life if he refuses. Yet the illusion is important, for it allows him to pretend to identification with the society, as if the choice had been real.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, the character of Sadie depicts the servant that Williams defined above, and who is clearly appearing in the story as the narrator says:

She always liked to pay her own dime, not to be beholden. But sometimes a fellow got to her first. He asked if she wanted to dance and the first thing she said was, Can you? Can you dance? She asked him bluntly. Then he would look at her funny and say yes, meaning why else would he be here? And it would turn out usually that what he meant by dance was shuffling around on two feet with his sweaty big meats of hands grabbing at her. Sometimes she just broke off and left him stranded, danced by herself—which was what she liked to do anyway. She finished up the dance that had been paid for, and if the money-taker objected and tried to make her pay for two when it was only one, she told him that was enough out of him. They could all laugh at her dancing by herself if they liked.<sup>5</sup>

And when she adds: “Sometimes she had to read them the riot act and tell them what she would do to them if they didn’t quit it. She let them know she’d come there to dance and paid her own way to do it”.<sup>6</sup>

## **2. The Rebel**

For Raymond Williams the Rebel is that character who is strongly attached to his society in a positive way, but has a different way from that of his society. He is rebelling against some social forms; instead he is trying to establish his personal way of life. His intention and desire to change the society in which he lives made him face problems since society for him is a tyranny for which he fights is a better one. That is what Williams defines as:

The idea of the rebel still carries a strong positive valuation, though in fact rebels are few. The rebel resembles the member in that he has made a strong personal commitment to certain social purposes, a positive identification of his personal existence with a particular pattern of social effort. The ways of his society are not his ways, but in rebelling against one social form he is seeking to establish another.<sup>7</sup>

“*Gravel*” is a short story which analyses the life and experiences of characters in their society, where some of those characters do not accept that way of life which the society imposed, that pushed them to look for changing and rebelling against it. In the story the narrator’s mother is the character who represents the rebel; she lived beside the gravel pit with her husband and two daughters. At the beginning she was not happy in her life; this is shown when she says: “My mother was the one who insisted on calling attention to it. “We live by the old gravel pit out the service-station road,” she’d tell people, and laugh, because she was so happy to have shed everything connected with the house, the street—the husband—with the life she’d had before.”<sup>8</sup>

After leaving her old house in the country and moving to the town, she decided to change her life including her look and profession there she joined the theatre and became an usher as it is mentioned in the story:

My mother had got busy with various fund-raising schemes for the theater and donated her services as an usher. She was good-looking and young enough to be mistaken for an actress. She’d begun to dress like an actress too, in shawls and long skirts and dangling necklaces. She’d let her hair go wild and stopped wearing makeup.<sup>9</sup>

That was the starting point to change her life and leave her husband to live with Neal though her husband refused that, here appears the character of rebel as it is defined by Williams to be: “The rebel fights the way of life of his society because to him personally it is wrong, but in art, morality and religion, as more obviously in politics, the new reality he proposes is more than personal; he is offering it as a new way of life.”<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, the narrator's mother left her husband and went to live with Neal she. She chooses to live her life as she wanted to be and to liberate herself from the old life, as the narrator claims:

My mother packed up our things and took us to live with Neal in the trailer he had found, out in the country. She said afterwards that she had wept too. But she said also that she had felt alive. Maybe for the first time in her life, truly alive. She felt as if she had been given a chance; she had started her life all over again. She'd walked out on her silver and her china and her decorating scheme and her flower garden and even on the books in her bookcase. She would live now, not read. She'd left her clothes hanging in the closet and her high heeled shoes in their shoe trees. Her diamond ring and her wedding ring on the dresser.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. The subject

The subject is the individual who must accept his situation in society. He has to obey the laws in order to live an ordinary life, because it is the only way to survive and to protect himself, he has no choice since the authorities did not give him the right to do. Williams in his theory affirms:

The subject, at whatever violence to himself, has to accept the way of life of his society, and his own indicated place in it, because there is no other way in which he can maintain himself at all; only by this kind of obedience can he eat, sleep, shelter, or escape being destroyed by the others. It is not his way of life, in any sense that matters, but he must conform to it to survive.<sup>12</sup>

The narrator is the character who represents the subject in the story of "*Pride*". He is a man with a harelip who finished the high school and has a job. But a job that did not need much talking, he says, "My impediment, even with the lip stitched up, ruled out anything that involved a lot of talking"<sup>13</sup>. This means he is not in a case which permits him to choose the job he wants to do, so he limited in doing things concerning his life.

He must stick on it; otherwise, he will be rejected.

Moreover, he is given an exemption for the military service, just because he has a malformation and he must obey and execute the order, "Was it that I was so used to being exempted from one thing or another that I took it, like a lot of other things, completely for granted?"<sup>14</sup>. This quotation shows that the narrator is always doing things even that it is not

what he wants to do. He also says, “And here my memory grows shaky, because I graduated from high school, and I had to think about earning a living if that was possible”<sup>15</sup>. The fact that he has finished his studies, he must find a job by which he earns his life, which means that he accepts his situation in the society as it is. Indeed, the narrator is living his life and accepts his situation in the society. Williams in his theory states:

It is an illusion of choice, because again, like the subject, he has no obvious way of maintaining his life if he refuses. Yet the illusion is important, for it allows him to pretend to identification with the society, as if the choice had been real. The subject will have few illusions about the relationship which is determining him; he will know that the way of life is not his but must be obeyed.<sup>16</sup>

Oneida is another character who represents the subject in pride. She is an individual who passed through many experiences in her life. As an individual in the society, Oneida lives her life like all the wealthy people, she has a bright look and studied in a private school, she is pure inside her and never seen unhappy for something happened for her, like when she was driving her father to job everyday for a long distance. So Oneida was living her life without complaining, as it is described by the narrator, “I don’t see Oneida looking downtrodden or unhappy at the arrangement”<sup>17</sup> she also says:

She had something different. When she went into a store or even walked on the street, there seemed to be a little space cleared around her, made ready for whatever she might want or greetings she might spread. She seemed then a bit flustered but gracious, ready to laugh a little at herself or the situation. Of course she had her good bones and bright looks, all that fair dazzle of skin and hair.<sup>18</sup>

After losing all money and after the death of her father, Oneida sells their big house for a man who was a liar and that she was shocked by this fact and asks if she can do something about this thing, but nothing, instead of crying or doing something she was laughing, ““I wouldn’t have done it,” she said, “and I’m only good enough to go at Christmas.” Then she shook her head and burst out laughing. “Such a fool,” she said. “I should have listened to you, shouldn’t I?”<sup>19</sup>

This quotation shows that Oneida as an individual in the society is not rebelling or doing problems and this affirms that she accepts everything happened with her and continues to live her life as all citizens, having a job and rent an apartment. The narrator says, “she had let go of her bad feelings for the owner and was full of praise for the view and the laundry room in the basement where she paid in coin every time she did her washing. “I’m learning to be economical,” she said. “Instead of just throwing something in when I feel like it.”<sup>20</sup>

#### **4. Exile**

Williams defines the exile as that individual that rejects the way of life of his society, since his own values and attitudes are different from those of his society. So he chooses to go away rather than fighting and moves to another society in which he can live his personal way of life. In other words Williams states:

The exile is as absolute as the rebel in rejecting the way of life of his society but instead of fighting it he goes away. Often he is like the subject in that unless he conforms he will be destroyed or will be unable to maintain his life. But he is unlike the subject in that he has managed to escape, or has been allowed to get away. In some cases, indeed, he will get away to membership of another society, in which he finds his personal reality, his vital system of values and attitudes, confirmed. More usually, perhaps, he will remain an exile, unable to go back to the society that he has rejected or that has rejected him, yet equally unable to form important relationships with the society to which he has gone. This is a tragic and characteristic condition which has been reached again and again in our century.<sup>21</sup>

Neal in “*Gravel*” is the man who lives with the narrator’s family her mother and her sister, he is said to be not really an actor, but he sees himself so since he had got the experiment when he was in college where he performed as a part of the Chorus in *Oedipus Rex*. But in fact he got that job by chance in his way to Toronto. Neal at the beginning he was living with the narrator’s family since her mother was pregnant with his child whose name is Brent, so he was not much caring about the two girls the narrator and Caro he was living with them just for the coming baby boy who is his son. The narrator as a young girl noticed that Neal stays with her mother in their room and did not spend time with her and her sister Caro; that is what she mentioned when she says:”That was the first time that I saw him acting like a father.”<sup>22</sup>

Besides, with the death of Caro many things have been changed in the narrator's family. Neal left them for a reason that he does not believe in funerals so he did not attend Caro's funeral and did not try to get any news about them and his boy especially at the time when the narrator's mother was in the hospital to give birth of his child Brent. From this point Neal represents the Exile as he left his family and managed to escape and goes away from his family, this is well clarified when the narrator says:

Neal didn't believe in funerals, so he didn't attend Caro's. He never saw Brent. He wrote a letter—I found this out much later—saying that since he did not intend to act as a father it would be better for him to bow out at the start. I never mentioned him to Brent, because I thought it would upset my mother.<sup>23</sup>

By the time going, Neal wrote an e-mail in which he congratulates the narrator for being graduated from Alumni Gazette as he saw her picture there. Neal decided to write to the narrator after a long time of absence and just after things changed in that family. This reflects the state of the exile that is known as that individual who waits for changing that will happen in the society from which he escaped, as Williams mentioned: "The true exile, on the other hand, is committed to waiting: when his society changes, then he can come home, but the actual process of change is one in which he is not involved."<sup>24</sup>

In "*Dear Life*" short story, the narrator's mother depicts the exile individual who left her mother after she got married and moved to Vancouver and raised a small family, she did not come to visit her mother when she was sick and when she was in death bed, she even did not come to her funeral and see her when she died, because she could not save on the travel costs and had no one to leave her two children with, that is what the narrator tells:

I did not go home for my mother's last illness or for her funeral. I had two small children and nobody in Vancouver to leave them with. We could barely have afforded the trip, and my husband had contempt for formal behavior, but why blames it on him? I felt the same. We say of some things that they can't be è forgiven, or that we will never forgive ourselves. But we do—we do it all the time.<sup>25</sup>

The quote above clarifies that the narrator did not come to see her mother for financial and familial reasons that she could overcome, but her husband too was an impediment for her, and then regrets for not being able to see her mother.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Hooper Brad, *The fiction of Alice Munro: An appreciation* (Connecticut, United States: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008), 7

<sup>2</sup>Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution: The Analysis of Culture* (Harmondsworth Middlesex, England Penguin Books Ltd, 1961), 90

<sup>3</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution: Individual and Societies* (Harmondsworth Middlesex, England Penguin Books Ltd, 1961), 105

<sup>4</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 105

<sup>5</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: The Eye*, 142

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, 142

<sup>7</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 106

<sup>8</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Gravel*, 53

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, 54

<sup>10</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 107

<sup>11</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Gravel*, 54

<sup>12</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 105

<sup>13</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Pride*, 76

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, 77

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, 76

<sup>16</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 105

<sup>17</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Pride*, 77

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 77

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 79

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 79

<sup>21</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 55

<sup>22</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Pride*, 55

<sup>23</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Gravel*, 60

<sup>24</sup>Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 108

<sup>25</sup>Munro, *Dear Life: Dear Life*, 173

## General Conclusion

To sum up, throughout this research paper, we have examined one of Alice Munro's important works, *Dear Life* Collection of short stories. Relying on Raymond Williams's theories of culture, *the Long Revolution* (1961) and *Marxism and Literature* (1977). We have explored the issues of culture providing with the concept of: the Selective Tradition, Structure of Feeling, Social Class, the Emergent and the Residual culture, and the classification of individuals within their society like: the Servant, the Rebel, the Subject and the Exile.

Therefore, dealing with the first chapter, we have focused on the cultural concepts and their influence. The culture of the Selective Tradition, that culture deals with the dominant institutions of the society like school and church, it is mentioned in "*Dear Life*" and "*The Eye*" short stories. These two institutions have been of great importance in the society at that time. Then we explained how the structure of feeling reveals the feelings through different experiences and the way of life of the individuals in society.

Concerning the second chapter we have discussed the concept of social class; we have dealt with the different classes in society. "*Pride*" short story shows the shift from the upper class to the lower class due to the fact that they lost their wealth; the difference between people who lived in the city who were considered as the upper class, while those who lived in the country represent the lower class as it is discussed in "*The Eye*" short story. In term of cultural materialism, we examined the Residual and the Emergent cultures, the Residual which refers to old values and meanings and to some locations like the old house and the old school in "*Dear Life*" and the theatre of the country in "*Gravel*", while the Emergent culture represents the new aspects of culture including new way of life in the city like new relationships and new buildings that they have never already seen, as shown in "*Pride*".

Moreover, in the third chapter we have dealt with the classification of individuals according to their relationship and interaction within the society in which they live, where we

discussed four types of individuals as: the Servant, the Rebel, the Subject and the Exile. We have presented the Servant in “*The Eye*” short story as that member who is free to identify himself in the society in which he lives only by including his place in that society and that is the case of Sadie in the story. The Rebel who is against some social forms and tries to establish his own ones and that is clearly presented in “*Gravel*” short story by the narrator’s mother and Neal. For the Subject who must obey the laws of the society in order to survive otherwise he will be rejected as the state of the narrator in “*Pride*” short story. Finally we discussed the case of the Exile who refuses the way of life of his society as a result he chooses to move to another society in which he can live his way of life and this is illustrated in “*Dear Life*” and “*Pride*” short stories.

To conclude, in the present dissertation we have tried to discuss the different cultural concepts of Raymond Williams and analysed the struggle that exist between individuals and their society through Alice Munro’s last work *Dear Life Collection*(2012) of short stories, which tackles the Canadian society and its culture.

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