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**Remember My Party: Despair in the Works of Virginia Woolf and
Katherine Mansfield**

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Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, PhD.

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Zásady pro vypracování:

The aim of the thesis is to introduce and compare the two remarkable female authors and their works. It will be focused on comparing Woolf's notable novel 'Mrs Dalloway' with short stories of Mansfield – 'The Garden Party', 'Bliss', 'Mr Reginald Peacock's Day'. The first, theoretical part is the introduction of the authors, especially focused on their relationship, along with some information about the Bloomsbury group. The practical part will be focused on comparing and analysing their works and finding their similar theme. The theme which is connected in all of the stories and which will be further analysed is the party as a mask for despair, loneliness and dark desires of the protagonists. The theme of homosexuality, suicide and death will also be focused on as an interlink between the writers' work and even their personal lives.

Seznam doporučené literatury:

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma ‘Remember My Party: Despair in the Works of Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield’ vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

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Introduction

When we talk about modernist authors, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf surely stood out from the rest by their unconventionality. This thesis will be focused on their relationship and the Bloomsbury group which in certain way both tied and divided the writers, and unexpected findings about their personal lives which affected the development of the characters in their works.

The two remarkable authors are not only tied through their friendship but also through the themes and symbols. The task of this thesis is not to find all of them but to analyse the ones which have not been analysed enough – my primary concern will be on the theme of despair. The thesis will be centred around the symbol of a party serving as a mask for concealing the despair. These will be analysed in Woolf's '*Mrs Dalloway*' and Mansfield's '*Bliss*', '*The Garden Party*' and '*Mr Reginald Peacock's Day*' through the narratological approach. I will additionally explore secondary themes, death and damaged relationships, and explain how they affect the protagonists in the authors' selected novels and stories. I will explain what is the central theme which ties all of the ones mentioned above and how.

1. The Relationship between Woolf and Mansfield

The names of the two remarkable writers are not only connected by the common themes in their works. Their paths crossed in January 1917 during their early twenties and their friendship remained until Mansfield's death in 1923. Although each of them was of a different nature, they shared similar family background. Both of them grew up in well-situated families and dealt with loss of loved ones at young age – Woolf's parents, brother and sister died in a ten year-span, Mansfield's brother died in 1915 as a soldier. Both of the writers were married to editors, were childless, both shared similar views on life and women's role in society. According to Claire Tomalin in her work '*Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*', their friendship can be best described as relatively one-sided.¹ It was Woolf who sent Mansfield cigarettes, flowers, invitations to meals, etc. It was partly because of Mansfield's nature – she was unpredictable sometimes. It was certainly not the case that Mansfield would not feel as sympathetic for Woolf as she did. Woolf was mostly the one who initiated more in the relationship. Mansfield wrote kind words to Woolf: 'My God I love to think of you, Virginia, as my friend. /.../ But pray consider how rare it is to find someone with the same passion for writing that you have.'²

At their very first encounter, Woolf did not seem to be fond of Katherine at all; she wrote in her diary about Mansfield, describing her in an extremely unpleasant way: 'We could not wish that the first impression of K.M. was that she stinks like a – well civet cat that had taken to street walking... We /.../ both 'to mock Katherine Mansfield as a stray, foreign, smelly cat given to promiscuity.'³ Later on, she continued in her impression of Mansfield as 'one of the cat kind – alien, composed, always solitary & observant /.../ someone apart, entirely self-centred, feline, alien, inscrutable.'⁴ Mansfield, as previously mentioned, was unpredictable, mysterious; a complex and perhaps also complicated person – to which she admitted herself. She claimed to have 'hundreds of selves' when she 'felt like nobody.'⁵ Woolf's interest

¹ Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 102.

² O'Sullivan, Vincent & Margaret Scott, eds, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, vol. I*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 68.

³ Christine Froula, Gerri Kimber, Todd Martin, and Aimee Gasston, eds, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 15.

⁴ Anne Olivier Bell (ed.), *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, vol. I*. (London: Penguin, 1979), 58.

⁵ Brigid Brophy, *Katherine Mansfield's Self-Depiction* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1966), 3.

in Mansfield grew. She wrote to her sister Vanessa Bell: ‘- she (Mansfield) seems to have gone every sort of hog since she was 17 /.../ she has a much better idea of writing than most. She’s an odd character.’ This time it was determination to get to know Mansfield which attracted Woolf.

Woolf began to mention Mansfield in her letters and journals and the two women started corresponding. Unfortunately, not many of Woolf’s letters to Mansfield appear to have survived.⁶ At least Woolf’s references to Mansfield have remained in her journals and correspondence to her family and friends. Unlike Woolf’s very first note about Mansfield, she mostly wrote flattering words about her afterwards: ‘I find with Katherine what I don’t find with the other clever women. We have been intimate, intense perhaps rather than open; but to me at any rate our intercourse has been always interesting /.../ as well as curious.’⁷ It was a curiosity and perhaps even affection which tied the two. While both of the women shared similar views and values, Mansfield lived a much more unorthodox lifestyle, with many unexpected actions, unlike Woolf’s. It was among other factors which prevented them from having a stable friendship. The friendship was a mixture of both attraction and repulsion, experienced intensively by both of the women.

The imperial prejudices and culture were one of the reasons behind the writers’ disagreements, as Todd Martin in his work ‘*Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*’ argues; Woolf was of a privileged family background - her father was an undersecretary in Colonial Office, shaping imperial policy.⁸ According to Sarah Ailwood in her work ‘*Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf and Tensions of Empire during the Modernist Period*’, expatriate Mansfield ‘was viewed as an inferior colonial based on the fact she was from New Zealand and poorer than her contemporaries.’⁹ Ailwood adds that Woolf’s views did not differ much – she viewed Mansfield as ‘potentially taboo’, while Mansfield’s prejudices against Woolf tended

⁶ Virginia Woolf, Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann, eds, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume II., 1912-1922* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 44.

⁷ Bell, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, vol. 1.*, 180.

⁸ Todd Martin, *Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 68.

⁹ Sarah Ailwood, *Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf and Tensions of Empire during the Modernist Period*, (University of Wollongong: Kunapipi, 2005.) Accessed December 12, 2019, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol27/iss2/30>, 257.

to be based on class.¹⁰ In the '*Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*' volume, Richard Cappucio and Christine Darrohn argue that Mansfield insinuated about the class issues and prejudices in the relationship with Woolf in her short story '*A Cup of Tea*' – with privileged Rosemary reflecting Woolf and lower class Miss Smith being in the position of Mansfield.¹¹

Despite the fact that the two women could only see each other's dissimilarities sometimes – there was a feeling of sameness in certain cases: Woolf wrote that 'she heard Mansfield expressing her feelings as she never heard them expressed' and about 'coming together to an oddly complete understanding'¹² or 'a queer sense of being like.'¹³

Unfortunately, the relationship lapsed towards the end of Mansfield life. Mansfield's very last letter to Woolf was emotional, as if she wanted to express her gratitude to Woolf for one last time: 'I wonder if you know what your visits were to me – or how much I miss them,' ending her letter with 'Farewell, dear friend (May I call you that)'¹⁴ as if she was unsure of the definition of their relationship, or her position in it. The truth is that uncertainty, to a certain degree, prevailed throughout their relationship. Mansfield fought the battle with tuberculosis and did not want to see any people – she stopped responding to Woolf's letters, neither she sent her diary to Woolf as she promised. All Woolf heard of her was that her health supposedly got better. Woolf wrote into her diary that she felt 'blank' without her.¹⁵ After Mansfield's death, Woolf, utterly shocked and struck, wrote about her: '...it seemed to me there was no point in writing. Katherine won't read it. /.../ She would promise never never to forget. That was what we said at the end of our last talk. /.../ Probably we had something in common which I shall never find in anyone else...'¹⁶ Even though Woolf told her romantic interest, Vita Sackville-West that her and Katherine 'never coalesced,'¹⁷ Mansfield, in Woolf's words, somehow 'haunted' her for a long

¹⁰ Ailwood, *Tensions of Empire*, 258.

¹¹ Martin, *Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, 11.

¹² Martin, *Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, 18-20.

¹³ Virginia Woolf, Anne Olivier Bell, eds, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, vol. II.*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 77.

¹⁴ Martin, *Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, 19.

¹⁵ Froula, Kimber, Martin, and Gasston, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*, 19.

¹⁶ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, 203.

¹⁷ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, 204.

time, as she predicted. She ‘pictured Mansfield as a ghost’¹⁸ and kept recalling her for almost the rest of her life. Woolf wrote that ‘one’s relation with the person seems to be continued after death in dreams, and with some odd reality, too.’¹⁹ Her last mention of Mansfield in her diary was in 1941, two months before Woolf’s death.²⁰

1.1. The Bloomsbury Group

The Bloomsbury Group was a group of writers, artists and philosophers which was founded around 1905. The group meetings ceased at about 1930. Most of the group members were associated with King’s College London and the University of Cambridge. Woolf, her brothers Thoby and Adrian, and her sister Vanessa were the first initiators of the group meetings. While Woolf was a member of the group, Mansfield was not. She still remained very close to the group although her perception and feelings about the group differed. Mansfield was introduced to the group through her husband, John Middleton Murry, who was invited by D. H. Lawrence to Garsington (a manor, home of Lady Ottoline Morell and a place of many of the Bloomsbury group gatherings), where he and his wife ‘ran into the likes” of Woolf, her brothers and sister, and other members of the group.²¹

Mansfield, however, had an uneasy position in the group – she was an ‘outsider’, as Lady Ottoline Morell wrote in her journal, adding that ‘she was unsure of her position, partly because of being a New Zealander /.../ and constantly playing different parts’²² Mansfield wrote an enraged note in her journal, confirming her aversion: ‘To Hell with the Blooms Berries. Don’t you think one really must run away as soon as possible and as far as possible.’²³ She knew she was a subject of gossip and potential grudge and loathed the fact that the group distracted her from writing. Morell did feel like an outsider in the group, too; the women grew close to each other and developed a friendship through Bloomsbury. Besides Morell and Woolf, Mansfield eventually became friends with other people loosely tied with the group – for example Aldous Huxley, who had the same position as Mansfield – he was not a member, but he kept seeing the people from the group frequently.

¹⁸ Woolf, *The Diary*, vol. II., 317.

¹⁹ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, 204.

²⁰ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, 205.

²¹ Martin, *Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, 6.

²² Martin, *Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, 7.

²³ O’Sullivan & Scott, *Letters of Mansfield*, vol. I., 325.

Mansfield also became friends with Bertrand Russell and was even rumoured to have an affair with him. Mansfield was worried of the rumours staining her relationship with Woolf, so she defended herself to in a letter, hinting that she was not unfaithful to her husband: ‘- don’t let THEM ever persuade you that I spend any of my precious time swapping hats of committing adultery,’ adding ironically, aware of the unpleasant denotations given to her: ‘- I’m far too arrogant & proud.’²⁴

Unfortunately, the ambivalence of Mansfield’s feelings toward the group caused a divide (to a certain degree) between her and Woolf. Despite this, Mansfield never grew to dislike Woolf based solely on being part of the Bloomsbury, which she began to loathe. She wrote in her diary: ‘...she is the only one of them that I shall ever see.’²⁵ Unlike Mansfield, Woolf was much closer to the group and it provided a sort of relief and break from the conventions. By the year 1918, both Mansfield and her husband detached from the group – even her relationship with Morell was becoming different – not what it used to be before.

1.2. Their works and styles

When it came to their professional lives, they were rivals to a certain degree and their personal feelings sometimes were not set aside. It is important to say that just like their feelings toward each other constantly changed, so did their professional relationship. In Mansfield’s very last letter to Woolf, she said: ‘You are the only woman with whom I long to talk *work*. There will never be another.’²⁶ Woolf ‘confirmed’ their rivalry after Mansfield’s death when she wrote into her journal: ‘Katherine’s my rival no longer. /.../ I was jealous of her writing – the only writing I have ever been jealous of.’²⁷

Mansfield openly criticized some of Woolf’s works, for example ‘*Night and Day*’: ‘Talk about intellectual snobbery — her book reeks of it.’²⁸ It was not the case she did not like Woolf’s thoughts, but Woolf’s form of expression in this case, along with the social positions of both of the writers. Mansfield adds: ‘I feel I must stand

²⁴ O’Sullivan & Scott, *Letters of Mansfield*, vol. I., 327.

²⁵ Katherine Mansfield, Vincent O’Sullivan, eds, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, vol. III., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 55.

²⁶ Virginia Woolf, Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann, eds, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume IV, 1929-1931*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), 94.

²⁷ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, 203.

²⁸ O’Sullivan & Scott, *Letters of Mansfield*, vol. III., 91.

up for my SEX. V.W. does it very well. /.../ But she does it very well in her intellectual snobbish way.’²⁹ On the other hand, Mansfield strongly appreciated Woolf’s ‘*The Mark on the Wall*’ and ‘*Flower Bed*’, writing to Woolf admiring her skills. Woolf admired Mansfield’s ‘*The Aloe*’ (later evolving into ‘*Prelude*’)³⁰ and commented about her ‘terribly sensitive mind’ in her review of Mansfield’s ‘*Journal*.’³¹ She commented on how ‘non-fragmentary’ Mansfield’s observations are, saying that everything ‘belongs together as writing.’ What Woolf criticised about Mansfield’s work was its ‘littleness’ when it came to her characters – she thought Mansfield’s characters were described in a shallow way, believing Mansfield could have ‘gone deeper’ and that her empathy with the characters was ‘superficial,’ as quoted in Nena Skrbic’s work ‘*Wild Outbursts of Freedom: Reading Virginia Woolf’s Short Fiction*.’³² Nonetheless, Woolf later admitted in her diary, that ‘prejudice might be at work’ when she was reading Mansfield.³³

Derek Ryan and Stephen Ross in their work ‘*The Handbook to the Bloomsbury Group*’ describe their professional relationship as ‘competitive literary friendship.’³⁴ Nonetheless, it became apparent that their rivalry did not seem to be defined in terms of competition, but in terms of being jealous of each other’s work. It did not leave any remarkable stain on their personal relationship; in fact, what it resulted to was that the writers’ mutual admiration. They sent each other some of their work in progress³⁵ to give each other feedback - critical, without pretence. They frequently talked about their work, and Mansfield even wrote that she ‘envied Woolf’: ‘There is always in her writing a calm freedom of expression as though she were at peace...’³⁶ Woolf was rather jealous of Mansfield’s writing (‘I said Damn,

²⁹ O’Sullivan & Scott, *Letters of Mansfield*, vol. III., 122.

³⁰ Froula, Kimber, Martin, and Gasston, eds., *Mansfield and Woolf*, 57.

³¹ Froula, Kimber, Martin, and Gasston, eds., *Mansfield and Woolf*, 30.

³² Nena Skrbic, *Wild Outbursts of Freedom: Reading Virginia Woolf’s Short Fiction* (Westport: Praeger, 2004).

³³ Virginia Woolf, Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann, eds, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume III, 1923-1928* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 102.

³⁴ Derek Ryan and Stephen Ross, *The Handbook to the Bloomsbury Group* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 44.

³⁵ Froula, Kimber Martin, and Gasston, eds, *Mansfield and Woolf*, 58.

³⁶ O’Sullivan & Scott, *Letters of Mansfield*, vol. I., 127-128.

Katherine! Why can't I be the only woman who knows how to write?')³⁷ while Mansfield was mostly proud of Woolf's work.

The writing style of the two differed and coalesced in certain spheres. Mansfield's writing, similar to her personality, was immediate, fluid. She spoke of her writing rather as a 'job' rather than a task.³⁸ As previously mentioned, Mansfield preferred a distinct approach to her characters, unlike Woolf, who was more interested in human psychology. Woolf preferred highly poetic language, but also the 'fluidity', hence her use of stream of consciousness. Their approach to short stories was akin in its essence – both of them intended to capture some instant, unexpected event or revelation.

The themes in their works connected the two – both were concerned with themes of family life, gender, relationship between men and women, nationality. As mentioned previously, the writers dealt with a loss of loved ones at young age, and both of them decided to depict the emotions one feels during the tragedy in their fiction: Woolf wrote about losing a family in *To The Lighthouse*, while Mansfield illustrated an elegy for a lost brother in *Jacob's Room*.³⁹ It was mostly the past which, for them, was a source of both nostalgia and tragedy; whether it was childhood (Mansfield's *The Doll House*, *The Garden Party*, and many more) or death. Mansfield was inspired to write *The Garden Party* 14 years later after an incident which shocked her; it was when she found out about a death of a young workman, just at the time her family was giving a party.⁴⁰ With no doubt, their personal struggles projected onto their works. On top of that, Mansfield's (as an expatriate - a New Zealander living in England) was pervaded by the constant search for an identity – a national identity. Woolf's struggles included a battle with mental illness and dealing with traumatic childhood experiences, including sexual and emotional abuse.

What affected all of the writers at the time, and Mansfield and Woolf were no exception, was war. The disillusionment and search for a new ideals, once the

³⁷ Virginia Woolf, by Joanne Trautmann, eds, *Congenial Spirits: The Collected Letters of Virginia Woolf* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 100.

³⁸ Froula, Kimber, Martin and Gasston, eds, *Mansfield and Woolf*, 31.

³⁹ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, 201.

⁴⁰ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, 32.

previous beliefs were lost or shaken after the war, led both Mansfield and Woolf to agree with each other that there was a need for change in art; yet, what they found was a ‘retrenchment of a patriarchal imperialist tradition.’⁴¹ Mansfield wrote: ‘The novel can’t just leave the war out. /.../ I’d say we have died and lived again. How can that be the same life?’⁴² Especially Mansfield believed the post-war situation could lead to something similar to enlightenment: ‘the common things are...intensified, illumined. Now we know ourselves for what we are. /.../ We face death. But through *Life*.’⁴³ The theme of war or post-war effects is not as common in Mansfield’s works (unlike Woolf’s), but it is necessary to note that there is a large scale of post-war effects on people’s psyche – ranging from loneliness, blurred or idealised view of past, unexpected change of lifestyle, mostly frivolous lifestyle, mental illnesses and many others.

1.3. Feminist views reflected in their works

Both of the writers were among the early supporters of feminism and suffrage movements, which reflected in their works - especially Woolf’s. She joined a moderate wing of the suffragette movement called ‘Adult Suffrage’ and reflected her views in her work. Her essay ‘*A Room of One’s Own*’ is a popular example of her feminist writing. In this essay she judged the different educational experiences available to men and women, condemning the male sex for destroying women’s independence, arguing that: ‘Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. /.../ ...and women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time.’⁴⁴ To demonstrate that women do not have the same possibilities, she gives an example of ‘Judith Shakespeare’ – Shakespeare’s fictional sister who is as talented as her brother. She claims that if such a woman like her existed, she ‘would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage’.⁴⁵ ‘*A Room of One’s Own*’ is not her only feminist work - in the novel ‘*Orlando*’ she explores the theme of a man waking in a woman’s body, realizing the obstacles which women must face but also realizing the gratitude of being a woman. In ‘*To the Lighthouse*’ she draws a link between two women, mother

⁴¹ Froula, Kimber, Martin, and Gasston, eds, *Mansfield and Woolf*, 104.

⁴² O’Sullivan & Scott, *Letters of Mansfield*, vol. III., 97.

⁴³ O’Sullivan & Scott, *Letters of Mansfield*, vol. III., 97.

⁴⁴ Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One’s Own* (Houghton: Mifflin Harcourt, 1989), 10.

⁴⁵ Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, 41.

and daughter – with the mother believing in and living by traditional Victorian lifestyle as a housewife and her daughter rejecting the conventional roles.

Mansfield's significant work in terms of feminist perspective is '*Mr. Reginald Peacock's Day*' It draws a social commentary about a self-centred man who feels obliged that his woman must always praise him and serve to him. He does not give her the same treatment in return but views her as an 'enemy' for the fact that she does not view him as an extraordinary artist. He gets pleasure from pursuing flirtatious relationships with his students and does not hide that he wishes to obtain an affair.

Despite the fact that the writers are generally considered to be early feminists, Mansfield tended to be sceptical of the suffragette movement sometimes; she was sceptical of the power of vote to improve political circumstances.⁴⁶ The writers struggled with succeeding in literature, at the time dominated by male writers. Both of them explored the issue of being a woman and a writer at the same time, the relationship between the two states, and if something such as 'feminine' style of writing exists. Mansfield opened up the problem of a woman writer needing to 'erase the female body'⁴⁷ – while Woolf had a very similar thought, saying that a woman writer must 'conceal her female origins.'⁴⁸ Patricia Moran in her work '*Word of Mouth*' explores the topic and states that the reason is that the distance between female writer's body and her work is being often radically diminished by the public.⁴⁹

The feminist views of the authors are significant for the analysis of their works because of the importance of mother-daughter relationship in the writers' works, which will be further explored in the following chapter. With the feminist perspective it is possible to analyse these relationships more effectively.

⁴⁶ Ryan and Ross, *The Handbook to the Bloomsbury Group*, 105.

⁴⁷ Susan H. Fox, *Woolf Studies Annual* 8 (2002): 215-22. Accessed January 23, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/24906484, 245.

⁴⁸ Fox, *Woolf Studies Annual* 8, 246.

⁴⁹ Patricia Moran, *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield & Virginia Woolf* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 22.

2. Themes of despair

In this chapter my primary focus will be put on one of the writers' major works: '*Mrs Dalloway*', '*The Garden Party*', and selected short stories from '*Bliss and Other Stories*.' We could possibly find endless symbols and themes which connect all of these masterpieces, but my main interest will be in those of despair and the consequences associated with it – such as damaged family relationships, mental problems and suicide caused by the horror of war and the pressure of society. The exploration of these themes is crucial for the following chapter 3 ('Party as a mask') because each of them are linked to the party and what leads to the characters' despair. How these problems relate will be now further explored and explained.

2.1. The Mother-daughter relationship and eating disorders

The importance of family relationships is undeniable. Damaged relationships can result into serious issues with human psyche or worsen the mental condition of already mentally ill people. Woolf's and Mansfield's works and even personal journals reveal many hints about not only damaged or questionable mother-daughter relationship but also signs of eating disorders. How these two problems are connected with each other is to be further explained in this section.

According to Moran, both Mansfield's and Woolf's work can be best characterized by its 'profound fear of the maternal body and maternal power'⁵⁰ Moran argues that both of the writers were affected by the over-attachment to their mothers and in their works large number of maternal metaphors emerged, which, hypothetically, could have been a possible link.⁵¹

Mansfield did not really have a good relationship with her mother, which is mirrored in her stories. Mansfield's mother, Annie Beauchamp, was furious with her daughter's lifestyle, and when she found out about her affairs (with both men and women) she sent her daughter into a spa, unaware of the fact that Mansfield was pregnant. Mansfield miscarried. Afterwards, her mother cut her out of her will. The mothers in Mansfield's short stories tend to be quite distant from their daughters, while fathers tend to be vigorous and quite obedient to their wives. On the other hand, the daughters, even though they are distant from mothers, cannot imagine to be

⁵⁰ Moran, *Word of Mouth*, 23.

⁵¹ Moran, *Word of Mouth*, 23-25.

able to leave their mothers, being over-attached to them, such as in *'In a German Pension.'* Young Mansfield always had a better relationship with her grandmother, just like her fictional character Kezia in *'Prelude.'* Mansfield felt like an outsider, especially for being chubby and unconventional, and her grandmother could have been the only 'rescue' in her family, which she hinted not only in *'Prelude'* but also in *'New Dresses.'* In *'The Garden Party'* she depicted the relationship of Laura and her mother whose influence Laura never escapes although she wants to. She was raised in a family, which lacks the sense of reality and Laura wishes she could go beyond her boundaries but is on the other hand satisfied with her comfortable life. At the beginning of the short story, Laura seems to imitate her mother, for example when she speaks to the workmen. Nevertheless, Laura proves to have a different mindset and views the workmen as nice, not looking down on them. She opposes her mother only once – and ends up agreeing with her mother in the end.

Besides reflecting mother-daughter relationships, as Moran in another of her works *'Unholy Meanings: Maternity, Creativity, and Orality in Katherine Mansfield'* points out, Mansfield's stories frequently included the fear of maternity and repulsion of female body.⁵² The rejection of anything female (such as large breasts, bottom, hips, stomach) is common for women with eating disorders, and such a case might have been of Mansfield. Moran refers to author Kim Chernin, who argues that 'the daughters of mothers, who were drained by maternity, experienced feeling a sense of guilt for their mothers' depletion. Not eating, as she says, is an act of atonement and separation.'⁵³ An obsession with self-rejection and eating prevails throughout most of Mansfield's work. Although she makes numeral references to food, her characters always have a small snack, tea, or so, they do not seem to experience pleasure in eating. As Diane McGee suggests in her work *'Writing the Meal: Dinner in the Fiction of Twentieth-Century Women Writers'*, meals (lunches, dinners) in her stories are never associated with the feeling of warmth, happiness, friendliness but are merely reduced to a biological level.⁵⁴ Meals tend to occur in the situations tied with loneliness and self-loathing. Sometimes, food or eating is

⁵² Patricia Moran, *'Unholy Meanings: Maternity, Creativity, and Orality in Katherine Mansfield,'* *Feminist Studies* vol. 17, no. 1. (1991), 106.

⁵³ Moran, *Unholy Meanings*, 107.

⁵⁴ Diane McGee, *Writing the Meal: Dinner in the Fiction of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 200.

perceived as disgusting, which she shares with Woolf. Mansfield's mother constantly criticised her for being fat and eating too much – adult Mansfield described in her diary her disgust with watching her friend Ida Baker eat: 'Ida eats too much. /.../ I hate fat people.'⁵⁵

Woolf also described very frequently other people eating in terms of disgust: she wrote in her diary complaining about many of the people, even her friends, 'munching' and viewed eating as degrading. She wrote in her diary that eating is 'the lowest pit of humanity /.../ Whether it is the act of eating and drinking that degrades, or whether people who lunch are naturally degraded /.../ one can hardly face one's own humanity afterwards.'⁵⁶ As described previously in chapter 1.3., she also inclined to reject the female body and everything maternal.

Woolf, similarly to Mansfield, found herself lacking the attention and love from her mother, Julia Stephen, at early age, who seemed to give more of her attention rather to Woolf's brothers, as Charlotte Savino points out in her work '*How Mothers Fail in Virginia Woolf's Fiction*.'⁵⁷ Her approach is nearly identical to Mansfield – while Mansfield's characters never blame their mothers and tend to be clingy to them, Woolf herself wrote in her memoir that she worshipped and idolised her mother, despite her lack of attention, portraying her first eleven years as blissful. The truth is that even lack of attention from a parent frequently does not lead to hatred for them but to wanting more attention from them and even idolising them, which was Woolf's case. Her mother's death left her in shambles, traumatized. When speaking of her mother, Woolf described her as 'distant and hollow'⁵⁸ The mothers in Woolf's works tend to fail with their role or exaggerate it. Most of them are absent, aggressive, intrusive, overly caring or incompetent, such as in '*Jacob's Room*.' In '*Mrs Dalloway*', Clarissa feels that she failed as a mother. Her relationship with Elizabeth is nearly non-existent, she realizes she is 'losing' her daughter. She despises Miss Kilman, believing she is trying to take her daughter away. Clarissa

⁵⁵ Katherine Mansfield, Vincent O'Sullivan, eds, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, vol. II*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 100.

⁵⁶ Woolf, *The Diary, vol. I*, 199.

⁵⁷ Charlotte Savino, '*I Hate, I Love: How Mothers Fail in Virginia Woolf's Fiction*, Undergraduate Honors Theses. Paper 783 (2008), 9.

⁵⁸ Virginia Woolf and Jeanne Schulkind, *Moments of Being* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 10.

mentions that she loves gloves and Elizabeth ‘does not care a straw for them.’⁵⁹ Her focus on saying ‘my Elizabeth’⁶⁰ in front of Peter hints that she is trying to conceal the absence of an actual healthy mother-daughter relationship. Woolf’s works do not explore the topic of eating disorders, but she frequently deployed a mother-daughter model which included uncaring or overly caring mothers and daughters who want to escape from the role of being dependent on them.

In conclusion, both Woolf and Mansfield demonstrated the effects of the loss of mother’s influence on young women. These problems can evolve into the developing an eating disorder, about which the authors hardly wrote about, except Mansfield who developed an ‘obsession’ with including food and how it affected the protagonists, mostly associating food with depressing or gloomy local colour. While it has never been officially confirmed by their relatives or close friends that the authors suffered from any kind of eating disorders, the possibility of it has a crucial impact on viewing and interpreting the writers’ works, especially when analysing family relationships. When analysing Laura in ‘*The Garden Party*’, Elizabeth and Clarissa in ‘*Mrs Dalloway*’ it is necessary to realize that the damaged relationships are one of the basic reasons and ‘roots’ of the despair of the protagonists, which are to be furtherly explored in chapter 3.

2.2. The Septimus trauma – mental illness and societal pressure

When analysing trauma and despair, it is apparent as to who is one of the most significant examples – Woolf’s Septimus Smith in ‘*Mrs Dalloway*.’ As a man who suffers from mental illness and commits suicide, it is important to analyse what led to it since there have been many theories and disputes about his mental illness and the cause of his suicide. What I intend to explore is how society and its pressure affects Septimus or mentally ill people in general.

It is important to say that Woolf was struck by the war and ‘*Mrs Dalloway*’ along with her other short stories and novels (for example ‘*Jacob’s Room*’) is being frequently analysed by critics as Woolf’s criticism of post-war society. After all, Woolf fought the battle with mental illness throughout her whole life and knew

⁵⁹ Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1925), 40.

⁶⁰ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 35.

perfectly well how to depict such a character as Septimus. Her dark, suicidal thoughts are projected onto his character.

Septimus Smith takes a great role in Woolf's post-war society analysis. Septimus, a veteran, suffers from a PTSD, post-traumatic experience, or so called 'shell shock.' He is no longer able to hide his trauma and feelings. While Clarissa, being portrayed as his 'other half', lives in the world of denial – as she is trying to conceal everything ugly and horrible, Septimus reveals it. In Clarissa's world, there is a strong sense of trying to present the post-war society as collected, whole, once again stable and confident – although the feeling of uncertainty and fear prevails. Clarissa attempts to hide the ugliness of war and death with something beautiful – she chooses to focus on her party and the preparations for it. Unlike Septimus, she is unable to face up to reality; she chooses to repress her feelings, even if it amounts to being pretentious (such as her exclamation 'my *Elizabeth!*' in section 2.1.) When she is lonely is the only time when her true feelings break through. The repression of her feelings only intensifies her despair. Septimus' approach is different. Facing up to his trauma can possibly help him to gain relief from his mental state, but he faces obstacles in the approach of other people – the doctors and the society. As Karen DeMeester in her work '*Trauma and Recovery in Virginia Woolf's "Mrs Dalloway"*' argues, the post-war society's treatment of veterans was poor, and for Woolf, the creation of the character of Septimus was a powerful tool to criticise the social system.⁶¹ In addition, Woolf had unpleasant experiences with her physicians throughout her battle with mental illness, which was another impulse for creating his character. Dr. Bradshaw and Dr. Holmes treat him with ignorance and lack of respect. The reaction by Dr. Holmes to Septimus' suicide was the exclamation: 'Coward!'⁶² which only proves Holmes' lack of sensitivity and the society's demonization of suicide and no attempts to prevent it.

Septimus keeps having hallucinations and flashbacks from the war, which is typical for PTSD and lives more in the past rather than in the present. Some of the critics have analysed Septimus' mental illness as schizophrenia but this has been

⁶¹ Karen DeMeester, 'Trauma and Recovery in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.' *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 44, no. 3, (1998): pp. 649–673 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 656.

⁶² Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 108.

disproved by many.⁶³ He feels alienated from his own self. Observing death every day and feeling responsible for the death of people caused a very serious psychological damage. It is important to note that Septimus did not feel pain but numbness. He feels it is of no use to have children and views humankind and the world as inherently evil. He does not see the meaning of life anymore. He experiences hallucinations about his dead friend Evans and his language transforms and deteriorates. As DeMeester argues, he is unable to describe his trauma accurately in order to make other people understand it, because for the survivors of a psychological terror, the words concerning trauma acquire new meaning – therefore a huge gap between the sane and the insane emerges.⁶⁴ His death is a result of inability of communication with other people – but is it entirely his fault? DeMeester agrees that certainly not – the force of post-war society which pressures the veterans to be silent in order to reintegrate plays a huge role.⁶⁵ Karen Levenback in her article ‘*Virginia Woolf and the Returning Soldiers*’ supports this argument.⁶⁶ His lack of proper communication derives from the inability to express his suffering in certain chronology – he cannot say what *was* and *will be* – even though he focuses strongly on his past, he views it as what is *now*.⁶⁷ War not only caused his perception of life as disconnected and fragmentary but also gave a new sense of identity to him – he is defined as a war veteran. It is not questioned what his life was before the war or how his life will continue; it is presumed that his identity from now on will be a veteran. He cannot be separated from his past. Therefore, he cannot have any trust in his doctors who not only fail to understand his suffering but seem to marginalize it or overlook it. The society refuses to view him as a former warrior – war becomes his identity, whether he wants it or not. It is clear that lack of communication is not his fault: firstly, he cannot control his mental illness and neither his deteriorating language and secondly, there is a lack of effort for communication from his doctors and most of the people except Rezia. It is logical that a person who is willing to

⁶³ DeMeester, *Trauma and Recovery*, 653.

⁶⁴ DeMeester, *Trauma and Recovery*, 655.

⁶⁵ DeMeester, *Trauma and Recovery*, 649.

⁶⁶ Karen L. Levenback, ‘Virginia Woolf and the Returning Soldiers: The Great War and the Reality of Survival in “*Mrs Dalloway*” and “*The Years*”’, *Woolf Studies Annual. Vol. 2.*, pp. 71-78 (New York: Pace University Press, 1996), 75.

⁶⁷ DeMeester, *Trauma and Recovery*, 651.

communicate about his trauma but is expected to be silent about it certainly cannot improve his mental state.

Septimus' death, a cardinal moment in *'Mrs Dalloway'* may leave the reader puzzled. His death is on the border between the expected and unexpected. His mental state grows worse, the doctors' approach was not ideal at all – but in the very last moments before throwing himself out of the window, he thinks: 'He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings?'⁶⁸ We come to find that even though his mental problems did not get any better, it was not the only factor which led to his death. '*Only human beings?*' What did Septimus mean by this? DeMeester argues that his mental state was worsened by the society's approach, refusing to understand him and accept his pain.⁶⁹ His wife Rezia does not want to allow Dr. Holmes to see her husband but Septimus knows it would not help. He realizes that even if he got rid of Dr. Holmes and Dr. Bradshaw, another, different doctors, would come, not trying to understand him: 'Only human beings – what did *they want?*'⁷⁰ Woolf is able to depict the undercover criticism of the post-war society masterfully in one simple sentence. She also explores what people with mental illness truly feel and need – Septimus needs someone to understand him and especially to listen to what he needs to say, to obtain a relief from his trauma by communication; but what he faces up to is being silenced.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that for Septimus the approach of the society was destructive for his mental illness and his life. The marginalization of war veterans was in this case not straightforward cause of his suicide but it made a major contribution to his downfall and was a great burden to him. Septimus' suicide was a form of an escape, which leads us to yet another link between him and the female protagonists of *'Mrs Dalloway'* and *'The Garden Party.'* Although each of the characters have different causes of despair (while of course Septimus' trauma is undeniably more serious) and manifest their need to escape in different ways, each of them experiences the similar sense of senselessness and the need to escape it.

⁶⁸ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 108.

⁶⁹ DeMeester, *Trauma and Recovery*, 656.

⁷⁰ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 108.

3. The Party as a mask

Each of the parties thrown in *'Bliss'*, *'Mrs Dalloway'* and *'The Garden Party'* have a different purpose and development, but each of them serves as a mask for something much deeper underneath. In this section, they will be further explained. It has already been argued that the characters experience feelings of despair and that they need to hide something or escape from something, but it is necessary to question what the 'something' means in this context. It will be questioned and analysed why the parties play such a great role and what they are intended to mask.

3.1. Death as a catalyst

Death, a recurring symbol in Woolf's and Mansfield's works, undeniably plays a great role. The authors deploy a narrative about death being announced at the parties and draw a contrast between a tragic event occurring at a place where everyone is supposed to have a laugh and have the time of their lives. Death has a much bigger importance than simply as a source of contrast but as a catalyst to the protagonists – in this section we find out how.

The plot of *'The Garden Party'* revolves around the death of man – the Sheridan family intends to have a garden party but Laura, a daughter from the family, disagrees with the idea of having a party when a man from a cottage close to their house died. She submits to her mother and the rest of the family and comes to believe that there is no reason why the party should be cancelled. After some time the situation reverses and she is persuaded by her family to bring a basket with leftover food to the poor family of the deceased man. In the cottage, she sees the corpse of the dead man. Mansfield finds a certain idealisation and romanticism in death. When Laura sees the corpse of the dead man, she thinks: 'There lay a young man, fast asleep. /.../ Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again /.../ He was wonderful, beautiful.'⁷¹ She thinks about the fact that the deceased man does not have to think or care about 'any garden parties /.../ far away from them both' (the people around)⁷² Does perhaps Laura sometimes experience the need to escape it all or to be far away, just like the dead man is? Her description of the dead man hints that she strongly romanticizes death – she sees it as a form of escape and

⁷¹ Katherine Mansfield, *The Garden Party* (London: Penguin Random House UK, 1923), 56.

⁷² Mansfield, *The Garden Party*, 57.

ignores the ugliness of death. All she is able to see at the moment is the simplistic conclusion that the man has no worries.

Laura comes home and does not feel horrified or sad. What she finds is joy that she is unable to put into words – instead, she starts to weep. What is significant for the moment of Laura’s crying, is that she overcame her romanticizing view of death. She does find the joy in the experience but also understands the intensity of it, which makes her weep. It is not sadness; it is the revelation of life in its most intense form. It is important to note that when Laura imagined the man’s corpse being carried for the first time (almost right after she found out about his death) the thought of it was completely unreal to her. Unlike Clarissa Dalloway, she did not imagine his death neither any details about it. This is one of the reasons for her shock – never before she saw death in all its realness, in all its ugliness; neither was she able to imagine it.

In ‘*Mrs Dalloway*’ Peter Walsh asks Clarissa a crucial question: ‘What’s the sense of your parties?’ which is not only his question but also of the reader. Clarissa is disappointed about Peter’s question, because it might be more of a rhetorical one – he presents it as if he already knew the answer in advance. Neither he nor Richard understand or want to understand the meaning of Clarissa’s parties. She has the answer for it though: she believes she must gather people together, that her role of a hostess is her offering, as she says. Nevertheless, Clarissa seems to be rather uneasy and nervous. She pays great attention to the party preparations and she wants it to be perfect – but is it the only reason she is nervous?

It has been argued that the characters connect on emotional level – Clarissa, Laura and Septimus feel a sense of rootlessness and despair, although each of them in a different way, but Septimus’ death itself has an undeniably important role. There is a section dedicated wholly to Septimus’ trauma and death but its main purpose is not only intended to analyze why he killed himself in the first place but with it another question arises: What is the purpose of his death? In fact, Septimus’ death serves as a catalyst to Clarissa. Throughout the novel, Clarissa keeps thinking about death repeatedly, almost obsessively. Death comes to her mind in various associations and the reader cannot help but wonder: how does Clarissa view death? Her sisters’ death affected her deeply enough not to be able to reconcile with it in her

life, and as she always said, it ‘made her turn bitter.’⁷³ She ended up being an atheist and tried to bring the beauty into the chaotic world. The reader comes to find that Clarissa, subconsciously, throws the parties in order to escape reality and as a tool of denial. She wants to escape not only her dark thoughts but also her loneliness. The gatherings of people make her feel a sense of relief. Clarissa made a protective barrier around herself, hid many of her feelings and ended up isolated in the superficial, dull world with her thoughts hidden underneath. Although death sifts through her thoughts since the morning, at the party, when she finds out about Septimus’ death, she seems to be distressed and outraged – not about his death but about the topic of death being brought up at *her* party: ‘A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party.’⁷⁴ Is she perhaps uncomfortable and not reluctant to admit she cannot stop thinking about death for the whole day? Did she wish she would stop thinking about death at least at her party; or is she simply worried about the depressive topic spoiling her party? Peter Walsh said that death has been horrifying to Clarissa: ‘It ended in a transcendental theory which, with her horror of death, allowed her to believe /.../ the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other...’⁷⁵ Even Clarissa admitted during the day to herself that death was unbelievable to her.⁷⁶ Surprisingly, she begins to think about Septimus’ death with all the explicit and unpleasant details – she imagines the action of jumping from the window, falling down and dying – and seems to be outraged not for the fact that the Bradshaws brought up the topic at her party, but for having the nerve to make her think about death. As she keeps thinking about it, she even thinks about her own suicide; and, surprisingly, comes to find ‘an embrace’ in death – she envies the young man, realizing his death is ‘a treasure’.⁷⁷ Clarissa, who always tried to make ugly things beautiful, not because she found the beauty within them but because she simply wanted to conceal them, now for the first time comes to find the beauty in death: she celebrates it, she feels happy for Septimus and approves of his deed. It is crucial to state that just like Laura, Clarissa was also able to find a sense of beauty in death. Deborah Guth in her work *‘Rituals of Self-Deception: Clarissa*

⁷³ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 117.

⁷⁴ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 133.

⁷⁵ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 111.

⁷⁶ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 89.

⁷⁷ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 134.

Dalloway's Final Moment of Vision views Clarissa's romanticization of death as evoking of myths – she comments that Clarissa viewed Septimus' death as a glorious defiance labelling it as 'non serviam.'⁷⁸ She believes Septimus preserved his soul by committing suicide, while she made too many compromises in her life that affected her soul; she does not pity it though – she reconciles with the realization. She finds the courage to think about death without being uncomfortable and accepts her mortality. It is important to state that Woolf called such moments 'moments of being' – the state of revelation, complete awakening. Her revelation is strongly similar to that of Laura – but while for Laura it is so intense she finds herself both happy but also quite paralyzed at the same time, which results in her starting to cry; while Clarissa finds a whole new sense of contentment and peace after this realization.

Both Laura in *The Garden Party* and Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* come to find they made compromises in their lives; Laura lives in the closed world of the Sheridans family, isolated from the real problems of life and despite being 'the artistic one' in her family and having quite a different mindset, chooses to settle for the more comfortable option. Clarissa married Richard, not quite sure about her feelings towards him, just like Laura choosing the more comfortable life, living as an upper-class socialite, isolated or rather ignorant of the problems of lower-class life. For both them, death is a strongly unpleasant, explicit and *too real* experience, the 'moment of being' – and it is the realness of the experience which is completely outside their boundaries and makes them realize the beauty within it. The revelation unfortunately remains unspoken and hidden to others around them, protected in their minds, and their lives go on, unchanged. Clarissa's party goes on – with an enormous turn inside of her and no changes happening on the outside world.

Guth argues that Clarissa's party 'has revealed itself to be and, by identifying with a romanticized image of Septimus, to defy the world that never seems to live up to her dreams,'⁷⁹ which I agree with, nevertheless, my secondary argument is that now, party serves as a certain 'arbiter' of the meaning of life - but it would not

⁷⁸ Deborah Guth, 'Rituals of Self-Deception: Clarissa Dalloway's Final Moment of Vision.' *Twentieth-Century Literature*. Vol. 36/1, pp. 35-42. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 37.

⁷⁹ Guth, *Rituals of Self-Deception*, 37.

happen without death and the topic of death being brought up. Death leads the protagonists to face up to their real feelings, to think about life and try to realize the meaning of it. Death is what both paralyzes and revives the party, brings a whole new meaning to it and calls for action. Death proves that when it is here and now, it cannot be overlooked or erased. If it wasn't for death, the party would never play such a great role for the protagonists neither would they be free to face up to the truth they have been suppressing.

3.2. The need to escape

The need to escape is the dominant theme tying together all of the previously mentioned ones. It is what drives the characters and paralyzes the characters. What is necessary to realize that while death is the catalyst which liberates the characters and gives a meaning to the party, the party itself is driven by the desire to escape something. The theme of death, suicide, stained family relationships - all of these are driven or followed by it – and cannot be separated from it.

In '*Mrs. Dalloway*,' Clarissa cannot help but think about Peter Walsh, with whom she formerly had been in love with but chose to marry Richard Dalloway. Passionate Peter is a foil to stable and 'simple' Richard and many of his thoughts are contradictory to those of Clarissa. Clarissa repeatedly thinks about 'how good it is that she did not marry him'⁸⁰ and then with contradictory 'why didn't she marry him?'⁸¹ It becomes apparent that she still cares deeply for Peter but wants to escape her true feelings and justify her choice of marrying Richard to make herself believe that what she did was a perfectly good decision. When Peter tells her about another of his love interest, she thinks: 'What a waste! What a folly! /.../ Thank heaven she refused to marry him!' but it is obvious that she only tries to make an excuse. Clarissa struggles with suppressing her true feelings throughout the novel – but she always comes to a point when she cannot do anything else but let go of them for a little while. As Peter is leaving, she cries: 'Remember my party!'⁸² This is obviously an exclamation of despair from her; she cares for Peter and wants him to attend her party. She puts an effort to make the party perfect and therefore she wants Peter to come and see how perfect her life is, without even realizing that it serves only as an

⁸⁰ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 6.

⁸¹ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 31-35.

⁸² Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 35.

artificial exhibition of the alleged perfectness of her life. As has been said in section 3.1., she fails to realize all of this until the announcement of Septimus' death.

In '*Mrs. Dalloway*' one could find more examples of the need to escape: Peter Walsh reciprocates Clarissa's feelings and feels sorry that he did not marry her; he desperately wants to escape from his memories and infatuation with Clarissa by jumping from one relationship to another. When Septimus Smith commits suicide, it seems to be obvious that he does it in order to escape Dr. Holmes and Bradshaw, rather than to resign to them. Escaping seems not to be a matter of trying to hide or conceal something but rather as something that seems inevitable in order to end the characters' suffering. Septimus' suicide is however not as simple as that. It is not only a matter of escaping the doctors and their dismissive attitude. As it has been said in section 2.2.1., Septimus realizes that escaping from the doctors would be of no help – there would be another doctors and another people who would not understand and accept his pain. Society would not understand but try to marginalize his and other veterans' experiences and traumas. Septimus' escape is a matter of despair and seeing no other option for him than to end his suffering.

Even the shifts (especially the hours) between the narratives of Clarissa, Septimus, Peter, and other characters can be possibly interpreted in terms of escaping – the scenes alter from the perceptions of the sane to the hallucinations of the insane in order to both emphasize and blur the difference.⁸³ The hours ticking are important in the part where Clarissa is thinking about Septimus' death: they introduce a turn in Clarissa's thinking: 'One, two three, she did not pity him..⁸⁴ Clarissa, gloomy and depressed, re-evaluating her life and wondering what Septimus' death meant to her, nearly suicidal in her thoughts, with her heart burdened by fear, finds a change in her mind. Perhaps she follows on her previous thought, that Septimus preserved his happiness by suicide - she knows that she is just like him and comes to find beauty and embrace in death. She escapes from the dark (even in literal sense, when the old lady 'had put out her light'⁸⁵ in the dark room) to the light back again.

Many of Mansfield's characters dream of escaping from the everyday reality because they do not feel satisfied with their current situation. DiBattista argues that

⁸³ Froula, Kimber, Martin, and Gasston, eds, *Mansfield and Woolf*, 35.

⁸⁴ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 135.

⁸⁵ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 135.

the option of escaping is not given to them.⁸⁶ This is not completely true in all cases - as previously mentioned in chapter 2.1., Laura in *'The Garden Party'* dreams of escaping the comfortable but delusional life in her family and becoming herself but never does it although she possibly could have the option. Laura shows her courage and inner strength when she disobeys her mother for the very first time – she refuses to wear a hat and look at herself in the hand-mirror. Her mother forced her to do so to distract her from discussing about cancelling the party because of the death of Mr. Scott. Although it might seem like a little and unimportant personal revolt of Laura, it could be the first step to stand up for herself. As has been written in section 2.1., looks were important to Mansfield's mother and Mansfield wrote frequently about manipulation and the importance of looks which can result from damaged mother-daughter relationship. The act of the mother distracting Laura by forcing her to look at herself 'looking pretty in a hat' hides a deeper meaning – when Laura refuses to look at herself, she refuses not only to submit to her mother but also to her mother's ideals and beliefs. Laura is rejecting what has been said and taught to her for years and what she blindly obeyed until now. Unfortunately for Laura, her attempt fails as soon as it began. Unintentionally, she glances at herself in the mirror and finds herself changing her mind about the party. It is indispensably important to point out to this moment in the short story – the act of looking at oneself in the mirror is principal in Mansfield's novels. Mansfield, along with Woolf, uses a mirror as a tool not only to see oneself as a whole, collected human once again (just like Clarissa Dalloway did)⁸⁷ but also as a reflector of Life.⁸⁸ Mirror is the symbol of a reunion and change and a source of illumination. In this case though, it does not draw Laura to change but back to be her old self – or more of her mother's self. Towards the end, she finds herself caught between two different attitudes and mindset – trapped between the lower and upper class. Although the revelation about life and death affects her, her position in the family remain unchanged. However, she finds an unexpected companion in her brother Laurie, who seems to understand what she intends to but cannot express: 'She stopped, she looked at her brother. "Isn't life," she stammered, "isn't life—" But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He

⁸⁶ Froula, Kimber, Martin, and Gasston, eds, *Mansfield and Woolf*, 35.

⁸⁷ Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 40.

⁸⁸ Froula, Kimber, Martin, and Gasston, eds, *Mansfield and Woolf*, 34

quite understood. “Isn’t it, darling?” said Laurie.’⁸⁹ She is not entirely trapped by her whole family but there is a hope that there is at least someone who understands her. There is not a denial for hope for Laura, the option of change is not denied to her; whether she does it or not though, remains the question.

The party for Laura seems as something both important and unimportant. The thought of cancelling the party is impossible for Laura’s whole family and at last, even to Laura. The party must be perfect – just like for Clarissa, even the thought of the topic of death brought up at it seems outrageous. As the party ends, Laura’s family is willing to send the family of the deceased man a basket with leftover food. It is *after* the party therefore the party cannot be ‘ruined’ or interrupted anymore and the Sheridans finally show their human side. Nevertheless, it remains hypocritical of them – as long as the party is in the process, it is unacceptable to cancel it or bring a basket with food to the family; when the party is over, some leftover food can be brought up. For this story, party is similar to a high prison-wall which cannot be escaped in any way. Even Laura’s thoughts when seeing the dead man: ‘What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things...’⁹⁰ suggests that she realizes the unimportance and foolishness of the whole preparations for the party to be ‘perfect.’ Party in this case obtains the same function as in ‘*Mrs Dalloway*’ – without the death intruding it would most likely result into having no meaning or importance for Laura at all.

Mansfield’s short story ‘*Mr. Reginald Peacock’s Day*’ is another perfect example of the theme of escaping – one would dare to say it is its central theme. Reginald is a completely different character than Laura, Clarissa or Septimus. He is a singing teacher strongly interested in himself and believes the world revolves around him. He, ironically, hates vain people, although he is also vain in his nature. Reginald is possibly unfaithful to his wife or at least desires to be. His singing lessons, with female students primarily, provide him an escape from his ordinary life and re-affirm his belief in the perfection of his character and his singing abilities. He keeps asking himself why he married his wife – his flirtatious attempts with other women allow him to escape from his relationship with a woman he is no longer in love with (although she tries her best to please him in every ways) at least for a little while.

⁸⁹ Mansfield, *The Garden Party*, 58.

⁹⁰ Mansfield, *The Garden Party*, 57.

Towards the end of the day, when Lord Timbuck calls him ‘Peacock, not Mr. Peacock’⁹¹ at the dinner with Ænone Fell he feels that he ‘is one of them’ – one of the people from the upper class, one of the highly regarded artists. He thinks: ‘And wasn't he (Reginald) teaching them all to escape from life?’⁹² Reginald views singing and interest in any form of art as an escape; and by life he could have thought of the ordinariness, routine, or his own family who did not quite admire him for his singing as much as he expected them. When he woke up in the morning, he thought about ‘energy escaping him’ at the moment his wife woke him up.⁹³ He views his wife as his enemy, believing she takes pleasure in waking him up ‘insensitively.’ He thought: ‘It seemed that she took a malicious delight in making life more difficult for him than–Heaven knows– it was, by denying him his rights as an artist, by trying to drag him down to her level. What was the matter with her?’⁹⁴ Instead of being grateful for his wife for taking care of their son, the house, he believes she is trying to make him feel bad: ‘...she came into the room buttoned up in an overall, with a handkerchief over her head–thereby proving that she had been up herself and slaving since dawn...’⁹⁵ His relationship with his son is not any better – his son even wonders why his father must ‘always sort of sing to him rather than to talk.’⁹⁶ Not only this reveals that Reginald is not being admired for his singing and he probably annoys his family members by constantly priding himself, but also the lack of actual relationship with his son. His son ‘feels awkward and silly for having to shake hands with his father every morning.’⁹⁷ An interlink between Mansfield’s and Woolf’s protagonists occurs once again – both Clarissa Dalloway and Reginald Peacock have nearly non-existent relationships with their children; nevertheless, Clarissa poignantly realizes it (and attempts to conceal it) while Reginald seems to fail to realize this.

When he comes back from the dinner, he naturally expects his wife to praise him, and makes his last attempt to ‘win’ her. He used to think of his wife as ‘an enemy’

⁹¹ Katherine Mansfield, *Collected stories of Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Knopf, 1937), 7.

⁹² Mansfield, *Collected stories*, 7.

⁹³ Mansfield, *Collected stories*, 2.

⁹⁴ Mansfield, *Collected stories*, 2.

⁹⁵ Mansfield, *Collected stories*, 2.

⁹⁶ Mansfield, *Collected stories*, 2.

⁹⁷ Katherine Mansfield, *Bliss and Other Stories* (London: Constable, 1922), 2.

but now changes his mind and tries to befriend her. He does not want to be lovers again with her, he wants to be friends. This might be his tactic – if he would be reassured that his relationship with his wife is defined simply in terms of ‘being friends’, he could use it for his own benefit: to be unfaithful without feeling any guilt neither owing an apology to his wife. When he is about to talk to her, he is unable to say anything but the sentence he so often repeats to his female students: ‘Dear Lady, I should be so charmed!’⁹⁸ He repeated the sentence to his students as a flirtatious attempt, which he believes, is successful. He believes in his vanity that the sentence which can charm ladies who do not know his true nature at all (they only know him as he presents himself to them) will have the same effect on the woman who has been living by his side for years. The sentence he utters is another form of an escape – he does not decide to have an open conversation with her but stick to a simplistic and much easier alternative.

It becomes clear that for Reginald the forms of escape are his lessons and dinners with other artists – there is not an occurrence of a party but these dinners and lessons adopt the same role – they serve as a mask intended to cover up what is damaged and not admit to the problem. However, Reginald, unlike Clarissa or Laura most likely realizes he is only escaping what troubles him, but he never decides to resolve his worries. For Reginald, his ignorance prevents him from solving and repairing what is wrong with his life.

Speaking of ignorance, there is another of Mansfield’s short stories strongly revolved around it – ‘*Bliss*.’ Bertha Young is, as her surname hints, young both in her age and at heart. Within the very beginning of the story we find that she suppresses her feelings of being and acting child-like. She wishes she could ‘run instead of walk, /.../, to bowl a hoop, /.../ or laugh-at-nothing.’⁹⁹ She loathes society and believes civilization is idiotic because it pushes a belief that a person cannot ‘express the bliss without being drunk and disorderly.’¹⁰⁰ She feels the need to escape the society’s pressure and behave freely, like a child. For her, the ‘child-like’ moments are those that are truly blissful. Mansfield put an excellent subtle metaphor about society’s pressure on Bertha’s coat – Mansfield describes it as ‘tight clasps’ as

⁹⁸ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 8.

⁹⁹ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 15.

¹⁰⁰ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 15.

Bertha ‘feels unbearable and must take it off.’¹⁰¹ Surprisingly, as she takes it off, she does not feel relief but a cold air falling on her arms. The cold air is a metaphor which signifies possible future trouble which Bertha has to face. The act of taking off the heavy tight coat which symbolises freeing herself leads to Bertha becoming more vulnerable and possibly facing problems or an unpleasant truth she has to deal with in the future. Bertha’s restrictions are not the only thing which bother her. It becomes apparent that the feeling of bliss she experienced was not sincere – there is more of what troubles her.

Bertha is uncomfortable with submitting to society’s expectations by giving her child to a nanny which results into missing out most of the time with her daughter. The social conventions at the time did not expect a woman of Bertha’s class to take care of a child – in fact, it was considered to be something out of the ‘social order.’ She does not feel like a mother but like an outside observer – she cannot ignore that the nanny mostly took over the role of mother to Bertha’s child. Although Bertha wishes she would spend more time with her daughter (and at least does a small personal ‘revolt’ by taking her from the nanny for at least a little while), she is clearly unable to make a bigger change. Bertha feels that taking her daughter for at least a little while is again a source of being happy and feeling that everything is alright again, but she fails to realize it is only a temporary solution, a form of escape. In this moment it is clear Bertha must realize that her inner bliss is not genuine. However, until the very end of the story, she remains in a state of denial. She keeps thinking about all the things which she has (adorable baby, her husband Harry, friends...) and her list of what makes her happy is actually a list of what *should* make her happy – but doesn’t. Whenever she comes close to the realization, she chases it off, thinking she is just being ‘too happy’ or ‘absurd’ or ‘hysterical.’¹⁰² Judith Neaman’s arguments in ‘*Allusion, Image, and Associative Pattern: The Answers in Mansfield’s “Bliss”*’ for this are similar – she states that society’s pressure not only makes Bertha view herself as hysterical, but also as frigid.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 8.

¹⁰² Mansfield, *Bliss*, 15-1.

¹⁰³ Judith S. Neaman, ‘Allusion, Image, and Associative Pattern: The Answers in Mansfield’s “Bliss.”’ *Twentieth-Century Literature*, vol. 32, pp. 242-254 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), 245.

What is that what truly makes her so uneasy? It comes to be apparent that so many things trouble her; but there is one extremely important problem which she is trying to ignore (one cannot help but think of ‘Ignorance is bliss’)? The answer to this question comes very soon. Bertha talks with Harry about a young woman called Pearl, whom Bertha ‘is in love with,’ as she says, but fails to admit that her love is true, not a friendly love, as she tries to persuade herself. Bertha has a party in the evening and wonders where Pearl is and why she is late; when Pearl finally arrives, Bertha feels excitement just from holding her arm. When her hosts sit, Bertha thinks of ‘what a decorative group they made.’¹⁰⁴ The adjective ‘decorative’ suggests that the hosts are only an accessory to her party. Bertha’s true intention behind the party could have been, most likely, the desire of wanting to be close to Pearl. The conclusion which comes from this is that the party is only a mask and an excuse to be close to her love interest.

Bertha catches herself waiting ‘for a sign...what she meant by that she didn’t know’¹⁰⁵ – a sign that Pearl reciprocates her infatuation, although Bertha is in denial of it at the moment. Bertha escapes from admitting her true feelings once again, by forcing herself to laugh: ‘I must laugh or die.’¹⁰⁶ This is another moment of Bertha’s denial – whenever she is too close to getting to the core of her problems, she hides it by force – either laughing or thinking she is being hysterical. In the society at the time it was a taboo to even admit having any sort of homosexual feelings, so this is another clear example of Bertha being oppressed and slowly tormented by society’s pressure and expectations. She is clearly aware that her life is not as she wants it to be but continues to pretend that everything is okay.

Another hint that the party serves only as a mask for Bertha is when she starts to think: ‘Soon these people will go. The house will be quiet–quiet. The lights will be out. And you and he will be alone the dark room–the warm bed...’¹⁰⁷ Bertha immediately jumps out of the chair and starts to play the piano. It is more than obvious that she again did not want to think about something unpleasant to her – but what was it? The quiet house? The empty house and dark room? It is the thought of

¹⁰⁴ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 19.

¹⁰⁵ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 20.

her and Harry in the warm bed. Bertha realizes that she is uncomfortable with her husband, especially not in sexual way – is it a repulsion to her husband? Bertha possibly realizes that she is not attracted to her husband at all and there is someone else she is attracted to; but she rejects to think about it. She threw the party possibly not only to meet Bertha, but also not to be alone with her husband for the whole day. It is clear throughout the story that they are not on the same page at all. Harry is of a completely different (quite contradictory to Bertha's) nature. When they were discussing Pearl's quite secretive nature, Harry was arguing Pearl was 'cold like all blonde women, with a touch, perhaps, of anaemia of the brain.'¹⁰⁸ Bertha still kept talking about the fact that Pearl tilted her head to one side, arguing there was something behind it, while Harry answered: 'Most likely it's a good stomach,' to which Bertha thought: 'He made a point of catching Bertha's heels with replies of that kind . . . "liver frozen my dear girl," or "pure flatulence," or "kidney disease," . . . and so on.' Although it is clear Bertha does not agree with him, she pretends to like it about him. She also fails to realize Harry's remarks about Pearl are a form of hiding his affair, trying to distract Bertha. Maybe the thought of spending time with him for the whole day and having nothing much to talk about, being ridiculed all the time is dreadful to Bertha. She does not leave the reader questioning any more – she admits it was 'the first time in her life she (Bertha) desired her husband /.../ oh, she had been in love with him, but just not in *that* way...'¹⁰⁹ which confirms her homosexuality. Bertha is still reluctant to admit it wholly, completely, trying to talk it down by emphasising that they are 'good pals' and so. This revelation still proves to be liberating and crucial to Bertha.

Pearl invites Bertha to a garden, which makes Bertha believe that they are on the same page. However, she misinterprets all of Pearl's actions and lives in ignorance. Bertha does not want to admit that what she believes in is delusional; she wants to escape her despair and have at least a little spark of hope. Bertha proves to be child-like, as mentioned in the very beginning; she is unable or unwilling to see the truth and her infatuation blinds her – Pearl is clearly not interested in a romantic way but Bertha believes she is. Her revelation comes when she sees her husband whisper to

¹⁰⁸ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 22.

Pearl: ‘Tomorrow.’¹¹⁰ This is the only moment when Bertha comes to realize the truth – and surprisingly, she does not try to conceal it. The question what happens next remains unanswered – for both the readers and Bertha, as Armine Kotin Mortimer points out in ‘*Fortifications of Desire: Reading the Second Story in Katherine Mansfield’s “Bliss.”*’¹¹¹

Bertha’s struggles connect with those of Septimus from Woolf’s ‘*Mrs Dalloway.*’ Both Bertha and Septimus (and Clarissa too) experience feelings of homosexual or possibly bisexual love but (unlike for Bertha) for Clarissa and Septimus it is not their major struggle or the main reason behind their worries. Nevertheless, both Bertha and Septimus experience different problems, while the pressure of society is accompanying them and worsening the characters’ mental state. For Bertha, the suppression of her love and then finding out it is unrequited, is destroying her, but if it wasn’t for society’s expectations, she probably would not try to repress her homosexual feelings in the first place. For Septimus, PTSD and memories from war alone are a tough battle but the refusal of his doctors to communicate about it based on the forced silencing of the veterans by post-war society is a major burden. Both Bertha (although she is not mentally ill, unlike Septimus, but her state is not exactly alright either) and Septimus would most likely improve, hadn’t it been for this.

It becomes apparent that the characters’ desperate actions are driven by the need to escape or hide the unpleasant truths in their lives. Woolf’s and Mansfield’s characters connect on the emotional level, trying to hide or break free from the routine of their ordinary life, forbidden love, society’s expectations and use the party as a tool for it. We find that for Clarissa, the party is crucially important since the beginning to the end but the meaning of it changes throughout the events in the day in her life. For Laura, the party lost its meaning in the sense of the shallow preparations and ensuring it goes well without any trouble going on. Nevertheless, she realizes this and comes to find that it gains a whole new meaning – on a spiritual level. For Bertha, party is important only as an excuse to see Pearl and just like for Clarissa, it was initially only a cover-up. Both Bertha and Clarissa eventually find the

¹¹⁰ Mansfield, *Bliss*, 23.

¹¹¹ Armine Kotin Mortimer, ‘Fortifications of Desire: Reading the Second Story in Katherine Mansfield’s “Bliss.”’ *Narrative*, vol. 2/1, pp. 41-52 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994), 52.

truth and do not try to deny it. For Reginald, his dinners (and lessons) are obviously masks and unlike the other protagonists, he most likely realizes this from the beginning. His obstacle is that, again, unlike Clarissa and others, he refuses to act on this revelation.

Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to analyse the themes of despair and the symbol of a party. The analyses in the thesis found that the crucial element of this thesis is the theme of the need to escape, which ties together all of the mentioned symbols and themes. Whether it is the need to escape family, reality of life, suppressed feelings - all of it is carefully hidden underneath a beautiful mask – the party (in case of Reginald Peacock it is a dinner along with singing lessons.) The party is intended to hide and conceal the undesired feelings, the darkness within the characters' souls; but the truth sifts through slowly and in complex ways. The party originally did not really have any other meaning except that of a mask, or only a very shallow one (especially in the case of '*Mrs Dalloway*'), but what becomes apparent is that it gains its meaning gradually.

The first, theoretical, part is focused on the relationship between the writers and how they influenced and inspired each other in their professional lives. The feminist views in their works are mentioned because they are largely interlinked with the second, practical, part.

The second part revolves around mental illnesses and traumas – it is explored that both the writers might have had issues with eating disorders which typically result from damaged mother-daughter relationships, or damaged family relationships in general, and it reflected in the works I analyzed – especially in '*The Garden Party*' and '*Mrs Dalloway*.' Woolf's character Septimus Smith is further analyzed from the perspective of his mental illness and how much the influence of society played a role.

Woolf and Mansfield put an emphasis on the pressure of society, especially through the characters of Mansfield's Bertha Young and Woolf's Septimus Smith for whom the power of society is crucial – and for Septimus it is fatal. The importance of family relationships and the consequences of the lack of them are shown in the development of the characters of Reginald Peacock, Clarissa Dalloway and Laura Sheridan, whose actions are furtherly analyzed in the third part. What is crucial to state is that except Septimus, none of the protagonists are 'doomed' – each of them has a chance to escape their demons but each of them grasps the chance differently.

The power of death is undeniable in the authors' works – what is found in the thesis is that death serves as a catalyst for the characters (except Reginald and Bertha) and in certain ways, its role is similar to that of the party in a certain way – it reveals what has been hidden inside, but unlike the party, the death is meaningful to the protagonists since the beginning to the end. Without death the meaning behind the party would not be nearly as powerful as it comes to be.

The conclusion of the thesis is that it is not the theme of despair, but the need to escape which is the central theme of Woolf and Mansfield's selected works. All of the themes of despair emerge from the characters' need to escape. The function of the party as a mask is intensified and exposed by the symbol of death, whose primary function is a catalyst. For Septimus, his death is his final moment of escape and relief. For Clarissa and Laura, it is a moment of revelation. Although Reginald and Bertha never face death, for them a revelation of their true intentions come (just as for the rest of the characters), although it occurs under different circumstances.

Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo analyzovat vybraná témata, která spojují díla významných autorek Mansfieldové a Woolfové. Jedná se především o téma zoufalství v dílech „*Paní Dallowayová*“, „*Zahradní slavnost*“, „*Blaho*“ a „*Den pana Zvonimíra Páva*.“ Spolu s tématem zoufalství sekundují další – téma tlaku společnosti a špatných vztahů v rodině, se zaměřením na vztah matky a dcery. Práce zkoumá, jaký vliv mají tyto skutečnosti na postavy.

V první, teoretické části se zabývám vztahem autorek, a především tím jaký vliv měl jejich vztah na jejich práci. Je problematické označit vztah autorek jedním jednoduchým popisem, protože se během let měnil. Dá se označit slovy jako jednostranný, komplikovaný, vřelý i chladný zároveň; a přesto se dá označit jako přátelství. Co se týče jejich profesního vztahu, přestože se zde vyskytovala určitá závist (spíše ze strany Woolfové), jednalo se spíše o závist v pozitivním slova smyslu a autorky se navzájem ve své práci podporovaly a inspirovaly, a zároveň byly schopny jedna vůči druhé objektivní kritiky, bez osobního zaujetí či zášti. Jejich vztah bohužel časem chladl, z části kvůli těžké nemoci Mansfieldové, která se koncem života pomalu uzavírala do sebe. Zmínku si zaslouží umělecká skupina Bloomsbury Group, ve které byla Woolfová členem a Mansfieldová spíše „externím“ členem. Co se týče skupiny, každá z autorek k ní chovala jiný vztah, obzvlášť Mansfieldová se vůči ní později smíše vymezovala, především na základě pomluv a nedobrych vztahů s ostatními členy. Mansfieldová měla strach, aby Woolfová nedala na pomluvy od členů skupiny a obávala se, že tím jejich přátelství utrpí; nakonec ke zhoršení jejich vztahu opravdu došlo, nikoliv však na základě pomluv.

Dále je zmíněn vliv feminismu v jejich dílech především kvůli návaznosti na druhou, praktickou část, ve které se zabývám vlivem vztahu matky a dcery. Obě autorky věřily v rovnoprávnost a zabývaly se svou rolí jakožto žen-autorek. Paradoxně občas svou „ženskost“ v literatuře spíše odmítaly, snad proto že se snažily oprostít od zaběhnutých cest, kdy na ně kritici pohlíželi především jako na *ženské* autorky a tím byla ovlivněna i kritika jejich děl. Faktem zůstává, že se autorky i přesto zaměřovaly na témata zaměřující se na nerovnoprávné role mužů a žen, zaběhnuté stereotypní role v rodině, a především na vztahy matek a dcer. Jak již bylo zmíněno, na tyto vztahy jsem se zaměřila v druhé kapitole.

V druhé části se zabývám traumatem a psychickými nemocemi, jelikož nesporně souvisí s tématem zoufalství, které primárně v práci analyzuji. Vztah matky a dcery, respektive narušený vztah matky a dcery má nesporný vliv jak na autorky samotné, tak na postavy v jejich dílech, konkrétně v povídce Mansfieldové „*Zahradní slavnost*“ a v románu Woolfové „*Paní Dallowayová*.“ Zjišťujeme, že autorky pravděpodobně měly sklon k poruchám příjmu potravy, který může nepřímo vycházet právě z absence nebo narušení vztahů s matkou, popřípadě celkově špatných vztahů v rodině. Samy autorky měly problematické vztahy se svými matkami (především Mansfieldová). Autorky právě odpor k jídlu v několika svých denících i dílech zmiňovaly, a především se u jejich postav často vyskytuje model špatného vztahu matky a dcery. Matky ve výše zmíněných dílech, na které jsem se zaměřila, mají buďto příliš velký, ba až téměř manipulativní vliv na své dcery (paní Sheridanová v povídce „*Zahradní slavnost*“) nebo naopak téměř žádný (Clarissa Dallowayová).

Co se týče psychických nemocí, zaměřuji se následně na postavu Septima Smitha v románu „*Paní Dallowayová*“ a konkrétně na to, jakou nemocí trpěl a jaký vliv měla společnost na jeho činy a sebevraždu. Docházím k závěru, opírajícím se o tvrzení Karen DeMeesterové, že společnost byla „poslední kapkou“ pro Septima a její vliv měl fatální dopad na jeho psychické zdraví. Nebyla samozřejmě spouštěčem jeho nemoci, ovšem významně přispěla k jejímu zhoršení. Septimovu smrt analyzuji jako pokus o útěk od společnosti, která umlčujovala válečné veterány a těžce zanedbávala a přehlížela psychicky nemocné. Vliv společnosti je dále v práci znovu rozebírán, konkrétně to jaký vliv má na postavy v dílech Mansfieldové.

V třetí části se zabývám symbolem večírku a následně tématem útěku. Symbol večírku v dílech autorek přebírá úkol jakési „masky“ – večírek slouží jako záminka či snaha zakrýt jisté nepříjemné pravdy a potlačené pocity protagonistů. Je nutné poznamenat, že stejnou úlohu jako večírek přebírají i večere a hodiny zpěvu v povídce Mansfieldové o panu Zvonimíru Pávovi. V práci dojdeme k závěru, že večírek jako takový má zprvu pouze úlohu masky ale žádný opravdový hlubší význam – v jeho průběhu ovšem přichází smrt, která mu udává jeho pravý význam, odkrývá to, co se pokoušely postavy marně skrýt a dochází ke zjištění, ke kterým by jinak pravděpodobně nedošly.

Co se týče témat, zjišťujeme že existuje jedno společné téma, které je „základním kamenem“ pro všechna výše jmenovaná témata (spojuje je a od něj se tato témata odvíjí). Nejedná se o téma zoufalství jako takové ale o téma touhy po útěku. Všechny postavy jsou motivovány potřebou uniknout něčemu, co je tíží. Jejich způsobem úniku je obvykle výše zmíněný večírek jakožto maska či záminka.

Mimo jiné znovu zjišťujeme vliv společnosti na postavy. Jak bylo výše zmíněno, na postavu Septima Smithe má nátlak společnosti nezanedbatelný vliv. Jeho psychická nemoc se zhoršuje, a to z velké části i díky ní. V druhé kapitole jsem došla k závěru, že sebevražda Septima byla jakýmsi pokusem o útěk od společnosti, která nejen že nepochopila jeho trápení, ale naopak se snažila umlčet válečné veterány (co se týče traumat, které si odnesli z války.) Právě v třetí části zjišťujeme že nátlak společnosti měl nezanedbatelný vliv taktéž na postavu Mansfieldové, a to na Berthu v povídce „*Blaho*.“ Bertha na rozdíl od Septima netrpí psychickou nemocí, ovšem její činy jsou, stejně jako u něj, z velké části vedeny a motivovány vlivem společnosti. V jejím případě se také jedná o jakési umlčení – ovšem Bertha se pokouší umlčet sama sebe, konkrétně své homosexuální pocity a touhy, které byly v tehdejší společnosti ostře zavrhovány a tabuizovány. Obě postavy, Septimus i Bertha, by z velké části došly k posunu vpřed nebýt nátlaku společnosti.

Závěrem práce tedy je, že potřeba protagonistů utéct od jejich zoufalství je hlavním „motorem“ večírků, které pořádají, a až setkání (přímé či nepřímé) se smrtí (kromě Zvonimíra Páva a Berthy) jim otevírají oči a určují další směr jejich konání. Smrt paradoxně jejich zoufalství utlumuje a postavy začnou objevovat pravé štěstí života. Zvonimír a Bertha k takovému zjištění nedochází ani se během děje povídek nesetkají se smrtí, ale stejně jako ostatní postavy dojdou ke zjištění, že jejich činy byly motivovány potřebou něčemu uniknout.

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Abstract

Author:	Marie Kuželová
Faculty and department:	Faculty of Arts, Department of English and American Studies
Title:	Remember my party: Despair in the Works of Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield
Thesis supervisor:	Mgr. David Livingstone, PhD.
The number of pages:	45
The number of signs:	79 135
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The aim of the thesis is to introduce and compare two remarkable female authors and their works. It will be focused on comparing Woolf's classic novel '*Mrs Dalloway*' with short stories of Mansfield – '*The Garden Party*', '*Bliss*', '*Mr Reginald Peacock's Day*'. The first, theoretical part is the introduction of the authors and their relationship along with some information about the Bloomsbury group. The practical part will be focused on comparing and analysing their works and finding their similar theme. The theme which is connected in all of the stories and which will be further analysed is the party as a mask for despair, loneliness and dark desires of the protagonists. The theme of homosexuality, suicide and death will also be focused on as an interlink between the writers' work and even their personal lives.

Anotace

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Název Práce:	Pamatuj na můj večírek: Zoufalství v dílech Virginie Woolfové a Katherine Mansfieldové
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. David Livingstone, PhD.
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Klíčová slova: zoufalství, útěk, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, Paní Dallowayová, Den pana Zvonimíra Páva, Blaho a jiné povídky, Zahradní slavnost, večírek, slavnost, maska, společnost, smrt, homosexualita, rodinné vztahy, vztah matky a dcery

Cílem bakalářské práce je uvést a porovnávat tyto dvě významné autorky a jejich díla. Jejím záměrem je srovnat významné dílo Woolfové, „*Paní Dallowayová*“ s povídkami Mansfieldové – „*Zahradní slavnost*“, „*Blaho*“ a „*Den pana Zvonimíra Páva*.“ První, praktická část začíná úvodem do života a vzájemných vztahů autorek spolu s několika informacemi o skupině Bloomsbury group. Praktická část bude zaměřena na srovnání jejich děl, analýze a hledání společných témat a prvků. Téma, které je protkáno všemi těmito díly, a které bude analyzováno, je večírek jakožto maska zakrývající zoufalství, osamělost a černé myšlenky a touhy hlavních představitelů. Na téma homosexuality, sebevraždy a smrti bude nahlíženo také jako na propojení mezi životem a dílem autorek.