



T. C.

**ULUDAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANABİLİM DALI
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**TEACHING THE MAJOR THEMES IN KATHERINE
MANSFIELD'S SHORT STORIES**

(YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ)

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**Danışman
YRD. DOÇ. DR. EROL BARUT**

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Uğur Çetinavcı'ya ait Teaching the Major Themes in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories (Katherine Mansfield'in Kısa Öykülerinde Temel Konuların Öğretimi) adlı çalışma, jürimiz tarafından Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bilim Dalında Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Başkan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this MA thesis was to find and discuss the methods to teach the major themes in Katherine Mansfield's short stories on the basis of the thematic analyses of the eight selected important works of the author.

For this, carefully selected eight stories of the author were used as the data. By highlighting, interpreting and discussing certain extracts, sentences and even the words that appear to disclose and/or constitute the author's thematic concerns, the stories were analysed with a clear focus on their themes first and then, the different thematic findings were discussed under separate sections together with their possible relations to and suggestions about teaching them.

The results of the study showed that the main, consistent thematic features in the author's stories are "a pessimistic view on life", "patriarchal social structures" and "social classes and conflicts." Based on these findings it was seen that different ways can be considered to teach the thematic concerns in Mansfield's stories and they are so suitable to enable Turkish students to learn in a motivated way by internalising the characters, experiences and messages that the author presents in her fiction and have literature courses in which they would be highly interested.

ÖZET

Bu Yüksek Lisans tezinin amacı; Katherine Mansfield'in seçilmiş sekiz önemli kısa hikayesinin işlenen konular bakımından çözümlenmesi temelinde, yazarın eserlerindeki belli başlı konuların öğretimi üzerine yollar ve yöntemler bulmaktır.

Bunun için yazarın dikkatlice seçilmiş sekiz kısa hikayesi veri olarak kullanılmıştır. Hikayelerde yazarın işlediği konular bakımından ilgi ve kaygılarını oluşturan ve ortaya çıkaran bölümler, cümleler hatta kelimeler yorumlanmış ve tartışılmış, eserler konularına odaklanılarak çözümlenmiş ve daha sonra söz konusu konular hakkındaki bulgular ayrı alt bölümler içinde öğretimlerine yönelik değerlendirme ve önerilerle tartışılmıştır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları göstermiştir ki; eserlerde işleniş bakımından tutarlılık gösteren ana konular "hayata dair karamsar bir bakış", "ataerkil toplumsal yapılar" ve "sosyal sınıflar ve bunlar arasındaki çatışmalardır." Bu bulgular temelinde Mansfield'in hikayelerindeki temasal unsurların öğretimi üzerine farklı yollar geliştirilebileceği, Türk öğrencilerin yazarın kurguladığı karakterleri, olayları ve ilettiklerini içselleştirerek motive bir şekilde öğrenebilmeleri ve ilgiyle takip edecekleri edebiyat dersleri için yazarın ve işlediği konuların elverişli olduğu görülmüştür.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In most of the English language teaching/learning contexts and English language teacher training programmes, literature courses have taken part and still take part in our country and as well as in other countries in the world. Short story, as a literary genre and as a component of the literature courses in question, has naturally taken part in these contexts and programmes. However, short stories and especially the modern ones written after the two world wars by such authors as Katherine Mansfield might be very unfamiliar to the inexperienced student readers who are not accustomed to reading such stories which are deliberately written as void of an easily pursued course of events, a neat plot, well-thought-out structural devices, a lucid narration and use of point of view, symbols interpreted without much effort and finally, thematic concerns and messages easily detected in the story as a whole or particularly at the end of it. Especially the quality modernist stories, which are the mostly published contemporary works of the short story genre of the twentieth century and which the students are supposed to read and study in their literature courses besides the classics, seem to lack a predetermined plot and tend to give almost all their universal messages through implication and even omission, a completely different use of narration, point of view, symbols and other elements of short story. Katherine Mansfield is one of the pioneers of this tendency and, as it is mentioned and exemplified in various parts of the present study, her style, thematic concerns and messages have often been considered to be obscure and quite hard to grasp.

Due to the facts mentioned above, this study aims at analysing and determining some main consistent thematic features in Katherine Mansfield's selected eight major works and then, discussing and suggesting the ways in which the determined thematic concerns could be taught to the students who will keep studying literature and literary works in their educational programmes. At that point, as its another significant aim, the present study is going to attempt to verify the hypothesis that Katherine Mansfield should be taught as she is not only a famous New Zealander short story writer but also an author who might be very interesting and beneficial for Turkish students to read and study and the hypothesis

that she is a universal literary figure whose works Turkish students can relate to their own lives. This point should be an important criterion for teachers while choosing the writer and works their students are supposed to be studying if they want to see motivated and interested students in their classes to read and study literary works, also in a way that could improve the language skills of students. At this point, the present study is going to attempt to show that Katherine Mansfield meets this criterion and students can study her fiction not only as an author who somehow became famous and included in syllabus, but also as a literary figure they would find highly interesting and not irrelevant to their own social and emotional lives.

In order to achieve the aforesaid goals, this study aims at analysing Katherine Mansfield's short stories in terms of their thematic concerns, understanding the author's fiction better and on the basis of these, attempting to see the references to teaching particularly the thematic concerns in question and in a more general sense, her fiction as a whole and in addition, the references to language teaching. In order to achieve this aim, carefully selected eight stories of Mansfield are used as the data. By highlighting the certain parts, sentences and even the words that appear to constitute the author's thematic concerns, the stories are analysed and interpreted with a clear focus on their themes first and then, the main different thematic findings as the results of the analyses are discussed in the last chapter under separate sections together with the discussion of their possible relations to and suggestions about teaching them. The necessary references to the analytical literature about the particular eight stories are provided simultaneously with the analyses of the stories in question. At that point the criterion for the necessity is whether or not a reference to the literature is primarily on the thematic dimension of the story analysed.

Here, the questions that need to be answered seem to be the following ones:

- Why is Katherine Mansfield, as a short story writer, worth analysing, teaching and learning?
- Why were those particular eight stories selected as the data to be analysed and then to base the references to teaching the author's themes on?

- For whom can the present study be beneficial and used?

In the rest of this chapter, the answers are going to be tried to be given under separate sections.

1.1 Why Should Katherine Mansfield Be Studied, Taught and Learnt?

Before dwelling on the value of Katherine Mansfield as a short story writer in literature, it might be necessary first to mention the place of literary works in ELT teacher education and in language teaching. Before answering the question “Why is Mansfield’s fiction advised to be taught?”, this could be an answer to “Why should literature be included in the language teacher education programmes and/or in language ELT syllabuses?”

If it is accepted that a foreign language is learnt for the sake of communicating with the speakers of that language, then it should be thought that an indispensable component of quality communication processes is the knowledge of or at least an awareness of the culture of the people, whose language is the target for the learners. Liu (1998) in her article emphasises the issue as follows:

It is well known that cultural understanding is an indispensable part of second or foreign language acquisition. Knowledge about the foreign culture is thus very important for language teachers, even for those whose students only need a reading knowledge of the language. This is because no language, whether spoken or written, can be devoid of cultural influences. (Liu 1998: 8)

In this case, the benefit and significance of literary works are probably so hard to deny if the pedagogical aim is teaching a language together with its culture. Literary works could be very effective means of teaching culture since one of the main sources of authors’ inspiration is either their own experimentation or observation of the elements and experiences constituting their culture and history. Authors generally reflect in their works the ways they and/or the people around them are affected by such experiences. Thus, novels, short stories, poems, dramas, essays etc. can become invaluable sources of cultural, social, sociological and intellectual information. As good writers can do it so strikingly in their peculiar ways, it might be even more important to study them for students and

especially teacher trainees, who are expected to teach language not exempt from its culture but not in a way that would reinforce the already effective pop culture again and again and not in a manner to be exposed as a propaganda of course. Kramersch (1993) explains how literature and culture are inseparable as follows:

By constructing with the literary text a reality different from that of texts of information, students are given access to a world of attitudes and values, collective imaginings and historical frames of reference that constitute the memory of a people or speech community. Thus literature and culture are inseparable. (Kramersch 1993: 175)

As it is going to be mentioned time after time in the text where necessary, Mansfield's stories include some vivid, down-to-earth social and sociological details of England and Europe especially after the First World War and of how a collective psychology the event in question created.

When we consider our country in terms of language teaching together with literature and thus culture, we, can say that the importance of teaching language together with culture might be considered to have increased in Turkey's process of integration into the European Union, which is a process that cannot be separate from integration into European cultures to some extent. This issue is evident in the Common European (CEF) Framework of Reference for Languages which sets the criteria for language learning for European Citizenship, cultural co-operation and plurilingualism which is a concept setting out to encourage people to learn not only one particular language but also several other languages in order to interact with each other in a united Europe. As regards different cultures in interaction with each other, pluriculturalism is one reflecting a similar point of view. The following statements might attest to the significance of literary works in language learning as one of the main cultural manifestations:

Plurilingualism has itself to be seen in the context of pluriculturalism. Language is not only a major aspect of culture, but also a means of access to cultural manifestations. Much of what is said above applies equally in the more general field. In a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side. They are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched,

integrated pluricultural competence, of which plurilingual competence is one component, again interacting with other components. (Council of Europe 2001: 16)

Literary works, as one of the pedagogical means, can also be very useful for teaching language itself. In the products of good writers, students can be exposed to the most quality, artistic use of authentic language and exemplification of aesthetic language use. Carter (1982) emphasises the significance of literature in language teaching, as an example of language in use and as a source for different contexts for language use, as follows:

Literature is an example of language in use, and is a context for language use. Studying the language of literary text *as* language can therefore enhance our appreciation of aspects of the different systems of language organisation. (Carter 1982: 12)

Even though it is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth just noting that a linguistic analysis of Mansfield's language use in her stories might prove that they are valuable sources indeed containing some quality aspects of the different systems of language organisation. Emphasising the fact that for Mansfield writing always meant language choices, New (1996) mentions the importance of reading her stories in that perspective:

... they demonstrate scenes and sentences in throes of construction – of words underway – and they provide instances of theorising about the possible effects of particular verbal arrangements: all of which emphasise the importance of reading any Mansfield text for how it says in order to appreciate – however one interprets this phrase – what it has to say. (New 1996: 53)

When it comes to Katherine Mansfield's place in world literature as a short story writer and how it has been appreciated by readers and literary scholars such as New, today it may look even needless to discuss the author's literary value. She is still widely read, published and examined. In her mother country New Zealand, she is considered to be a literary icon. The reputable English novelist and writer Virginia Woolf admitted that Mansfield's writing was the only one she had ever been jealous of. In terms of her particular stylistic qualities, she has often been considered to be an equivalent of the famous Russian writer Anton Chekhov.

Schneider (1935) mentions this in her article in which she examines the parallelism between two particular works of the two writers in question:

Yet a remarkable parallel is to be found between one of her early short stories, "The Child-Who-Was-Tired" from the volume *In a German Pension*, and a story of Chekhov's called, in its English versions, "Sleepyhead" or "Sleepy." (Schneider 1935: 394)

Then it is important to try to summarise here how Katherine Mansfield, who passed away at the age of only thirty-four, achieved such an appreciation or even praise and her peculiarity as an author.

Mansfield was one of the pioneers of the modernist and impressionist tendencies and their applications in the field of literary works. After the novelties and innovations such authors as Mansfield introduced, modernist short stories continued to gradually supplant the conventional ones and evolved and developed up till our time. This was to a great extent a literary reaction to the traumatic effects of the great First World War in Britain and whole Europe. Having demolished most of the approved and adopted social, politic, religious, military etc. opinions and beliefs, the war created a vacuum which needed to be filled by some brand-new things in every field. The old and familiar could not prevent it and millions of death. Katherine Mansfield was one of the few writers then who did not fail to fulfil such a requirement in literature. Saying that Mansfield quietly and radically revolutionised the short story form, Mc Rae (2000) interprets how she reacted against her age and how this contributed to her literary immortality:

Mansfield is a writer about uncertainty. Her subject matter is very precisely the uncertainty of the post-First World War world, the decade that encompassed both despair and jazz. And she analyses it acutely, fearlessly, and in the tones of the music of the age. *What makes the stories powerful even now, eighty and more years after they were written, is that the anxieties and tensions Katherine Mansfield describes have come to be seen as very much the same as the tensions of our times.* (Mc Rae 2000: xi) (my italics)

At this point, it might be important to outline in what ways the author responded to the modernist call and gained her unique literary identity. First of all, it should be mentioned that her stories lack a well-wrought structure and a neat plot in which readers can find a

beginning that introduces the characters, setting and situation, then a gradual development of events usually with a growing suspense and lastly, a climactic point and an ending with an absolute resolution. The stories are also lacking in having a controlled use of point of view. They may be narrated by an omniscient narrator with free indirect discourse or from the perspective of a collective consciousness of a group of characters or in other modes of narration. More than one mode may be used in a single story and the transition between the uses of two different modes is generally unclear.

In the plotless stories with such a very different application of point of view, Mansfield usually opens her stories with a conjunction like “and”, thus the reader is often plunged immediately into a narrative situation. In her unique way, Mansfield often depicts especially the moments of changes in feelings and thoughts. Instead of describing the big events in the lives of some important, heroic, admirable people, the stories focus on the unconscious minds and inner moods of ordinary people. Her prominent quality of handling children in her stories can set a good example to this issue which could well be a point of interest for teacher trainees who are to teach children in their professional lives. Parkin-Gounelas (1990) mentions the quality in question as follows:

She is, of course, famous for handling of childhood, for being one of the first in English fiction to depict the child’s mind as something potentially sinister and lascivious, not simply awed and ignorant. (Parkin-Gonelas 1990: 497)

Finally, the endings of the stories are always open, they withhold resolution. Presenting an effect and/or a change, Mansfield leaves for the reader the deduction of the unmentioned. New’s (1999) reference to the author’s views on classic, plotted stories seems to explain why she adopted all these modernist tendencies:

To accept the received language of “art” – the received conventions of story-telling – was an option Mansfield repeatedly refused; she found plotted, closed stories anathema, and their politics a “corruption.” (New 1999: 132)

In the emotional and intellectual atmosphere of Europe traumatised by the First World War which refuted many conventions in every field, Mansfield appears to have been one of the pioneers who tried to meet the need for “new” in literature, especially in the short story

genre. Just two decades after her death testified to the fact that she was right having done so. Humanity experienced the Second World War, the chaotic effects got deeper and European peoples were further from the relative certainty, security, consistency and feeling of being settled before the wars. Art, and literature as a component of it, responded with an advance to post-modernism from the modernist path authors like Mansfield had paved. They believed that life and people were no more that easy to understand. Fullbrook (1986) mentions this as follows:

... the view of causal relations embodied in the conventional plot and the neat 'finality' of the traditional ending seemed, for the modernists in general and Mansfield in particular, 'to convey the misleading notion of something finished, absolute, and wholly understood.' (Fullbrook 1986: 33)

Not only the greater second world war, ten millions of death, the emergence of post-modernism and literary types as absurd drama, but also the periods that have followed after those collective traumas and the political and military agenda of our time attest to Katherine Mansfield's view on life and human experience. It would not be so hard to claim that today, any critical thing for the present and future is absolute and wholly understood. It might be a misleading notion to think that the drives of the two world wars completely vanished. Furthermore, with the situation in the Middle East and particularly in Iraq, the main source of the global feeling of uncertainty, complexity and insecurity is just nearby our country now.

All the above-mentioned things could be considered to be explaining Mansfield's literary value, the universality of her themes and why she is still studied and read, why the readers of our time can still see the characters and situations in her stories presented everywhere, and thus, why and how her themes are contemporary as well as universal. Criticising the traditional literature teaching application, Widdowson (1988) defends the necessity of introducing students to literature which is written in a more familiar version of English and which has more familiar beliefs and values. These are the things Mansfield's fiction seems to be apt to do:

Most literature courses at university begin in the distant past (Beowulf, Chaucer and Shakespeare being favourite starting points) and advance towards the present through every major 'period' on the way, usually stopping well short of writing which could reasonably be regarded as contemporary. So what students gain from such an approach is not an insight into the beliefs, values and so on of contemporary English-speaking societies but a knowledge of their past culture and what is sometimes referred to as their cultural heritage. (Widdowson 1988: 79)

The present study will be attempting to show that Katherine Mansfield's literary works would be a solution for the problem stated above. It is quite plausible to expect that students of English and ELT teacher trainees should be able to relate the literary texts to their lives. If a literature course fails to do so, studying literature becomes a burden on students. Therefore, selection of classics should be done with this in mind. These classics are expected to facilitate such communication in a variety of ways, such as by means of giving learners a perspective of European thinking and understanding European life and by enabling them to question how different and/or similar this perspective to the Turkish perspective.

All these seem to be satisfactory answers to the questions such as "Why shall I teach Katherine Mansfield?" by teachers and "Why am I studying Katherine Mansfield?" by students.

Besides the universal quality of the author and her enduring relevancy to the world of twenty-first century, the aforementioned reference to Turkey and some others to be dealt contribute more to the fact that Mansfield can be an ideal choice for Turkish teachers and students to study. Those other relations of the author's themes to Turkey are going to be determined on the basis of the thematic analyses and their place and function in teaching are going to be dealt later. At this point, I will conclude with a striking example that is supposed to facilitate the consideration of the fictional society in Mansfield's stories and the real one in Turkey together. While examining the feminist imperative behind the author's fiction, Kaplan (1991) needs to emphasise the mentality of the main female character in "Frau Fischer" as follows:

Frau Fischer, in the story of the same name, sentimentally suggests to the narrator that “every wife ought to feel that *her place is by her husband’s side* – sleeping or waking (Kaplan 1991: 139). (my italics)

Being apart from Kaplan’s aim, Frau Fischer’s words have been emphasised in my study since their even one-to-one translation to Turkish points to a traditional, well-known, still existing mentality in Turkey and the patriarchal family structure and many other systems in the country. This could well be an item of the information that would make Turkish students think that Katherine Mansfield is not only a famous New Zealander writer involved in a syllabus consisting of some good writers about whom they just have to learn, but an intellectual who transcended her time and her contemporaries.

1.2 Why Were the Particular Eight Stories Selected As the Data To Do the Thematic Analyses?

After reading nearly all of the stories Mansfield wrote and much from the written criticism of these stories, it seemed possible to make a distinction between two groups of Mansfield stories. The first group consists of the stories written after the author’s observations of German people during her treatment in a German spa. They were collected in a book called “In a German Pension” and published in 1911. The stories in question have drawn and may still draw attention with their parodies, humour, satirical tone and serious disapproval of sexual oppression. However, they were written before the First World War, at the beginning of Mansfield’s professional career. Therefore, they did not contain any of the significant reflections of the war’s effects and they appeared to lack the depth, subtlety, thematic variance and above all, the modernist elements Mansfield’s later works presented. Interestingly enough, after years, Katherine Mansfield herself almost hated them and did not want those stories to be published. By agreeing the author, Marek (1998) mentions this in her article as follows:

It should not be surprising that, despite the skill and humour of these early stories, Mansfield was reluctant to reprint this book... (Marek 1998: 291)

Büchel (1995), with a reference to one of her letters, reveals the fact that the author had a very severe judgement on her earlier stories:

From the generally rather crude and satirical sketches and stories collected in *In a German Pension* – which Mansfield herself deemed “far too immature, “juvenile” and “a lie” (*Collected Letters* 3: 206, 4 February 1920) – “At ‘Lehmann’s’ ” stands out as a narrative with Naturalist tendencies. (Büchel 1995: 43)

Having considered all these, the stories in “In a German Pension” were excluded from the thematic analyses of the present study.

From the rest of the author’s short stories, it was seen that the selected eight were often included in the analytical and critical literature on Mansfield’s works. It was also noticed that these stories have attracted not only the attention of critics but also of readers and thus publishers. They generally have been chosen for the reprints of Mansfield’s works after her death. Therefore, they can be considered to be of the major stories of hers.

In addition to these, the characteristics of the characters in these eight stories were an important criterion evaluated during the selection process. They are from different ages and different social and economic statuses. While Pearl Button of “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped” is a young, enthusiastic child, “The Life of Ma Parker” is a story of an old, exhausted woman. The couple in “Honeymoon” is a young one, the one in “Bliss” is in their thirties and the Hammonds of “The Stranger” are middle-aged. While Vera of “The Dill Pickle” is a young, strong, independent woman, the elderly lady Miss Brill of “Miss Brill” is close to the end of a life spent by being dependant on her make-believes that she has always been strong and independent.

It was thought that such a heterogeneous group of characters could be an evidence for the fact that Mansfield’s view on life and the era was valid for humanity in general, her thematic concerns and messages could involve all kinds of people without any exception due to their particular qualities.

1.3 For Whom Can This Study Be Beneficial and Used?

The present study as a lecturer/teacher guide to Mansfield’s fiction aims to be beneficial to especially the English teacher trainees in Education Faculties, in “Short Story Analysis and Teaching” and/or “Introduction to English Literature” courses. However, it might be a source when teaching literature and/or short story as a genre to any group of

students with an upper-intermediate or higher level of English in any educational institution.

It aims to inspire the lessons that would generate and enhance students' interest in and comprehension of Katherine Mansfield's thematic concerns particularly in the selected eight stories, and generally in her whole fiction. It aims to provide the basis and some ideas for the sessions after which students would be expected to determine the thematic concerns and patterns in the stories, connect them to certain biographical features of the author and to some items of the information about the era she lived in, see their relations and references to our time and our country and have some independent discussions on this, and finally be keener and more interested Katherine Mansfield and literature readers.

For being beneficial to teacher trainees and/or other groups of students, as mentioned before, this study aims to be a useful resource and guide for firstly the teachers who want to use Mansfield's works for their literary and/or pedagogical purposes. Considering the fact that Katherine Mansfield produced her unconventional, innovative works in the short story genre which is relatively unfamiliar to teach and learn when compared to novel, drama and poetry, it tries to help teachers to develop a deeper understanding and a particular judging perspective of the analysed eight stories in particular, and the author's oeuvre in general. It is hoped that this would be of use to teachers when considering their particular lesson plans to teach Mansfield's short stories and when guiding and assessing their students' cognitive and intellectual access to the stories.

This study contains four parts. The following three parts will present the thematic analyses of the selected eight stories of the author. Then, based on the analyses part, a chapter on teaching the thematic concerns in these short stories will follow. Finally, the conclusion part will wrap up the issues mentioned in the previous chapters.

2.0 ANALYSES

In this part of the study, carefully selected eight stories of Mansfield are used as the data. By highlighting, interpreting and discussing the certain extracts, sentences and even the words that appear to disclose and/or constitute the author's thematic concerns, the stories are analysed with a clear focus on their themes first and then, the different thematic findings are discussed in the last chapter under separate sections together with their possible relations to and suggestions about teaching them. The necessary references to the analytical literature about the particular eight stories are provided simultaneously with the thematic analyses of the stories in question. At that point the criterion for the necessity is whether or not a reference to the literature is primarily on the thematic dimension of the story analysed.

2.1 The Thematic Analysis of "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped"

Among all the stories of Katherine Mansfield, this story might be claimed to be the unreal one in tone, it can be considered to be almost an allegory. It tells about a dream-like experience of a "conventional" little girl called "Pearl Button", a fantasy of her. One day, two dark women in colourful clothes come, take Pearl from the porch of her urban house to some fascinating places and she has her greatest experience in her life with those dark, amusing people until policemen find them and take her back to her house.

Through such a content as the one above and suitable stylistic, linguistic devices; the story produces a subtle general criticism towards the particular notions and practices of the social and familial conditions in which Pearl lives. In particular, the criticism is towards the adults who impose their own values and attitudes on Pearl in a way that would revoke her freedom as a female. In the social life of the era and in its concepts and applications, there are some specific female roles determined through the preceding long years. Thus, these roles are to conventionalise Pearl (in the way they conventionalised her mother) and determine what she is expected to do. She should be conformed to these patterns which have been set by the system and conveyed through parents. At this point, the question to be answered should be how the author dealt with

such a thematic concern in this one of her shortest stories which does not involve any parent and seems to be a brief, simple account of a kidnapping.

First of all, the choice of the protagonist's name (Pearl Button) seems so far from being a coincidence. If it is thought that the society which Pearl lives in is a superficially nice dress, then she is a pearl button on it; but a button to be snatched from the dress for a fantastic period of time that will be discussed from now on. On the narrated day, Pearl is playing in front of her house and the story starts as follows:

Pearl Button swung on the little gate in front of the house of Boxes. (Mansfield 2000: 3)

Pearl "swings" and this gives the implication of not being tied firmly, anyway she is to be snatched just a few seconds later. At the moment, attention should be paid to the name of the house: "House of Boxes". It is an obvious image of confinement. Moreover, the diminutive vocabulary in the first few sentences of the story supports this idea of confinement, the implication of that image. On a sunshiny day with "little" winds:

She swung on the *little* gate, all alone, and she sang a *small* song (*ibid.* p. 3).
(my italics)

Just at this moment; two big, dark, always smiling women come in red, yellow and green clothes with pink handkerchiefs over their head and carrying two big flax baskets of ferns. They are barefooted. They are the most salient features of the story that generate its dream-like, fairy-tale quality. They have no names, no distinguishable personalities and characters, they are highly mysterious. They seem to possess everything that would represent liberty and pleasure against confinement and pain. Their coloured, gay clothing and their liberty signalled by their unshod feet is in direct contradiction to Pearl's tight pinafore frill. They look absolutely free in every detail unlike Pearl and her mother who is in the kitchen at that moment and "ironing-because-its-Tuesday". According to the emphatic spelling of this expression, it appears that she has no other chance on Tuesdays. She seems to have been restricted by her imposed female role and most probably, she is expected to restrict her daughter Pearl now. These two dark women call Pearl by promising to show her "beautiful things" and thus her voyage to an entirely new world begins. However, at first she just expects to see what

they have in their own House of Boxes, to see a different and new version of her home and life. But instead of telling their rules, one of the women catches Pearl up in her arms, hugs her and gives a warm shoulder. Most probably, Pearl feels the happiness, comfort and security that she has never experienced even with her mother who is now used to serve like a programmed robot to the men in her life in a patriarchal society. What Pearl thinks about the woman is as follows:

She was softer than a bed and she had a nice smell – a smell that made you bury your head and breathe and breathe it... (*ibid.* p. 4) (my italics)

Waiting to go to another House of Boxes, Pearl finds herself in a log house, undivided by walls, which is full of another dark people. They are also characterised without any identity but with some salient qualities as seeming to be engaged in only pleasant things. They caress and kiss Pearl. At the moment she sets her foot in this house which is totally different from her house, Pearl is freed from her hair ribbons by a woman and her nice curls are shaken loose. This act might be considered to be a symbol of the increasing independence she enjoys because Katherine Mansfield often uses ribbons, ornamented hats, and ostentatious garments etc. as the symbols of the conventional restrictions caused by the life style of Pearl's social class. New (1999) mentions this in consideration of some other Mansfield stories:

Hats, repeatedly, are signs of deference to convention, as when Fenella wears one for propriety's sake, or Laura Sheridan (in "The Garden Party") puts one on at her mother's behest; in "The Wind Blows" Matilda (rebellious against her mother) deliberately wears an *old* hat to her music lesson and shouts "Go to hell" (192) at her mother... (New 1999: 113)

On the other hand, Pearl still tends to behave according to her breeding after being offered a juicy pear and sitting on a dusty floor to eat it:

The floor was very dusty. She carefully pulled up her pinafore and dress and sat on her petticoat *as she had been taught to sit in dusty places*, and she ate the fruit, the juice running all down her front. (Mansfield 2000: 5) (my italics)

She sits just as she is taught how to do but she smears her nice dress. Nevertheless, the dark woman, patting her cheek, says that that does not matter at all. This is surely a different response from the one that Pearl's mother would give; who is ironing her daughter's other dresses because that day is Tuesday!

Then, a man comes and shouts something. They all get up, laugh and get on a green cart with a red pony and black pony. Pearl sits on the lap of the woman beside the driver who stands up and waves his whip. His people follow in other colourful carts just like it happens in a joyful carnival. Namely; Pearl's succeeding phase of her fantastical experience, her trip to the big blue sea, starts. It is narrated as if it is a very nice dream: (As a matter of fact, it is not all that easy to be sure about whether Pearl's experience is a dream-like reflection of her unconscious or a real event).

Then the country came. First fields of short grass with sheep on them and little bushes of white flowers and pink briar rose baskets – then big trees on both sides of road - and nothing to be seen except big trees... (*ibid.* p. 5)

Before the beach, Pearl is taken to one of the tiny houses full of fat and laughing people with little naked babies rolling about in the gardens like puppies. At last, in the atmosphere of such gaiety and freedom, Pearl who has never been happy like that before cannot help overtly comparing it with her own life. This is important as it gives clues about Mansfield's view about the conventional system which she seems to criticise in this story as it was said before. Below is Pearl's comparison:

"Haven't you got any Houses of Boxes?" she said. "Don't you all live in a row? Don't the men go to offices? Aren't there any nasty things?" (*ibid.* p. 6)

The dark people reply by releasing her from the still remaining, superficial symbols of the life in the House of Boxes, they take off her shoes and stockings, her pinafore and dress. Altogether they rush to the bright, beautiful sea over the warm sand. Pearl is at the summit of her bliss but just at this moment, she is also at the edge of her permanent grief. The destructive forces lurk nearby her joy. The means by which nastiness reappears is the coming of the police to carry her back to the House of Boxes. It is narrated as follows:

Little men in *blue coats* - little blue men came running, running towards her with shouts and whistling - a crowd of little blue men to carry her back to the House of Boxes (*ibid.* p. 6). (my italics)

Their blue coats are in a pathetic contrast with that magical, infinite blue of the sea in which Pearl is still in. The police, the male guardians of conventional regimentation, arrive to end Pearl's extreme but inevitably transient happiness. They will bring her

back to the mechanical civilisation whose guardians are men again who “go to offices”. Evaluating this ending showing that an escape from the male-dominated society can occur only in fantasies like Pearl’s, Fullbrook (1986) comments on the focus of the story as follows:

It specifically treats the forces that construct stereotyped roles for women and the difficulty of escape from those roles. (Fullbrook 1986: 41)

From now on, it seems that young Pearl Button must be schooled into the rigid categories of women in order to prevent her being snatched from them once more. After that escape rather than a seemingly kidnapping, she is now in that established society, to advance in that way again leading to the image of a prospective mother “ironing - because - its - Tuesday”...

2.2 The Thematic Analysis of “Bliss”

“Bliss” is one of the most popular and anthologised stories of Katherine Mansfield. It is based on the feelings of an upper-class, blissful woman called “Bertha Young”, before during and after a joyful party with friends which she holds with her husband in their house. The story as a whole and its separate aspects also have often been under the scrutiny of many critics. Zorn (1980) mentions this as follows:

It is perhaps inevitable, given our cultural bias, that Bertha Young, who yearned to share her feelings of “bliss” with her husband and friends and failed to find the language that would communicate it, *has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by the critics of this most popular of Katherine Mansfield’s stories.* (Zorn 1980: 141) (my italics)

The story has received various critical and literary responses and it has been found as convenient to be approached from the viewpoints based on several different theoretical and/or ideological standpoints. For instance; on one hand, Dilworth (1998) emphasises the Darwinian theory of evolution as the outstanding feature of the story in his article:

The meaning of its central imagery – the pear tree, garden and moon – continually changes in a way that rhymes with the displacements of biological evolution – evolution being, though heretofore unnoticed as such, the most important thematic strand in the story. (Dilworth 1998: 141)

On the other hand; knowing that the evolution theory caused the questioning of the Bible and shattered the faith in its Genesis part especially, it is so interesting to find that Neaman (1986) claims in her article that Mansfield had been highly affected by her readings of the Bible while writing the story which had references to the Bible in terms of its contents, images and symbolism:

Perhaps because critics have seen all too clearly the obvious tree of knowledge blooming in Bertha's garden, *none seems to have detected the first overt clue to the thematic importance of the Bible*. It appears as a familiar echo in the words, "for the first time in her, she desired her husband". In Genesis 3.16, among the punishments God metes out to the disobedient Eve is: "thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall over thee." (Neaman 1986: 242) (my italics)

Such an ambiguity that has generated many problems in the analysis of the story and plagued critics for years is achieved by Mansfield in thirteen and a half pages in "Bliss". Those two opinions above which are in great conflict with each other are just one of the examples for this situation. Besides, the story has also been considered to be only about sex (both homosexual and heterosexual), feminism, oneness with nature, and psychological impacts of the unconscious on one's self etc. This is a result of Katherine Mansfield's style, her tendency to only hint at her messages but not to disclose them in an overt manner. According to Fullbrook (1986), what underlies this aspect of the author's style is a particular interpretation of life and experiences in it:

The only way to read such stories, to 'get at' them, is to be alert to their obliqueness, untrustworthy surfaces, and lack of overt narrative instruction for the reader at the same time as paying attention to the urgent signs of meaning that are dissolved all through the text rather than being concentrated at climactic points. *The method itself is a part of the commentary on the world that sees experience as not easily readable but difficult, obscure, and very likely to be other than it seems.* (Fullbrook 1986: 34)

In this study it will be tried to reveal if any general, covering thematic concerns could be found to be functional also in this controversial and problematic story; thus if the protagonist will find herself finally isolated with no hope or help like Pearl Button, beaten by the destructive forces that have been just behind her bliss and joy which are to fade away inevitably.

The story starts with an apparent presentation of the protagonist's, Bertha Young's, blissful mood while she is on her way home:

Although Bertha Young was thirty she still had moments like this when she wanted to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to throw something up in the air and catch it again, or to stand still and laugh at – nothing – at nothing, simply (Mansfield 2000: 48).

Bertha is joyful, she feels an absolute bliss and this fact is given through the third-person narration technique. Nonetheless, the reader is indicated that she cannot see any specific thing to be happy about or to laugh at. She is full of happiness but she does not seem to have any conscious reasons for this. This queer situation as a sign should make the reader doubtful about the reliability and permanence of this bliss. At the same time, it might be thought as a foreshadowing of what that bliss will lead up to.

As it is expected from a decent middle-class woman, Bertha does not go out of her way to do the things she wants so much but instead she continues walking home. Her spontaneous and awkward questioning of the reason why “she cannot take dancing steps on and off the pavement although she yearns for it” increases the doubt about the nature of this bliss. Because it introduces some specific characteristics of her life that are more likely to make her unhappy, but not that happy. These characteristics also remind the restrictions in the life of the girl in “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped”, symbolised by her “House of Boxes” and tight pinafore. In a similar way, Bertha’s life is first presented with images of confinement:

Oh, is there no way you can express it without being ‘drunk and disorderly’?
How idiotic civilisation is! Why be given a body if you have to keep it shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle? (*ibid.* p. 48) (my italics)

But all the same Bertha threw off her coat, *she could not bear the tight clasp of it another moment*, and the cold air fell on her arms (*ibid.* p. 48). (my italics)

While reading the story on, some other details of Bertha’s life convert the doubts about her bliss into a question such as the following one: “Is there any reason for being happy like that indeed?”

For Bertha, it is seen that such an absurd thing as buying especially purple grapes is a serious aim. She wants her fruit to be in harmony with her new purple dining-room carpet. Later, we understand that she somehow must create some even more absurd meanings in her life because she is in a very futile, meaningless position as a mother for example. She has to take the permission of her baby’s nurse before caring for it:

'Oh, Nanny, *do let me finish giving her her supper while you put the bath things away.*' (*ibid.* p. 50) (my italics)

Even when she finds the opportunity to hug her baby, her estrangement from it is sensed in her words, as D'Arcy (1999) emphasises this in her article:

However, the contrast between Bertha's feelings and her verbalised attitude is, to say the least, striking. The mother is incapable of transmitting warmth and love to her baby. (D'Arcy 1999: 257)

Just after the episode with her baby, an apparent distance between herself and her husband can be deduced from her talk with him on the phone:

What had she to say? She'd nothing to say. She only wanted to get in touch with him for a moment. She couldn't absurdly cry: 'Hasn't it been a divine day!' (Mansfield 2000: 51) (my italics)

This notion of distance between them is later supported by Bertha's reflection on her sexual coldness:

They'd discussed it so often. It had worried her dreadfully at first to find that *she was so cold*, but after a time it had not seemed to matter. They were so frank with each other – *such good pals*. That was the best of being modern. (*ibid.* p. 59) (my italics)

Despite all these, Bertha is still happy and her bliss is rising especially in the rising action part of the plot. ("Bliss" is one of the few stories of the modernist Katherine Mansfield which contains the conventional elements of plot.) If it is thought that the plausible source of her happiness is the dinner party at her home and her attending guests, then it should be mentioned that the dialogues of these guests evince the fact that these people can make a person only nervous and bored. Whereas, Bertha thinks of them as follows:

"And friends – *modern, thrilling friends, writers and painters and poets or people keen on social questions* – just the kind of friends they wanted." (*ibid.* p. 52-53) (my italics)

However, despite their literary titles, their talk is so banal and boring in general and they wear strange garments. For Mansfield, they as a group might be an implicit criticism of the society of that era but for Bertha her friends are a reason for her bliss together with her cook making the most superb omelettes! Eventually, she consolidates her joy and bliss via her interpretation of the tall, slender pear tree which is in their

garden and is in richest bloom without any faded petal. She identifies her life with that tree:

And she seemed to see on her eyelids the lovely pear tree with its wide open blossoms as a symbol of her own life. (*ibid.* p. 52)

This tree, the central symbol of “Bliss”, is perhaps the most controversial component of this controversial story. It has been claimed to be symbolising several things including Bertha’s husband Harry, Bertha’s awakening sexuality, the indifference of nature towards mankind etc. However, one certain thing about this tree is that it is Bertha’s illusion that it symbolises her life. With her obvious estrangement from her family, with her inability to make introspection and with the resulting unawareness of the bitter facts in her own life; that slender pear tree in fullest bloom can have nothing to do with Bertha’s meaningless life. Therefore, Bertha is definitely wrong about herself and her life. As a consequence, she can well be considered to be an unreliable narrator as well.

Having determined the realities of Bertha’s life, it is seen that she is estranged from all those. They do not affect her in the way they would be expected to do. Nevertheless, she does not feel unhappy but just the opposite. It is evident that she has lost the capability of reasoning and the capacity to evaluate her life. Due to her malfunctioning mind, she is not her real self anymore and she seems to be personifying the blissful woman she wants to be. She always tends to make herself believe that she is that woman. We understand this when the author provides an access to Bertha’s way of thinking and get the impression that her excessive bliss might be a way of escaping from everything in her nonsensical life and lost self that would disillusion her:

Really – really – she had everything. She was young. Harry and she were as much in love as ever, and they got on together splendidly and were really good pals. She had an adorable baby. They didn’t have to worry about money... (*ibid.* p. 52)

On the other hand, the narration with the omniscient point of view reveals a very significant clue about Bertha’s bliss. She is waiting for something and this seems to amplify the fire of happiness inside her:

She hardly dared to look into the cold mirror – but she did look, and it gave her back a woman, radiant, with smiling, trembling lips, with big, dark eyes and air

of listening, *waiting for something...divine to happen...that she knew must happen...infallibly.* (*ibid.* p. 49) (my italics)

Hours before the party, Bertha aligns the cushions in the drawing-room and:

As she was about to throw the last one she surprised herself by suddenly hugging it to her, *passionately, passionately. But it did not put out the fire in her bosom. Oh, on the contrary!* (*ibid.* p. 52) (my italics)

What must happen infallibly? What is that she is waiting for passionately? These seem to be of the questions that need to be answered at this point. According to Bertha's reflections on the invited guests to the party, there is only one who seems to be worth waiting in the way Bertha does wait. It is a "find" of Bertha, named Pearl Fulton. There are many statements in the story that could give ideas about Pearl's "special place" for Bertha. An interpretation of Bertha's special treatment of Pearl could be and has been its homosexual nature. Bertha is again unaware of such a possibility and she never admits that Pearl is the starter and catalyst of the fire in her bosom. But her views on Pearl, together with her known coldness towards her husband, give some significant clues:

What Miss Fulton did, Bertha didn't know. They had met at the club and *Bertha had fallen in love with her, as she always did fall in love with beautiful women who had something strange about them.* (*ibid.* p. 51) (my italics)

What was there in the touch of that cool arm that could fan – fan – start blazing – blazing – the fire of bliss that Bertha did not know what to do with? (*ibid.* p. 55)

Several authors have often pointed out this important dimension of Bertha's feelings. D'Arcy (1999) is one of them:

Because Bertha is unable (or averse) to engage in a fulfilling sexual relationship with her husband, her bliss is no other than an unconscious camouflaging of a half-contained and frustrated desire. She does not realise, or else refuses to acknowledge, the real nature of her bodily impulses. *In this sense, the whole sequence of events could be interpreted as tracing the unfolding of the heroine's repressed homosexual disposition.* (D'Arcy 1999: 266) (my italics)

Anderson (1984) is another writer commenting on this aspect of the story. His view is as follows:

Almost completely unaware of the homosexual nature of her attraction to Pearl, Bertha quite logically supposes that her passion - though fanned throughout the

evening by imaginary communications with Miss Fulton – is for her husband Harry. (Anderson 1984: 398) (my italics)

As we know, Bertha is an upper-class housewife who has lost her relation with the realities in her life. Then it is quite reasonable that Bertha once more fails to perceive what she actually feels. Instead of accepting such a striking component of her personality, she avoids such a taboo and attributes her excitement to her husband's masculinity. Besides the protagonist's paradoxical train of thought observed in the whole story, this contrast stems from also Mansfield's aforementioned manner of regarding human experiences as being obscure and as very likely to be other than how they seem.

After Pearl Fulton joins the party, the effect of her on Bertha is disclosed through an omniscient point of view of narration up until the climax of the story. Bertha is in an incessant expectation of a "sign" that Pearl is supposed to give:

'I believe this does happen very, very rarely between women. Never between men' thought Bertha. 'But while I am making the coffee in the drawing-room *perhaps she will "give a sign."*' (Mansfield 2000: 57) (my italics)

However, Bertha cannot define or even question what that sign is. Again, she is not aware of her emotions or the mental process she is in. At this point, it is reader's duty to infer the content of that sign from the previous information about that mysterious link between Bertha and Pearl Fulton. In fact, Bertha tries to deceive herself in order to believe that such a link exists. When considering Pearl, there are hardly any evidences which could show a tendency similar to Bertha's. Zorn (1980) discusses about Bertha's this instance of fallibility in her article:

Because Pearl has seemed sympathetic, she desperately waits for a "sign" that she has shared her emotion. But she is unable to distinguish true intimacy from false, and so the moment at the window before the pear tree turns out to be one more imposture. *'Your lovely pear tree' does become a symbol of the desirability of human intimacy and the betrayal of it.* (Zorn 1980: 146)

Despite Pearl's attitude that gives sign of nothing, Bertha once again manages to get lost in her illusion. When watching her garden with Pearl, she thinks that Pearl gives that sign:

How long did they stand there? Both, as it were, caught in that circle of unearthly light, understanding each other perfectly, creatures of another world,

and wondering what they were to do in this one with all this blissful treasure that burnt in their bosoms and dropped, in silver flowers, from their hair and hands?

Forever-for a moment? And did Miss Fulton murmur: 'Yes, just that.' Or did Bertha dream it? (Mansfield 2000: 58)

As it is clear, now Bertha is at the summit of her bliss although she is unaware of its content again. She "dreams" that she has got that sign that would confirm the unity of the two women in a unique way. For this reason, she is also at the very edge of the inescapable impending frustration just like Pearl Button of the previous story analysed and many other characters of Mansfield. Before long, she is to be disillusioned.

At the end of the party while the guests are leaving, Bertha faces the reality. She witnesses the farewell of Pearl and her husband Harry:

His lips said: 'I adore you,' and Miss Fulton laid her moonbeam fingers on his cheeks and smiled her sleepy smile. Harry's nostrils quivered, his lips curled back in a hideous grin while he whispered: 'To-morrow,' and with her eyelids Miss Fulton said: 'Yes.' (ibid. p. 60) (my italics)

This ending might be and has been interpreted in different ways. One of the interpretations is that Bertha faces the damnation she deserves because of her ignorance. Another is that at last she understands the impossibility of having an ideal emotional or sexual partner in such a corrupted society. But when it comes to the question of whether Bertha is shocked because her husband betrays her with Pearl, or whether her prospective lover Pearl betrays her with her husband, the latter seems more probable when the whole story is considered. Anderson (1984) emphasises this as follows:

As the guests take their leave, a stunned Bertha beholds Harry embrace and kiss Pearl. Her eyes focus on Miss Fulton, who laid her "moonbeam" fingers on his cheeks and smiled "her sleepy smile." The sign she had so much desired has been reserved for Harry, and her pearl slips from her grasp like quicksilver. (Anderson 1984: 402-403) (my italics)

D'Arcy (1999) is another example of the writers who take a similar position. Her comment is quoted below:

Seen in this light, the climactic moment when Bertha finally realises that her husband and her friend are lovers significantly alters the position of the participants in the love triangle: It is no longer a matter of Pearl and Bertha being in competition for the strong-sexed, patriarchal Harry, but rather Harry and Bertha are rivals for Pearl. (D'Arcy 1999: 266) (my italics)

In conclusion; after that bliss fed by her hopes, Bertha is now lonely and frustrated just as the young girl in the story “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped” and many other Mansfieldian characters in the author’s other stories, some of which will be analysed with a focus on their themes. Bertha of this story finally finds herself isolated with no hope of human understanding, help or pity. Her last sentence reveals all about this “new Bertha”:

Bertha simply ran over to the long windows.
‘Oh, what is going to happen now?’ she cried. (Mansfield 2000: 61) (my italics)

2.3 The Thematic Analysis of “Honeymoon”

“Honeymoon” is about a young couple who have got recently married. The name of the heroine of the story is Fanny and her husband’s is George. They are in a lovely resort by the Mediterranean sea and they are enjoying their honeymoon. But here, Katherine Mansfield deals with a subtle thematic concern underlying this seemingly trivial account of a honeymoon just as this is the case in almost all of her stories. The question which gradually emerges while reading the story and which the present study aims to answer is “Are they really, both Fanny and George, enjoying their honeymoon, or do they, or only one of these two, just *think* that they are enjoying it?” This is one of the stories that reflect Mansfield’s perspective on problematic male-female relationships especially in marriage. New (1999) mentions this as follows:

... the connection between property and gender relations that Mansfield’s fiction recurrently portrays and disputes, configuring dependency (*and especially the “institution” of marriage*) as a different kind of prison-house. (New 1999: 124-125) (my italics)

“Honeymoon” starts just in the middle of an action and involves readers in the story at once. George and Fanny are in front of a shop waiting for a cab. Fanny is so happy. She is content with and proud of her marriage. She admires her husband, even his rude manners. She considers them to be a way of George’s dealing with everything so nicely. Thus, she reminds us about the many other characters of some other stories who are introduced as being extremely happy, perhaps Bertha of “Bliss” in the first place. Fanny believes that everything in her life is a sheer luck for her:

What luck! Wasn't it luck? Fanny pressed her husband's arm. These things seemed always to be happening to them ever since they – came abroad. (Mansfield 2001: 68)

At this moment we are in Fanny's mind and the trip there reveals a fact that will be being confirmed throughout the story: An inescapable doubt accompanies Fanny's happiness. Just in the fourth sentence of the story, this doubt and George's introductory manners emerge together with the impression that this might not be a mutual happiness and George does not feel in the same way with his sentimental wife:

Didn't he think so too? But George stood on the pavement edge, lifted his stick, and gave a loud 'Hi!' (*ibid.* p: 68) (my italics)

In the whole rest of the story, this clue of the distance between Fanny's and George's feelings is hinted until it can easily be seen that the distance in question is an evident reality. Fanny always clings to her disillusion just like Bertha in "Bliss" and cherishes ideas of her "romantic" love. Whereas, George responds to her in such stunning ways as in the following extract from the story:

As a rule he merely kissed her. But now he caught hold of her hand, stuffed it into his pocket, pressed her fingers, and said, *'I used to keep a white mouse in my pocket when I was a kid.'* (*ibid.* p: 69) (my italics)

This is one of the incidents showing how George reacts to his wife's statements about their "shared" love and bliss. Even though her fingers remind her husband of white mice, Fanny tolerates this as she can do everything. She is totally uncritical of all his manners and George never stops. As soon as he sees a swimming man, he mutters that even wild horses will not keep him from bathing in that perilous Mediterranean Sea. Fanny's heart sinks, she is the one who is anxious about this dangerous determination of swimming. However, George's impetuous decision and determination show that his wife's presence and preference are not even slightly meaningful for him. Going on planning every single thing in her future by never excluding her husband, Fanny succumbs once again. But this subservience is not an ordinary one, this time a vital process of introspection accompanies it:

But she'd made up her mind long before she was married that never would she be the kind of woman who interfered with her husband's pleasures, so all she said was, airily, 'I suppose one has to be very up in the currents, doesn't one?' (*ibid.* p: 69) (my italics)

In the very first days of her marriage, starting in her honeymoon, Fanny unconsciously inclines to accept her secondary, passivised role against her man. She begins her run towards that position of women or men in conventional relationships in which one of the parties always has to make sacrifices. Fanny's remarks remind that of how Bertha of "Bliss" might have thought and behaved in her own honeymoon and who is now frustrated at the end of the time elapsed in her relationship with her dominant husband. It can be said that Bertha in her twenties was like Fanny or Fanny in her thirties will be a disappointed mother like Bertha. When it comes to George, it is most probable that that patriarchal, authoritarian, non-romantic middle-aged husband of Bertha was almost a copy of him as a young bridegroom years ago.

As it is seen; while seeming to deal with some trivial events taking place during a honeymoon of a young couple, Katherine Mansfield was able to outline the future of George and Fanny and hint at an impending tragedy. Her skills were enough to do this in just nearly one and a half pages. The remaining four pages can assure reader that blissful Fanny will be disillusioned sooner or later just like many other joyful and excited characters of Mansfield's fiction. However, the disillusionment in question is not within the scope of this open-ended story, Fanny does not yet face the reality of a life with George. They are a newly married couple. In addition, neither the time nor the setting of the story is convenient for a complete tragedy. Nonetheless, as it is said above, the rest of the story seems to be able to persuade readers that serious potential problems are due especially for Fanny. Rohrberger (1991) mentions this as follows:

The obvious difference in the responses of husband and wife to the same situations sets the structural pattern for the rest of the story. Very little happens in the way of a plot. They go to a restaurant, talk, and leave, but in the interim, their essential differences are underscored. George is adventuresome, matter of fact, authoritarian, parochial, non-romantic; Fanny is fearful, enthusiastic, accepting, romantic; and these differences will create problems after the honeymoon is over, an essential lack of communication will develop...
(Rohrberger 1991: 64) (my italics)

Here the question to be answered might be the following one: "How are their essential differences underscored in the interim during the account of those episodes in that restaurant?" First of all while deciding where to sit, George tries to control himself in order not to quarrel with the restaurant manager who just wants to help him. He gets

very angry with the manager making efforts to show them a nice table and does not care whether or not he disturbs other people. But in the same situation, what all Fanny wants to do is to sit down and to look like everybody else. George is determined not to choose the table the manager suggests but he somehow asks Fanny if that table is all right for her. She says she likes the suggestion and George agrees but he immediately gets his revenge on her. While ordering food, he treats her as if she is nobody. Without asking her about what she prefers, besides his own choice he chooses what his wife is to eat:

'Right' said George hastily, and he sat down almost before Fanny, and said quickly, '*Tea for two and chocolate eclairs.*' (Mansfield 2001: 70) (my italics)

After this, he does not say even 'Do you want toast, Fanny?' and instead of this he says:

'You don't want toast, do you, Fanny?' (*ibid.* p: 71) (my italics)

Having lost all the meaning of her presence, Fanny can just reply that she does not want toast, praying the manager would go. Despite all, she is still uncritical of George. Once again she takes refuge in her bliss and the hopes she cherishes for a future for which she ironically seems to have no concrete idea. Then, she feels or just wants to feel a rush of love for her husband. And George, now face to face with Fanny at a table of a restaurant where he does not find any other thing to pay attention to, tends to respond with love for the very first time. He takes one of Fanny's hands and calls her "darling." This is the unique act of George that resembles Fanny's approach full of love. It is what Fanny has normally yearned for. When provided with access to her thoughts, we can see that her mind functions in a predictable way:

Nothing mattered except love. Faintly smiling she gazed into that faintly smiling face, and the feeling was so blissful that she felt inclined to say to George, 'Let us stay here – where we are – at this little table. It's perfect, and the sea is perfect. Let us stay.' *But instead her eyes grew serious.* (*ibid.* p: 71) (my italics)

Here the expression "but instead" and its timely use are quite important in terms of indicating how she feels. Being in a blind love and in need of love, for blissful Fanny it is just the time she is expected to do whatever her above-mentioned thought would stimulate her to do. But, she does not say to George that she wants to stay with him at

that little table by that perfect sea. She says she wants to ask him something fearfully important and asks if he feels that he really knows her, emphasizing the word “really” three times. George does not understand anything and she goes on quickly as follows:

‘What I mean is this. So often people, even when they love each other, don’t seem to – to – it’s so hard to say – know each other perfectly. They don’t seem to want to. And I think that’s awful. They misunderstand each other about the most important things of all.’ *Fanny looked horrified. ‘George, we couldn’t do that, could we? We never could.’ (ibid. p: 72) (my italics)*

These sentences are likely to be related to Fanny’s temporary doubt encoded in her question “Didn’t he think so too?” asked at the beginning of the story. In spite of all her love, admiration and even subservience to George; Fanny cannot help asking these in a most unexpected, so-called romantic moment and her statements foreshadow the certainty that before long, she will eventually see that they were a young couple on their honeymoon who did not know each other perfectly and who misunderstood each other about the most important things of all.

When George is about to respond in a silly manner again by saying how much he likes Fanny’s little nose, the waiter arrives and provides a new chance of escape for Fanny instead of her reminding herself about that recurrent maxim: “Nothing matters except love.” Finally, the song of the old singer at the restaurant draws the attention of both Fanny and George and everybody else there in the restaurant.

If it is thought that this is a trivial event that might often happen in the places like restaurants and a fine song is a good way of finishing a fictional story, it is a mistake while reading Mansfield’s stories. The song is really fine; it affects everybody in the restaurant but Fanny and especially George more than everyone:

But George had been feeling differently from Fanny. The poor old boy’s voice was funny in a way *but, God, how it made you realise what a terrific thing it was to be at the beginning of everything, as they were, he and Fanny! (ibid. p: 73) (my italics)*

George seems to realise that everything might not be as easy as he thinks that they are and his entirely new life as a newly married man augurs nothing but obscurity in the future. Again without asking anything to his wife, he takes her and leaves the restaurant and that sad, queer song behind. Nathan (1988) talks about George’s this last act as follows:

But at the present moment they are captured in the first flush of their married state on a Mediterranean wedding trip. At a café, where they take afternoon tea, they hear a strange sad song sung by an itinerant old entertainer. *The gleanings of the possibility of sadness or ugliness in a world illuminated by the first flush of love is enough to send the two skittering back to their villa and the safety of their ignorance of the real world.* (Nathan 1988: 82) (my italics)

This is the end of the story, a moment later they are gone. “Honeymoon” is one of the many open-ended stories of Katherine Mansfield. Nothing is said directly about the future of this young couple, reader is supposed to speculate about Fanny and George’s lives in the following years after their honeymoon. Nevertheless, such a speculation is not so difficult. If read inattentively, this story might be considered to be about just one or two unimportant episodes in a summer day. In fact Mansfield gives adequate data to be sure that this is a mismatched couple just like the couples in some other stories such as “The Stranger”, “A Dill Pickle”, “Bliss”, “A Dill Pickle” etc. which form the group of stories that deal with problematic female-male relationships. It looks quite likely that in the future Fanny would be a woman like Bertha of “Bliss” who is preoccupied with meaningless things in her tiny world with almost disappeared relations with realities. Or, she will be like Linda of “At the Bay” (it is a story that is not involved in the thematic analyses of this study) oscillating between the feelings of love and hatred towards her husband and her baby. She might well be like Vera of “A Dill Pickle” who painfully sees that her man has never changed after a lengthy separation and he still keeps being selfish, inconsiderate, insensitive as ever, he has never reflected upon why they are and will be separate. In this case, the most plausible presumption is that, like all the characters in question, Fanny as a woman might somehow face the cleavage between the rich potentials of life and the inescapable pains of human experience as an isolated woman without any hope of empathy or help.

2.4 The Thematic Analysis of “A Dill Pickle”

“A Dill Pickle” is one of the few stories of Katherine Mansfield that does not follow her line of stories usually dealing with problems between men and women as “the stories about problematic *marriages*.” The reason for the impossibility of such a generalisation is that this story is about a couple who has never got married but had a love affair that ceased six years before their encounter in the story. Therefore, though

very similar, it is different from the stories such as “The Stranger”, “Honeymoon” and “Bliss” which are within the scope of the present study and as “Marriage a la Mode”, “A Cup of Tea”, “At the Bay” which are not. All these include married couples. In this regard, “A Dill Pickle” is closer to such stories as “Psychology” and “Mr. And Mrs. Dove” (which are also not analysed in this study) in which there are unmarried couples suffering in their relationships.

The heroine of the story is a woman called Vera. The name of her ex-lover is not given. This is one of the aspects of the story that seem to have not been scrutinised sufficiently. However, nearly all the statements of this man and almost all the sentences about him in the story prove that he lacks a sound character and this gives an impression that his lacking a name is in harmony with his distinct lack of virtue.

Vera meets this man in a cafe again after six years and the story begins. It consists of their brief conversation and Vera’s leave-taking at the end. In spite of this economy of words and dramatic fictional events in “A Dill Pickle”, Mansfield could again say a lot about why this relationship could not continue and ended six years ago, why there seems to be no chance of a resume of it either at present or in the future, and how Vera and the man have completely different personalities. Starting from the third sentence of the story, both are gradually introduced and Vera as an attentive, faithful and sensitive woman having a good memory for her old love:

There was a tall plate of fruit in front of him, and very carefully, *in a way she recognised immediately as his ‘special’ way*, he was peeling an orange. (Mansfield 1998: 129) (my italics)

But, the man does not even know her for a long time:

He must have felt that shock of recognition in her for he looked up and met her eyes. Incredible! *He didn’t know her!* She smiled; he frowned. She came towards him. He closed his eyes an instant, but opening them his face lit up as though he had struck a match in a dark room (*ibid.* p. 129). (my italics)

When the whole story is read, from just a few incidents that Vera remembers in their past, it can be inferred that being with this man was always frustrating and painful for her and now she has disturbing memories. But Vera has goodwill, she is constructive and above all, hopeful. She is hopeful about the possibility that he might

have changed in those long years and now he is really that man who influenced her at the very beginning of their relationship. She is ready to give him another chance. When the man offers to have lunch together, her hesitation as a response with that “of course” in her thoughts is an apparent sign of this:

She hesitated, *but of course* she meant to. (*ibid.* p. 129) (my italics)

Vera sits down opposite him and by his first words the man immediately says that Vera has changed very much and looks so well. But ironically just at that moment, he starts to reveal the fact that he has not changed a bit. When Vera is about to reply to his compliment, he interrupts her in the way he used to do. Vera, who has sat at that table probably with the hopes of being able to make plans about the present or even the future, cannot help remembering the past:

But she was thinking how well she remembered that trick of his – the trick of interrupting her – and of how it used to exasperate her six years ago. (*ibid.* p. 129-130)

This is the first overt clue of why they grew apart and it is the first impact on Vera’s reanimated hopes. As it is the case in the preceding analyses of the three stories and in many other Katherine Mansfield stories; hopes, especially the ones cherished by female characters, sooner or later fade away. In the light of this recurrent thematic feature; by the end of the first page of the story, a negative impression emerges about the fate of Vera’s optimism. The following remarks of the man continue to give away the reality that he is still an inconsiderate, insensitive and annoyingly comfortable person. What he remembers about the experiences he shared with Vera is completely different from what she remembers about them.

He recalls how they spent their first afternoon together in a lovely garden and with a show of magnanimity, he talks about himself as if he was a romantic hero who praised Vera’s heavenly voice and language the whole afternoon. However, that afternoon means entirely different to Vera in the way it was never occurred to him:

Yet, what had remained in her mind of that particular afternoon was an absurd scene over the tea table. A great many people taking tea in Chinese pagoda, and he behaving like a maniac about the wasps – waving them away, flapping at them with his straw hat, serious and infuriated out of all proportion to the

occasion. How delighted the sniggering tea drinkers had been. *And how she had suffered.* (*ibid.* p. 130) (my italics)

Here it is seen that this man can be considered as a fool in addition to his irritating insensitivity. Nathan (1988) mentions this as follows:

It is one of Mansfield's most "feminised" stories, told from the perspective of a highly sensitive woman, whose reconstruction of the affair is a triumph of insight and emotional recall, *while for her obtuse lover it is, from her point of view, a total failure of the imagination.* (Nathan 1988: 70) (my italics)

But, even though Vera senses that the same man is sitting opposite her and despite her memory strengthened by pains and sufferings, she tries to make herself believe that his memory is the truer one. The reason might be a kind of wishful thinking, her avoidance of a prejudice and her respect for what six years can change in a person. But the important thing is that she clings to her hope for finding a new man and refuses to hear the message given by her experiences and intuition. She tends to be in a kind of illusion, in which such characters as Bertha of "Bliss" and Fanny of "Honeymoon" are in. Vera reanimates her optimism by appreciating his appearance:

He was certainly far better looking now than he had been then. He had lost all that dreamy vagueness and indecision. Now he had the air of a man who has found his place in life, and fills it with a confidence and an assurance which was to say the least, impressive. He must have made money, too. His clothes were admirable... (Mansfield 1998: 131)

Vera is still constructive, hopeful and eager to give him chances. New (1999) considers this in terms of the symbolic dimension of the story:

She, who has "raised her veil and unbuttoned her high fur collar" on joining him for coffee (271), gives him an opportunity to be a new man; when it turns out he hasn't sufficiently changed, she buttons her collar and draws down her veil again (275);... (New 1999: 130)

Then the question that needs to be answered is "what else happens and how does it turn out he has not sufficiently changed?" What hurts Vera most is her ex-lover's account of his visit to Russia where Vera has always imagined seeing, especially with him when they were together. As the story unfolds, through a series of one-sided exchanges in general, the man tells her about his memories of Russia and he does not need to consider what pain he causes her. Thus, he is inconsiderate, highly comfortable and maybe arrogant as ever. Nathan (1988) refers to this situation as follows:

Smugly unaware of the pain he is causing his former lover, the man, looking as if a day had not passed since the disastrous end of their liaison, informs her that he has prospered since their parting and has even fulfilled their shared daydream of visiting Russia someday when they could afford it. (Nathan 1988: 70) (my italics)

While the man smugly tells her how he has really carried out all those journeys that they planned together and stayed everywhere long enough, he is not aware of the fact that he is subjected to the internal scrutiny of Vera whose memories and feelings differ radically from his own. Katherine Mansfield describes the effect of his words on Vera in a very striking way:

As he spoke, so lightly, tapping the end of his cigarette against the ashtray, she felt the strange beast that had slumbered so long within her bosom stir, stretch itself, yawn, prick up its ears, and suddenly bound to its feet, and fix its longing, hungry stare upon those faraway places. (Mansfield 1998: 131)

While the man recounts to her his Russian adventure; that beast, hurting Vera inside, does not stop him. She listens all he has to say about Russia and she fills in the blanks in his account through her imagination and activated senses. Is Vera a bit of a sadist then, does she gain pleasure while hearing about Russia despite the obvious pain it gives her? As far as she is introduced, let alone be a sadist, we see that Vera is a woman of virtues. She is sensitive, considerate, faithful and not vindictive. Besides, she is rational enough to think that even the man opposite her might have changed in six years. In this case, the reason why she does not interrupt the man might be the fact that she cannot resist learning about Russia whereto she seems to have always yearned to go. Russia is just like she has exalted in her imagination and she cannot help participating imaginatively in all the episodes the man tells about. Below there is an example of how her mind works while listening to the man telling about a picnic in Russia in which a coachman came and offered a dill pickle to him and his friends:

And she seemed at that moment to be sitting on the grass beside the mysteriously Black Sea, black as velvet, and rippling against the banks in silent, velvet waves. She saw the carriage drawn up to one side of the road, and the little group on the grass, their faces and hands white in the moonlight. She saw the pale dress of the woman outspread and her folded parasol, lying on the grass like a huge pearl crochet hook. Apart from them, with his supper in a cloth on his knees, sat the coachman. 'Have a dill pickle' said he, and although she was not certain what a dill pickle was, she saw the greenish glass jar with a red chilli

like a parrot's beak glimmering through. She sucked in her cheeks; the dill pickle was terribly sour... (*ibid.* p. 133)

This "dill pickle" here perhaps would not draw any attention if it was not the title of the story. It seems that Katherine Mansfield must have skilfully loaded an obscure but significant meaning in these two words. Therefore, questions such as "What does that dill pickle refer to?" or "What does it symbolise" become vital to understand the story.

The mention of that dill pickle makes Vera suck in her cheeks and think the dill pickle tastes terribly sour although she has never tasted or seen it in her life. This is an important clue. Moreover, the dill pickle is presented as the only negative thing that she allows to exist in her sweet dreams of Russia. As another clue, it is in the final sentence of the man's account of Russia. Keeping these in mind, it can be thought that the dill pickle refers to Vera's final frustration of realising that all about Russia is just a dream once again and perhaps she will never be able to see those silent, velvet waves of that mysteriously Black Sea. Nathan's (1988) comment is similar to such an idea:

Her old dreams are fulfilled in his narration of the experience, but soured through the denial of shared experience. (Nathan 1988: 71)

A second interpretation of the dill pickle might be its referring to the man. Being the person who talks about Russia and provides Vera with the setting of her imagination and who actually was there on the grass by the Black Sea, he plays his part in her daydream. Therefore, he seems to have the status of an intruder spoiling the pleasure of the imaginative picnic for Vera, just like the sour dill pickle does. Rohrberger (1991) talks about the moments in question as follows:

He tells about a picnic he was having with friends when the coachman came up and offered them a dill pickle that he wanted to share. As he is telling the story she is imagining the scene as she thinks it occurred, and although she does not know what a dill pickle is, when she thinks about how it must taste, she draws in her cheeks: "The dill pickle was terribly sour." *The obvious comparison is to be made. He is the dill pickle.* (Rohrberger 1991: 59) (my italics)

At the moment she mentally tastes the dill pickle, Vera stops imagining Russia and the man quickens her return to the real world by a new production of his failing memory. While reminding Vera of another experience they had together, he engages in another monologue in which he talks about himself as an honest, romantic, generous

and sophisticated man. From his point of view, the event is about his telling Vera about his hard childhood and his doing this under a nice Christmas tree he bought for her. But, Vera remembers entirely different things:

But of that evening she had remembered a little pot of caviar. *It had cost seven and sixpence. He could not get over it. Think of it – a tiny jar like that costing seven and sixpence. While she ate it he watched her, delighted and shocked. ‘No, really, that is eating money. You could not get even seven shillings into a little pot size. Only think of the profit they must make...’ And he had begun some immensely complicated calculations...* (Mansfield 1998: 133) (my italics)

In addition to being a new impact on Vera’s hopes, this fuss about money is a foreshadowing of his behaviour at the end of the story. But the more important thing at this point is her starting to define her feelings in a much more concrete manner. She asks a question to herself that might be an evidence proving that she has abandoned her hopes of finding a new man and that she sees that man of six years ago more clearly now. She wonders if his absolute insensitivity is mixed with a mockery of her:

Was there just a hint of mockery in his voice or was it her fancy? (*ibid.* p. 133) (my italics)

While Vera shows once again how faithful she is by remembering even the name of the dog in his childhood; the man, who has even forgotten that he had a dog, immediately reveals his real tendency towards mocking her. Here is his reaction to Vera’s old letters:

‘I’ve often thought how I must have bored you. And now I understand so perfectly why you wrote to me as you did – although at the time that letter nearly finished my life. I found it again the other day, *and I couldn’t help laughing as I read it. It was a clever – such a true picture of me.*’ (*ibid.* p. 133) (my italics)

Just after hearing this, Vera buttons her collar again and draws down her veil. As it is mentioned above, this act might be considered to be an image about her withdrawal of the opportunity she has given him to be a new man. There is no ambiguity in her thoughts anymore:

Now she knew that he had been mocking. (*ibid.* p. 133)

Pleading with her not to go, he shows signs of regret. However, these signs will turn out insincere at the end of the story. He catches up one of her gloves from the table

and clutches at it as if that would hold her. When he asks if he has said something to hurt her; in her response we find a woman who is, though not angry anymore, really hurt and desolate but at the same time reasonable and brave enough to determine the fact that he has not changed:

'Not a bit,' *she lied*. But as she watched him draw her glove through his fingers, gently, gently, her anger really did die down, and besides, *at the moment he looked more like himself of six years ago...* (*ibid.* p. 134) (my italics)

At this point he makes a last effort. He pretends he was a hero during their relationship and he emphasises his so-called sacrifices he made by really wanting then to be a sort of carpet for Vera to walk on so that she need not to be hurt by the sharp stones and he could carry her away to all those lands she longed to see. He laments her loneliness. Consequently, he achieves the effect he aims at. Vera starts to struggle with herself for a time:

Ah, God! What had she done! How had she dared to throw away her happiness like this? This was the only man who had ever understood her. Was it too late? Could it be too late? She was that glove that he held in his fingers... (*ibid.* p. 134)

The man creates this doubt in Vera's mind but, almost simultaneously, he makes a big mistake that makes Vera make up her mind again. He generalises from his own egoism and implies that Vera was and is just like himself:

And to you, too, of course... It simply was that we were such egoists, so self-engrossed, so wrapped up in ourselves that we hadn't a corner in our hearts for anybody else. (*ibid.* p. 132)

On the one hand, this is a confession of his own selfishness and proves that all those tales about sacrifices and carpets were lies. On the other hand, it is an attempt to load half of the responsibility of their separation to Vera because of being egoistic like him. Whereas, none of the narrated shared experiences of this couple shows that she is a selfish woman. New (1999) comments on his attempt of generalisation as follows:

Extrapolating from himself to her, he declares that "we were such egoists, so self-engrossed," and *he uses this generalisation* to explain why they broke apart before... (New 1999: 131) (my italics)

This can be the last insolence of the man, it overwhelms Vera's doubt about whether or not he deserves a new chance. She goes away. He sits there, thunderstruck, astounded beyond words. At this point; if readers remain who are still sympathetic towards the man and affected by his last effort more than Vera is, in the last sentence of the story Katherine Mansfield can persuade them that he does not deserve any chance indeed. After asking the waitress for his bill, it is seen that paying for the untouched cream is the first cause of anxiety for him even just at that moment he sees he has certainly lost Vera:

'But the cream has not been touched,' he said. 'Please do not charge me for it.'
(Mansfield 1998: 134)

This is the first time in the story the narration is from the man's point of view and it can be seen as irrefutable evidence showing that he has never changed. Nathan (1988) comments on this as follows:

The final moments are narrated from the point of view of the astonished man, left alone after the woman has summarily risen from the tea table and walked out on him. His last words, a bid to the waitress not to charge him for the untouched cream on the table, reveal his meanness of spirit... (Nathan 1988: 72)

At this point, readers are supposed to know all that is to be known about the man and that is his completely revealed smallness of character. The question is what Vera, who has a much more complex character than him, feels as the heroine of the story. Although she is out of the story now, she should be in the minds of readers with her emotional process that starts at the moment she leaves the café. This is the point where the persistent thematic features running throughout Mansfield's work become functional.

Admitting in the middle of their conversation that she has been lonesome for six years, now Vera meets isolation again. She faces the denial of emotional fulfilment once more. Furthermore, this frustration and disillusionment comes after very short transient moments of reanimated joy and hopes and thus, after an illusion. It is an illusion in which she inclines to believe that she might be at a brand-new start. This notion of illusion is the point where Vera appears to come together with many other characters in Mansfield's fiction. Bertha of "Bliss" and Pearl Button of "How Pearl Button Was

Kidnapped” might be the firstly remembered ones. However, Vera as a character is distinguishable from others in terms of her unique quality that is she is an independent young woman. She is not bound by a wedding contract like Bertha. She is not an old single woman like Miss Brill. She is not a young girl like Pearl who has to live under the authority of conventional parents for years. She should have alternatives and it seems that she has the emotional and rational capacity to make the best of alternatives even if she has not done it for six years. When this dimension of Vera’s status is considered, an impression emerges that she is somewhat like Katherine Mansfield herself who always chose independence and individuality in her own life at all costs.

2.5 The Thematic Analysis of “Miss Brill”

“Miss Brill” is one of the stories of Katherine Mansfield that deal with the lives of lonely characters. If a classification is to be made within this particular story group, it is one of the few stories about “lonely and elderly” individuals. Here the protagonist is an elderly spinster called Miss Brill who is an English teacher in France. She has no acquaintance around her except her students and an old and senile man. She lives in a little dark room, just like a cupboard (in the narrator’s words). Her only enjoyment is listening to the music band in the park every Sunday and listening secretly to other people’s conversations. Every Sunday, she wears her favourite fur, goes to the park, listens to everything she can, buys a slice of honey-cake on her way home and comes back. These crowded Sunday gatherings seem as recurring rituals for her during which she feels alive and she has a function in life as an individual of a community. However, this is nothing but self-deception that enables her to escape from the fact that she does not have anybody to love or to be loved by. She is filled with joy and excitement among the crowd there, life comes back into her eyes. Nothing is said in the story about her other days but just a few clues suffice to imply that her life does not include much satisfaction. She has got only her students and an old man who cannot speak and read. Even an almond that she rarely finds in her honey-cake can make a great difference in her dull life. Thus, she seems to “need” these Sundays and her park ritual which is ironically a routine itself also. This ritual seems to provide her with the means which is suitable for her self-deception in order to escape from the reality of her empty life.

Thus, she can have the “illusion” she is in need of, she can protect her consciousness against the fact that she is a solitary woman who has wasted chances in her life which is devoid of any meaning now.

The fur in question is an important feature of the story. It is not a haphazard choice. Every Sunday, it leaves its box just like its owner leaves her room like a box itself. Life comes back into this fur every Sunday in the way it does to Miss Brill. Furthermore, she feels this reanimation at the moment she rubs her dear fur after one week interval. The similarities between the fur and Miss Brill point to an identification of her with it, a situation which will be almost certainly proved in the denouement of the story. Below are some sentences about this fur and what it means for Miss Brill:

Miss Brill put up her hand and touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again. She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth-powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes. (Mansfield 1951: 184)

The rising action in the story starts with Miss Brill’s arriving in the park and noticing the band there at once. Now it is the time for eavesdropping in the Sunday ritual program. The first attempt is disappointing for her as the old couple sharing her seat do not speak. At this point, the omniscient narrator of the story emphasises that Miss Brill is an expert at participating in other people’s lives secretly and temporarily. It might be thought that she unconsciously tries to compensate for the vacuum in her own life in a pursuit of some different colours in others’ lives. The emphasis in question is as follows:

...Miss Brill always looked to the conversation. She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn’t listen, at sitting in other people’s lives just for a minute while they talked round her. (*ibid.* p. 185)

Never minding this lack of conversation for the time being, Miss Brill engages in her another habit which is watching people and re-shaping them in her vision. During this process it is seen that she always tends to minimise what she sees, her perception is shaped by the adjectives referring to “smallness”:

Little children ran among them, swooping and laughing; *little* boys with big white silk bows under their chins, *little* girls, *little* French dolls, dressed up in velvet and lace. And sometimes a *tiny* staggerer came... (*ibid.* p. 186) (my italics)

This tendency to visual transformation and reduction is completed by her attribution of animal qualities to the people she sees. In addition, she eventually minimises the whole world around her to a small stage on which she determines roles for everyone and the role of a fine “actress” for herself. However, this stage metaphor is surely not a Shakespearean one. What she intends to do seems to be reducing the real world of a bright spring afternoon to make it fit her own constricted world. By doing this and stripping people of their human qualities; she attains that aforementioned illusion, thanks to which she delays questioning her own qualities and escapes from her loneliness in her empty life. Mandel (1989) mentions this in her article in reference to Welty:

Miss Brill consistently reduces the world in which she lives. In Welty’s terms, Miss Brill tries to make the world “cozy” and “safe” for herself. To make them fit into her diminished world, Miss Brill attempts to reduce the people in the Jardines Publiques by imagining them as small animals: the band director “scraped his foot and flapped his arms like a rooster about to crow”... (Mandel 1989: 475)

We see that Miss Brill’s manipulation of her surroundings is not limited with reducing and dehumanising. She watches and then mocks people. Never questioning her own little room, her age and her appearance with a fur on a most probably warm, bright spring afternoon in France; she thinks that everybody is funny in a way:

... they were nearly always the same, Sunday after Sunday, and – Miss Brill had often noticed – *there was something funny about nearly all of them. They were odd, silent, nearly all old, and from the way they stared they looked as though they’d just come from dark little rooms or even – cupboards!* (Mansfield 1951: 187) (my italics)

The most striking clue, which supports the idea that this Sunday entertainment functions as the setting of her world of illusions, is her contempt for an elderly woman who resembles nobody but herself! Wearing a fur herself, Miss Brill scorns this woman wearing an ermine toque. Moreover, in her mind she describes her as not “a woman wearing an ermine toque” but as just “an ermine toque” meeting a gentleman:

And now *an ermine toque and a gentleman in grey met* just in front of her. He was tall, stiff, dignified, and she wearing the ermine toque she’d bought when her hair was yellow. (*ibid.* p. 187) (my italics)

Obviously; Miss Brill makes fun of her, her ermine toque and her white hair which is not yellow anymore. Whereas, Miss Brill wears fur instead of a toque, she is not young too and must not have perfect hair now. She is in a worse condition even. Because that “ermine toque” can meet gentleman. That is, she is not alone. Then it is easier now to think that, with the actors and actresses playing their comic roles she creates for them on her artificial stage, Miss Brill suppresses the objective reality in which she is old and frail too. By viewing people as she wants them to be, she turns a blind eye to her own shabbiness. This is her way for escaping from the realities of her appearance and advanced age.

Another factor of her illusion that is worth noting is the way how she has used these Sundays to cope with her solitude. At this point, the aforementioned stage metaphor of her is important. In her fantasies, the real world changes into a stage on which people are in a play written in Miss Brill’s mind. This should give her an idea of a companionship in which individuals constitute a harmonious whole and in a covert communication. Never trying to be in a real, open communication with people but shaping and mocking them in her perception instead, Miss Brill gives herself the role of the star in that play whose absence would be felt:

They were all on the stage. They weren’t only the audience, not only looking on; they were acting. Even she had a part and came every Sunday. No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn’t been there; she was part of the performance after all. (*ibid.* p. 188)

Miss Brill is not married. She has no friends. In that park where she goes every week, she does not have even one acquaintance to chat with for just a few minutes. She is a woman who has apparently failed in social relationships throughout her life. Therefore; this imaginary company on that imaginary stage in her fantasies, is another need of Miss Brill in order to gain some emotional sustenance against her deep solitude and isolation. Büchel (1995) emphasises this together with the vocabulary she uses:

Miss Brill unconsciously manipulates reality by moulding it to her needs. Her craving to be part of the community is more than evident, as it is further underlined by the vocabulary of her interior monologue, which accumulates terms such as ‘part of the performance,’ ‘company,’ ‘moving together,’ ‘join,’ ‘accompaniment,’ ‘understand,’ etc. (Büchel 1995: 82) (my italics)

At this point, Miss Brill is carried away by exuberance. She has a feeling that she, as the indispensable member, and the other members of that friendly company will begin singing altogether. She is at the summit of her joy and happiness. In her illusion, they move together with a kind of accompaniment. In Miss Brill's words, they "understand." Nonetheless, she cannot name what they understand and this gives away the clue about the frailty of her imaginary world which is now close to its collapse together with her illusion:

And Miss Brill's eyes filled with tears and she looked smiling at all the other members of the company. Yes, we understand, she thought – *though what they understand she didn't know.* (Mansfield 1951: 190) (my italics)

With tears of bliss in her eyes, she is now at the top level of her gradually increased joy fed by self-deception. This joy should make an experienced Katherine Mansfield reader expect a sudden blow of sadness and disappointment hidden nearby. Just at that moment, a young couple sit beside her and bring that blow in their conversation. Not knowing that it will crush her this time, Miss Brill prepares to listen secretly again. The boy wants probably to kiss the girl and she says she cannot do that there. Their conversation continues with the boy's following remark:

'But why? Because of *that stupid old thing* at the end there?' asked the boy. 'Why does she come here at all – *who wants her?* Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?' (*ibid.* p. 190) (my italics)

The girl replies as follows:

'It's her fu – fur which is so funny,' giggled the girl. 'It's exactly like a fried whiting.' (*ibid.* p. 190) (my italics)

With these words, Miss Brill faces her realities whose effects she has blocked by self-deception up till this moment. Now she sees that people are individuals living their own lives, not actors playing their parts harmoniously on that artificial stage she likes to replace with the real world. She realises that, not everybody, but she herself is funny with her appearance and especially with her fur with which she identifies. Her age, which might well be the same as that "funny ermine toque", can cause her being labelled as a "stupid old thing" by an angry boy. The boy and the girl reveal the fact that her absence would relieve people and they would not lament the absence of an actress.

With this blow, gloom takes hold of Miss Brill. She seems to lose the unique source of pleasure and excitement in her life. For the first time on her way home; she passes the baker's by, does not buy her slice of honey-cake that has sometimes made a great difference in her life with a tiny almond in it. It seems that there will be no more Sunday rituals. Nathan (1988) is one of the critics who think so:

... she has been irrevocably changed by the events of the day that evolved so naturally in the connecting scenes, but contain one small insignificant moment that ruined not only this day, but would poison her Sundays henceforward. (Nathan 1988: 92)

Miss Brill climbs the stairs, goes into her little dark room like a cupboard. Her last doings and feelings are as follows:

The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But *when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying.* (Mansfield 1951: 191) (my italics)

The fur, which comes out of its small shell and comes alive once a week just as Miss Brill does, is crying. It is in its narrow box again, just as its owner is in her narrow room now. This is the situation completing the parallelisms between the fur and Miss Brill and it reminds the idea that the fur is to be identified with Miss Brill. In this case, the imaginary tears of it can be considered to be the manifestation of Miss Brill's real tears.

This ending caused contradictory interpretations. While some writers think that Miss Brill's story is supposed to evoke only pathos, some others are intolerant of the protagonist as they think that she experiences the punishment she deserves because of her misconceptions about life and people. Hull (1967) is a representative of the former group:

Miss Mansfield gives in the story a significant look ... a look short and startling and at once full of pity, at the world that the lonely woman inhabits... She is left, as she began, in her pathetic solitude. (Hull 1967: 74-76)

Mandel (1989) is a critic in the latter:

The proper response to Miss Brill, then, involves not only pity for her current misery but also blame for having brought that misery on herself. Reading the imagery carefully reveals that the theme of the story is not destruction but self-destruction. (Mandel 1989: 476)

Nevertheless, there is an interpretation of this ending that cannot be expected to cause any controversy and that is the important aspect of the story in terms of the interests of the present study. The ending of the story is the point where the recurrent thematic concerns of Katherine Mansfield's fiction become functional. After hearing the conversation of that young couple, Miss Brill has to face the inescapable realities that shatter her illusions by which she has protected her consciousness against objective facts. She is disillusioned. Just at the moment of an excessive joy, frustration and loneliness dominate her fantastical world and leave her isolated with hope of neither human understanding nor pity. If she does not try to find a new way of prolonging her self-deception, Miss Brill is supposed to accept that she has failed in life, she is a loser like many characters of Mansfield's stories and especially like the suffering Ma Parker of "Life of Ma Parker", and from the stories not analysed in the present study, the old Mr Neave of "An Ideal Family" and the aged father in "the Fly".

2.6 The Thematic Analysis of "The Stranger"

"The Stranger" is another work in Katherine Mansfield's oeuvre that deals with male-female relationships lacking mutual love and understanding. It is about a married couple, Mr John Hammond and Mrs Janey Hammond. Therefore, it is similar to the stories like "Bliss", "Honeymoon", "A Dill Pickle" and some other stories of the author which are not included in this study. But, unlike the majority of the stories about problematic relationships, in this story it is the man who suffers more from everything that is not right in the relationship and it is one of the few stories of the author told from the perspective of the male partner. This might prove the inconvenience of the supposition that Katherine Mansfield was always a radical feminist. She knew that also men could easily be unhappy in conventional marriages though they are naturally assumed to be the dominant and powerful party in marriages.

"The Stranger" consists of the homecoming of Mr Hammond's wife after an absence for many months and his meeting her on the wharf. Then, they go to a hotel room and after a relatively short conversation, the story comes to an end. It does not involve any serious argument, insult or even a disagreement between the couple. On the contrary, they, especially Mr Hammond, seem to love and care. However, what

underlies this absence of big dramatic events is the implication of some imminent big crisis points before, during and after the narrated experience of Hammonds. Nathan (1988) is one of the critics thinking that this story is a very poignant one among the stories about disappointing marriages:

Because all its frustration is compressed into one painful episode, *it is more affecting than many of the other manipulated tales of marital disharmony.* (Nathan 1988: 81) (my italics)

In this regard, the most important question to be answered seems to be how such a marital disharmony is presented in this story. It should be noted that in nice clothes the strong-looking, middle-aged Mr Hammond is introduced to readers as a husband, who feels on top of the world while waiting for the arrival of the liner that brings his wife to him and seemingly so far from any kind of disharmony at first sight. His heart is warm towards even the crowd on the wharf:

They knew, every man-jack of them, that Mrs Hammond was on that boat, and he was so tremendously excited it never entered his head not to believe that this marvellous fact meant something to them too. It warmed his heart towards them. They were, he decided, as decent a crowd of people... (Mansfield 1951: 213)

Moreover, he has an air of confidence in a way that he sees the crowd under his control:

He seemed to be the leader of the little crowd on the wharf and at the same time to keep them together. (*ibid.* p. 212)

Besides being an excited and happy man, we see here that Mr Hammond might be a selfish one who assumes control on everybody else and determines roles for them. Here that role for the crowd is waiting for Mrs Hammond like he is doing himself. He is likely to love them as long as he thinks they also are waiting for his wife. Later, this is proved when he immediately forgets about the little girl named Jean Scott, whom he compassionately got on his shoulders, when he hastily rushes into the arriving boat without even saying a goodbye to Jean or anybody on the wharf towards whom his heart has been warm! All these happen when he sees the boat. New (1999) emphasises his insincerity as follows:

The problem is that he doesn't follow through on the commitments to which sensitivity might be expected to lead. *If he has been warmly friendly to the crowd, he soon forgets them-if he has been helpful to Jean Scott, that doesn't last.* (New 1999: 35) (my italics)

When these clues of his selfishness and his claim on authority are considered, he might be expected to have tried to be the dominant party in his marriage and control his wife also. If a natural resistance on her part has emerged as a result, then this would be one of the factors creating crisis in the relationship. At this point, the wonder goes up on how a passenger is coming. The following questions are worth asking and answering: "If Mr Hammond is really an egocentric man, how may Mrs Hammond have responded?", "Has the long separation of the couple changed anything?", "Is she a woman who will surrender like many other women in Mansfield's stories or will she claim on her individuality?", "What episodes in the story give ideas about the choice she has made?"

As a matter of fact, a clue can be found in Mr Hammond's behaviour just before the arrival of his wife. He looks so happy but he is also nervous in a very strange manner which is so unusual for a person waiting for his beloved. Then it might be thought that some experiences in the past are the source of his tension and they prevent him from predicting how Mrs Hammond will behave now:

The shrewd eyes narrowed again and searched *anxiously, quickly*, the motionless liner. Again his overcoat was unbuttoned. Out came the thin, butter-yellow watch again, and *for the twentieth – fiftieth – hundredth time he made the calculation.* (Mansfield 1951: 213) (my italics)

At last, the ship appears and so does Mrs Hammond. At this point, a series of paradoxical feelings and thoughts starts in Mr Hammond. On the one hand, his joy is at its peak. However, according to the thematic findings of the stories analysed and the consideration of the rest, what should be remembered about such instances of joy in Mansfield's fiction is that they are usually the last phase preceding an initial phase of a severe pain and grief. On the other hand, the second factor of the paradox is his tension which is at an unbearable level now. His inner voice reveals the fact that seeing her wife Janey after months is somewhat a challenge for him:

His hands were shaking, but he'd got hold of himself again. *He was able to face Janey.* (*ibid.* p.217) (my italics)

His heart was wrung with such a spasm that he could have cried out. How little she looked to have come all that long way and back by herself! Just like her, though. Just like Janey. She had the courage of a- (*ibid.* p. 217) (my italics)

His nervousness is clear now and the questions emerging in our minds should be “the courage of what does Janey have?”, “why does Mr Hammond *have to be ready to face her?*” or “what does this excessive degree of nervousness indicate?” Answers may vary but none of them is likely to deny the fact that he dreads what will happen between him and his courageous wife Janey. It seems that Mr Hammond has an unconscious doubt that Janey will be behaving contrary to his expectations. Kobler (1990) is a critic emphasising his queer state of mind and he comments on the impending encounter of the couple as follows:

Why should he not be able to face her? *He again reveals his buried fear that something is going to be different in their relationship now that she has proved to both of them that she can function as Janey, on her own, and not just as Mrs. Hammond, under his watchful eye.* (Kobler 1990: 33) (my italics)

As soon as he sees Janey standing by the rail of the ship, the first thing he does is commanding her not to move! Perhaps, this is what he is used to do and while advancing towards the ship he cares about nothing and nobody:

Hammond signed to Janey to stay where she was. The old harbour-master stepped forward; he followed. As to ‘ladies first’, or any rot like that, it never entered his head. (Mansfield 1951: 218) (my italics)

However, starting from the very first moment of their meeting; Janey, though clasped in Mr Hammond’s arms, behaves in a manner that would vindicate his buried fears of finding a courageous and independent woman. Janey utters her first words with an emphatic, cool voice. Her husband is so impatient to go and so unwilling to talk about anything there on the ship that his inner voice says “Hang the children!” when Janey asks and wants to talk about their children first. He does not have even a bit of tolerance towards spending any time in the wharf, whereas Janey is so calm and patient. Without any sign of pleasure to see her husband after a long time, she engages in saying goodbye to all the first-class passengers in the ship. Showing no signs of his joy mixed with an unconscious fear anymore, Mr Hammond is controlled by his wife now. All he can do is to watch many people surrounding his wife, the most popular woman on

board, and to ask what that boat would have been without her. Now; he “has to” notice his wife’s individuality exhibited by the respect she gained during the voyage, for the first time in his life he has come to notice even the details of what she wears. Her black costume seems to be in harmony with the black moments that has started for him:

Hammond never noticed what his wife had on. It was all the same to him whatever she wore. But today he did notice that she wore a black costume...
(*ibid.* p. 220)

Büchel (1995) thinks that Janey’s coolness, self-control and reserved attitudes are worth emphasising:

When her husband comes on deck to give her a warm welcome, she fails to respond in kind, referring only to the delay of the ship and asking about the health of her children. (Büchel 1995: 162)

In contrast to her husband, who is filled with passion and love for his wife, Janey’s attitude towards him is shaped by marital duty and a lack of inner warmth. (*ibid.* p. 163)

In the introduction part of the story, the created expectation for readers was of a romantic, warm meeting of a married couple who are in love and have been apart for months. Nevertheless, the queer tension of the waiting husband should have attracted attention. At this point it is understood that the tension in question was not an undue one. Mrs Hammond seems to be trying to disappoint him in every possible way. That excited and joyful husband is now being dragged in the ship in a shock by his prestigious wife. He cannot control anything. The last and most important instance of this situation is Janey’s want to say goodbye to the doctor of the ship after stopping her husband who wants to come with her. His inner voice cries out some concrete sentences of doubt and frustration now:

That was rather queer of Janey; wasn’t it? Why couldn’t she have told the stewardess to say goodbye for her? Why did she have to go chasing after the ship’s doctor? She could have sent a note from the hotel even if the affair had been urgent. Urgent? Did it – could it mean that she had been ill on the voyage – she was keeping something from him? That was it! (Mansfield 1951: 221)

As her husband points out, this is queer of Janey. It is seen that she is not the woman she was before this voyage months ago. She is different, she makes her husband feel it and she seems to have decided and planned to be different during those months

far away from Mr Hammond. Although she probably knows that her husband would naturally expect warmth and care after the long separation, she seems to be escaping from him. She even looks like taking revenge out of him. But why?

What happens on the wharf could be an indication of a culmination of a series of unpleasant past events. In this regard, the aforesaid clues of Mr Hammond's selfishness and tendency to dominate become more meaningful and important while interpreting Janey's air of independence. She seems to be deliberately trying to show her husband that things will not be the same anymore and she has made the necessary mental preparation to resist him at any time when he demands "staying where she is" of her, in the way he used to do. Rohrberger (1991) comments on this couple's past, which is the source of their present, by comparing them with the young couple in the story called "Marriage a la Mode":

Their needs are different, they have not been able to communicate those needs, or to respond positively to them. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond are older than William and Isabel, they have been married a longer time, and *Mr. Hammond has not realised quite so persistently that his wife is a stranger to him.* (Rohrberger 1991: 64) (my italics)

New (1999) also is one of the critics who draw attention to the past in order to shed light on the present:

"The Stranger" elucidates how a present conflict arises out of something that has happened before, how a tension has been deferred, and how, unresolved itself, it continues to have the power to overturn subsequent expectations of resolution. (New 1999: 134) (my italics)

In this story, there is not even a word about what has happened before in the life of Hammonds. Nevertheless, being another admirable quality of Mansfield's fiction, just a few pages can suffice to outline the past years of this couple who have got an adult, married daughter now living in a distant country.

The rest of the story includes the continuation of the agony and the final fatal impact for Mr Hammond who has already experienced the grief that has been lurking nearby his joy and who suffers from the denial of emotional fulfilment. In addition, the remaining pages reveal the facts about the multi-dimensional title of the story.

When they leave the wharf, Janey stops her stunned husband and almost mockingly says that bachelor life agrees with him. She does this after also saying directly that she

has not even looked at him up till that moment. Being shocked once more, Mr Hammond cannot help anymore defining “the stranger” by him, that is his wife:

‘Agrees with me!’ he groaned for love and caught her close again. And again, as always, *he had the feeling he was holding something that never was quite his – his*. Something too delicate, too precious, that would fly away once he let go. (Mansfield 1951: 222) (my italics)

At this point, what he can do to renew his hopes is imploring his wife to get off to the hotel for God’s sake so that they can be by themselves. Janey submits but does not fail to continue the torture by not even bothering to answer when Mr Hammond asks her whether she is glad to be home again. Being in a kind of agony, he hopes to please Janey by talking about the plans he made about returning home a day or two late and staying a bit longer there in that town the wharf is in. But Janey rebuffs this suggestion:

‘Oh no!’ said Janey quickly. ‘Not for the world! The day after tomorrow, then. And the children – (*ibid.* p. 224)

Before the final impact there is one more attack Janey seems to have reserved for her husband that would make him feel more wounded. After the long period away from his wife, it can be thought that Mr Hammond should have sexual desires. He shows signs of this by always keeping being close to Janey, by having taken and taking all the precautions to prevent any interruption in their hotel room, by trying to dissuade her from reading the letters of their children and some other efforts. Besides, “the blazing fire” in the room must not be a symbol chosen by chance. But Janey insists on finding the letters, she finds them and tucks all of them into her frilled blouse. So she quite successfully implies that she has never thought of getting undressed and thus, having a sexual relationship. Kobler (1990) comments on her behaviour as follows:

...she tucks the letters into her blouse, putting the children symbolically closer to her heart than John has probably ever been. *Going contrary to everything he has hoped for from this reunion, the relationship moves out of his control.* (Kobler 1990: 35) (my italics)

Mr Hammond is obviously wounded, disappointed and terribly nervous now. He starts swearing even. As if she tries to increase the pain of the agony, Janey perches on his knees, hugs him but this seems to be just for introducing that stranger better to him, introducing her new, more independent self. The closer he gets to his wife, the more

clearly he feels that she is not his anymore. The cries of pain inside him become louder now:

How could he know? Would he ever know? Would he always have this craving – this pang like hunger, somehow, to make Janey so much part of him that there wasn't any of her to escape? He wanted to blot out everybody, everything. He wished now he'd turned off the light. That might have brought her nearer. And now those letters from the children rustled in her blouse. He could have chucked them into the fire. (Mansfield 1951: 227)

The last effort Mr Hammond makes in order to escape from the stranger laying on his breast now is whispering her to kiss him. Janey submits, she kisses him and in the way she has always kissed him even. But ironically, a different feeling arouses in his heart for the first time. He admits to himself in vain that it was as if a stranger kissed him:

But that wasn't what he wanted; that wasn't at all what he thirsted for. He felt suddenly, horribly tired. (*ibid.* p. 227)

At last, Mr Hammond asks that question, which he has escaped from, to the stranger whom he has tried to escape from as well. He asks why the liner was so late and what kept her so long. After making no answer again for some time, Janey tells about one of the male passengers in the ship who died in her arms when she was alone with him. While speaking, her all sentences are laden with compassion and peace. This is the point where the final in question comes. The blow is so sudden that Mr Hammond thinks he will faint. He cannot move, even breathe. He thinks:

Ah, my God, what was she saying! What was she doing to him. This would kill him! (*ibid.* p. 228)

The new Janey might be a stranger to Mr Hammond but he is certainly not a stranger to Janey. There is no evidence showing that he behaves in any way Janey does not expect from him. For Janey, he is still the man with whom she has been married for years. He does not surprise readers either when considering his excitement or impatience mixed with lust, which are quite expected for a man away from his woman for a long time. His present frustration after that joy of reuniting with his wife is understandable as well and the signs of this blow are apparent, as apparent as it would be when seeing a pained person who cannot move, even breathe. Then, it seems

impossible that Janey cannot notice what she is doing to her husband by telling how compassionate she was towards that dying man. But she does not stop. She tells all about the episode including the details of the death of that “stranger” in her arms. Furthermore; while giving the account of what happened, she pauses time after time and asks him such questions as “You do not mind, do you?”, “It has not spoilt our evening, has it?” as if she is not even slightly aware of how this hurts him. Therefore, all these clues strengthen the idea that Janey deliberately does this and tries to punish her selfish, dominant husband who has been a “stranger” to her feelings, needs and expectations all through their married life. Kobler (1990) comments on the reason why Janey might be telling the story about the dead man as follows:

... she may be telling the story to John in order to demonstrate to him that she really is a compassionate and loving woman. If so, she is certainly rubbing salt in his emotional wounds, *in effect saying to him that “I can love, so if I do not demonstrate it to you, it is because something is wrong with you rather than with me.”* (Kobler 1990: 36) (my italics)

Janey succeeds. At this point, Mr John Hammond is completely desolate. The blazing fire that has seemed to accompany his passion now falls in with a sharp sound and the cold creeps up his arms. He starts to muse on the dead stranger in the arms of his wife. Although he cannot find the courage to complete the confession sentence in his mind, he finally realises that he has never had the kind of affection that his wife granted even a dead man. Thus, being unaware of his shortcomings that have created the unresolved tensions in their marriage, he comes to realise that he has always been like a stranger to Janey. This is another dimension of the title of the story. After the dead passenger and Janey, he himself is the third stranger. That half sentence below become meaningful when continued in such ways as “sincerely got him in her arms” or “hugged with love”:

And yet he died in Janey’s arms. She – who’d never – never once in all those years – never on one single solitary occasion – (Mansfield 1951: 230)

Meanwhile, Janey beholds every single change her husband undergoes. He has been just by her bosom for some time. However, as if she has not agonised him enough, in her last words in the story she asks him whether or not her story has made him sad!

This is the last and most striking clue that points to a well-planned strategy she applies in order to make her husband question himself and his past.

Above all, this is the point where the recurrent thematic concerns of Mansfield's fiction appear to draw forth in this story. The protagonist finds himself finally isolated and with no hope of a help or care. Grief takes him captive. He is disillusioned after having overlooked the fact in his marriage that his wife has gradually estranged from him and there has always been a lack of communication between them. Now he faces the reality after his fantasies of a romantic reuniting. What he lastly feels is as follows:

Spoilt their evening! Spoilt their being together! *They would never be alone together again.* (*ibid.* p. 230) (my italics)

He seems to feel that their estrangement is permanent now. Büchel (1995) comments on this disillusionment as follows:

Like most solitary Mansfieldian characters, he fails to acknowledge the discrepancy between fantasy and reality, forging reality according to his needs... (Büchel 1995: 169)

As long as he avoids looking into the eyes of reality, there is little hope that he will ever accomplish the process of individuation. (*ibid.* p. 169)

If the future is dim for Mr Hammond, it is so for readers as well. It is not clear if he can see that Janey's claim on individuality and their estrangement are the results of his not granting his wife the status of an independent personality and his regarding her as a complementary object. It is not also clear if this hopeless man will get the message given by his wife and initiate an open communication or if Janey will do this. But what is clear about the story is that it emphasises the necessity of such a communication instead of patriarchal traditions and it highlights serious consequences of the lack of it resulting in marital tensions, something from which such other Mansfieldian couples as the ones in "Bliss", "Honeymoon", "A Dill Pickle" etc. suffer and which makes them strangers to each other.

2.7 The Thematic Analysis of "Life of Ma Parker"

"Life of Ma Parker" is one of the two works included in this study that deals with solitary and elderly people. It also has some relatively exceptional features which make it an interesting story in Katherine Mansfield's fiction. First of all, it is one of the few

Mansfield stories such as "The Doll's House" or "The Garden Party" which all have explicit social and sociological dimensions. The protagonist of the story, Ma Parker is a widowed charwoman and a member of the late-Victorian lower class in England. The story consists mainly of the inner monologues of this woman in one of the houses she cleans weekly. A major concern of the story is the exploitation of Ma Parker, and thus other people like her, by the members of the upper class as the other party of the social injustice. Another prominent feature of "Life of Ma Parker" is its lacking the depth and subtlety of Mansfield's oeuvre in general. The story gives its message so easily probably because the message itself is simple. Presenting Ma Parker's hard, pathetic life in detail; the story targets on the emotions, even the tears of readers rather than their attention or intelligence in the manner the writer's masterpieces admirably do.

However, what the present study is concerned with is the quality of the story through which the recurring thematic elements in Mansfield's fiction become functional. For this, it seems that the story should involve first a character or characters escaping from the realities that have dominated and dominate his/her life. In this story such a character is the widowed charwoman called Ma Parker. Including a dead husband and children who have been victims of emigration, prostitution, poor health, and bad luck etc., her life itself is a huge reality. After all these disasters, the last ring of this ominous chain is the death of Ma Parker's grandson who was buried on the day before the narrated time in the story. It seems that Ma Parker has had to develop a defensive mechanism in order to escape from or at least endure everything and the added burial in question. Despite having experienced the loss of everybody she loves, Ma Parker has somehow survived and this is one of the points to be analysed in my study.

The indication of the stoicism which Ma Parker has developed is provided right in the first paragraph of the story. Just after the funeral of her dear grandson, we see that old Ma Parker can come to the literary gentleman's flat which she cleans every Tuesday. Another implication of this might be the lack of communication and understanding between Ma Parker and this upper class gentleman who never intends to spare her the work of that Tuesday although he learns the death of the infant. The only thing he does is uttering his hope that the funeral was a success. While doing this he

gives away the signs of the class distinction in his mind by using the expression “these people”:

He could hardly go back to the warm sitting-room without saying something – something more. Then because *these people* set such store by funerals he said kindly, ‘I hope the funeral went off all right.’ (Mansfield 2000: 32) (my italics)

After recalling her grandson’s death as a result of the man’s foolish insensitivity, old Ma Parker’s reaction gives clues about her old strategies that she has developed to cope with her painful life. She gives no answer and immediately engages in cleaning the kitchen, thus earning money for the rest of her family by serving other people as she has always done. She does not question why her fate added her little grandson to the list of her losses; she does not mind the literary gentleman, who names her and other losers in life as “those people” to have successful funerals. She seems to have found two more places deep in her heart for these two realities as well. She takes out her cleaning things and apron and a pair of felt shoes, ties her apron and sits down to take off her boots. At this point, in a harmony with the resistance of her tired heart, Ma Parker’s physical resistance is mentioned in a way that could hardly be a coincidence:

To take off her boots or to put them on was an agony to her, but it had been an agony for years. *In fact, she was so accustomed to the pain* that her face was drawn and screwed up ready for the twinge before she’d so much as untied the laces. (*ibid.* p. 33) (my italics)

But at this point, strong Ma Parker starts to show signs of faltering. She does away with another twinge coming from foot, nevertheless the memories of her dear grandson suddenly come out of her cramped heart. Up till this moment the narration has been from an omniscient narrator’s perspective but with an unexpected shift in the use of point of view, readers start to hear the past dialogues between Ma Parker and her grandson which are all full of mutual love. Ma Parker’s memories, which have been suppressed by her stoicism, are speaking now. However, she responds with her almost instinctual manner, she closes her ears and consciousness; she resists by trying to go on serving and denies her feelings. She seems to temporarily find the deadening of her pain in the noise of the water, which is one of the rituals of her work:

The noise of the water drumming in the kettle deadened her pain, it seemed. She filled the pail, too, and the washing-up bowl. (*ibid.* p. 33)

But, the disclosure of the episodes between Ma Parker and her grandson implies the fact that among all her losses her grandson's meant the vanishing of the only spark in her dark life. The noise of the water drumming in the kettle does not seem likely to soothe her in the long term. Fullbrook (1986) comments on her life and the meaning of the grandson as follows:

Her daughters 'went wrong', her boys 'emigrated', and her last remaining girl was thrown back on her hands after the death of her husband, bringing with her a frail grandson who has been the light of Ma Parker's life and whom she has just buried. The contrast of the extraordinary stoicism of the woman and the tenderness of her love for the fragile child is painfully moving. (Fullbrook 1986: 126)

Ma Parker must have kept going by dedicating her life to the remaining ones after each victim she loved and then lost. Now there is nobody to dedicate a life and the questions that should be answered are "what will Ma Parker's reaction be against the realities", "will she be able to prolong her stoicism or will she begin questioning her life, fate and the social order", "can cleaning the kitchens of rich people continue to be a means of escaping from all these dilemmas?" At this point it can be worth emphasising the views of the upper class gentleman about Ma Parker and women like her. They deepen the social and sociological dimension of the story and might say a lot about the social atmosphere at the time Katherine Mansfield lived. Here are the man's words uttered to his friends:

'You simply dirty everything you've got, *and get a hag in once a week to clean up, and the thing's done.*' (Mansfield 2000: 33) (my italics)

Just after the remark above, Ma Parker's feelings towards this man are mentioned. While the man defines her as "a cleaning up hag", she pities the "poor" young gentleman for having no one to look after him. Her view on the young gentleman is one of the aspects of the story that point to Ma Parker's world of illusions in which many other escapist Mansfieldian characters appear to take refuge. The reality is that all through her life she has dutifully served these wealthy people who have scorned her. Her illusion is that she helps people like him who need her as an industrious woman. It is clear that she has never questioned her social exploitation as a cheap labour, which is a dominant component of her hard life.

But as the day following the one when she buried her grandson, that day seems to be the day of earthquakes in that world of illusions. All of a sudden while sweeping the floor, Ma Parker's thoughts start to reveal the fact that that day is the day of awakening, realisation and confessions. She cannot keep her mental balance anymore, she falters. The following lines represent a watershed in both the story and her life:

'Yes', she thought, as the broom knocked, 'what with one thing and another I've had my share. I've had a hard life.' (*ibid.* p. 34)

This is probably the first time in her life she admits that she has had a hard one. And for the first time, she allows the realities to stop her struggle against life. She thinks about her life starting from her childhood up till now. In this way, the details of why and how her life has been hard are disclosed. Here is what she remembers about her first work:

She was never allowed out. She never went upstairs except for prayers morning and evening. It was a fair cellar. And the cook was a cruel woman. She used to snatch away her letters from home before she'd read them, and throw them in the range because they made her dreamy... (*ibid.* p. 34)

After pondering on her childhood (which she does not even remember), her working conditions, the ways how she lost her husband and thirteen children, Ma Parker considers how her grandson Lennie passed away in agony at long last. The thought of this is apparently the first thing she cannot bear in her lifetime. The stolid Ma Parker now begins to rebel against life, fate and even God. That angelic Ma Parker, who has never questioned even that literary gentleman out of touch with humanity, now asks why her little Lennie had to fight for his every breath and suffered like that. In her article, Lohafer (1996) comments on these moments of disillusionment as follows:

... we know that Lennie was the focus of all her love, all her joy, all her hope. Now, apparently for the first time, she acknowledges to herself that yes, she has had a hard life. As this thought gains momentum, as her misery deepens, she realises she has never cried in front of people. All her life, she has internalised her sorrows, accepting them, going about the business of serving her family, her employer. For what? (Lohafer 1996: 480-81)

At this point, Ma Parker loses every bit of her patience, prudence and stoicism. She suddenly gets out of the house without taking her money and thus she risks even her job. She feels that she must cry for a long time but her conflicts inside are so strong. On

the one hand, she needs to cry over all those things and be herself for the first time in her life. But on the other hand, her self-control that she has developed for years does not let her. She does not give the right to herself to cry before people or in literary gentleman's flat as it is a stranger's house. She is totally helpless, feeling that nobody knows and cares about her plight. Pathos is at its summit at the end of the story:

Oh, wasn't there anywhere where she could hide and keep herself to herself and stay as long as she liked, not disturbing anybody, and nobody worrying her? Wasn't there anywhere in the world where she could have her cry out – at last? (Mansfield 2000: 38)

Due to the concerns of the present study, the more important thing about this ending is its being the point where the recurring thematic features of Mansfield's fiction seem to become functional. The narration comes to an end with the mention of the beginning of the rain and while nobody but the pitiful sky cries for the hapless Ma Parker, she has arrived to a point where many other protagonists in Mansfield's stories meet. What makes them meet here is their efforts to escape from the realities of their lives in this modern world by various unconscious strategies of ignoring things. In the end, suppressed realities shatter the safe worlds of illusion and characters become aware of what their lives have actually been like. Nothing is said directly about the lives of these characters after such moments of disillusionment and the resulting awareness. Nevertheless, it might be thought that such moments can be considered to be gains which could help one develop a much more rational approach towards everything in his/her life. Lohafer (1996) comments on Ma Parker's moment of being more aware as follows:

Momentarily, at least, the emphasis shifts from tallying her losses to appreciating her gains – those barely noticeable ways of “being more aware, more centered, more dramatically interesting than she has ever been before. (Lohafer 1996: 486)

It is the first moment in *Mansfield's* text where this downtrodden woman says, in effect, “Hey, wait a minute.” (*ibid.* p. 486)

Just like the other protagonists analysed in this study, Ma Parker is left lonely and frustrated at last. She has found herself finally isolated with no hope of human or divine help. However, what makes Ma Parker different from the other major characters

included in my study is that her disillusionment is not a consequence of a concrete incident. There is not an outside manipulation which is the case in “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped” when policemen coming from the world of realities come and take her there back. Ma Parker does not see any shocking thing as Bertha does in “Bliss” when she witnesses the betrayal or she does not hear unexpected things in a conversation such as the ones in “The Stranger” or “The Dill Pickle.” She does not accidentally hear what her life actually means from other people as the protagonist of “Miss Brill” does. What Ma Parker, as an elderly person, experiences is questioning and consequently being more aware of her lifelong submission to others. Other examples of such cases can be seen in other Mansfield stories, particularly in “The Ideal Family” and “The Fly” which are out of the scope of this study.

2.8 The Thematic Analysis of “Her First Ball”

“Her First Ball” is a story about an experience of an adolescent and this is a case that can be seen in some other stories of Katherine Mansfield. The adolescent in question is a girl called Leila. She is from a small town or a village distant from the modern life of a city and the story tells about the first dance ball Leila attends in the city with her urban cousins. A major concern of this story is the young girl’s psychology determined mainly by the abrupt emotional and intellectual changes caused by her age.

Teenagers’ conflicts with self, family, opposite sex and society in a broader sense appear to have been an interest of Katherine Mansfield. Young people, especially female ones, often take part in her fiction on the one hand with their wishes, desires, dreams and on the other hand with their various problems, hesitations, considerations. Kobler (1990) draws attention to this dimension of Mansfield’s stories and especially to the physical changes they undergo and their potential conflicts with their parents’ generation:

... Mansfield also depicts natural, physical yearnings in young women, those very yearnings that her parents’ generation would have warned her to avoid at all costs and that much of her own generation was telling her to obey at absolutely no cost – or, if the voices were sufficiently Freudian, to obey lest there be great cost. (Kobler 1990: 6)

The narration in “Her First Ball” starts with the presentation of the protagonist Leila and her four cousins in a cab on the way to the ball parlour. Gently opening and shutting

her fan, Leila seems to have been dazzled long ago by the changes and lots of new things around her:

But every single thing was so new and exciting... Meg's tuberose, Jose's long loop of amber, Laura's little dark head, pushing above her white fur like a flower through snow. She would remember for ever. (Mansfield 1951: 192)

The most interesting point in the opening of the story is Leila's excessive excitement, happiness and admiration for every single thing about the dance ball. She attributes an almost magical quality to everything and everybody. The road is bright for her with moving fan-like lights, on the pavement couples seem to float through the air and little satin shoes chase each other like birds. Just at this moment, Leila's cousin Laura gives an even more interesting warning to her as follows:

'Hold on to me, Leila; *you'll get lost*,' said Laura. (*ibid.* p: 193) (my italics)

The context of this warning should raise questions about the way Leila might be lost. Some of them would be "Will she only in the physical sense get lost in that crowd of esteemed dancers or by getting lost, did Katherine Mansfield imply the possibility that Leila will be a new degenerate member of those nonsensical parties?", "What will the tone of the writer and another clues say about the balls in question?" etc. The answers are to be found in the experiences Leila will be having after she enters the dance hall.

First of all, a deafening noise and an utter chaos are mentioned in the ladies' dressing room. All the ladies are in a rush for getting prepared for the dance and there is a rapid exchange of ribbons, gloves, hair-pins etc. between young ladies. They try to be as artificially beautiful as possible. However, this flurry of excitement and all those girls with colourful, glittering garments influence Leila. She watches everything with real delight:

Dark girls, fair girls were patting their hair, tying ribbons again, tucking handkerchiefs down the fronts of their bodices, smoothing marble-white gloves. And because they were all laughing it seemed to Leila that they were all lovely. (*ibid.* p. 194)

Leila feels a gradually increasing joy and bliss which almost all the protagonists dealt with in this study felt. Now she forgets to be shy and how in the middle of dressing

for the ball she begged her cousins not to come. But it should be emphasised here that all the protagonists in question lost their touch with realities and created an illusory world inasmuch as they felt a similar joy. They all either misunderstood or misinterpreted the situations they were in or they consciously or unconsciously escaped from the realm of the realities. Nonetheless, they all met a sudden and painful disillusionment at last. At this point Leila seems to have lost her affection for her little country home first and be fascinated by each detail in the hall. She seems to be ready to swap her country life for this world of colourful hats, fans, gloves, dance balls etc:

And the rush of longing she had had to be sitting on the veranda of their forsaken up-country home, listening to the baby owls crying 'more pork' in the moonlight, was changed to a rush of joy so sweet that it was hard to bear alone. She clutched her fan, and, gazing at the gleaming, golden floor, the azaleas, the lanterns, the stage at one end with its red carpet and gilt chairs and the band in a corner, *she thought breathlessly, 'How heavenly; how simply heavenly!'* (*ibid.* p. 195) (my italics)

Now it is clear that Leila has really got lost in this crowd under all those lights and colours. Everywhere she sees more and more reasons for her increasing joy and admiration and this makes her discover some new parts in that illusive world she has newly entered. She goes on attributing heavenly qualities to the dance hall part in that geography:

... Leila was sure if her partner didn't come and she had to listen to that marvellous music and to watch the others sliding, gliding over the golden floor, she would die at least, or faint, or lift her arms and fly out one of those dark windows that showed the stars. (*ibid.* p. 197)

Now Leila is completely under an illusion like the other young people in that dancing throng. She scorns the place she is from and considers the dance hall to be the one she would die in at least.

At this point an experienced Mansfield reader is supposed to expect a disillusionment and grief lurking nearby this joy. However, for anyone, Leila's exaggerations at least might not be too hard to notice. Anyway, just one clue in the story can prove the fact that these dance balls do not deserve such an appreciation as Leila's. The first and the second dance partners of her do exactly the same things and then leave her. They first ask if the dance floor is good and then where Leila was last week. Upon

getting Leila's answer that that is her first ball, they do not show any interest or engage in a conversation. As if programmed, everybody seems to act in a pre-determined, insincere manner. They are not in a simple interaction even. Instead of being sceptical, what Leila does is clinging to her illusion and bliss which is as artificial as every single thing around. She thinks she is at the beginning of everything:

It seemed to her that she had never known what the night was like before. Up till now it had been dark, silent, beautiful very often – oh, yes – but mournful somehow. Solemn. And now it would never be like that again – it had opened dazzling bright. (*ibid.* p. 199)

Like many other Mansfieldian characters, and especially the ones analysed in the present study, Leila refuses to hear the call of the realities. She thinks that she is at the beginning of a life that will always be dazzling bright. The rest of the story would show whether or not she is right. Some questions needed to be answered might be “Will a sudden disillusionment come and if so, when and how?”, “Is Leila a typical Mansfieldian character who is to find to her cost that she has had a lot of misconceptions?”

Before long, a third dance partner takes Leila. But this old fat man is very different in appearance from the other young and slim male dancers. He looks shabby with a creased waistcoat and a dusty coat. Besides these, he immediately shows his difference in his behaviour also. He neither says a word about the dance floor nor asks where Leila was last week. Before she admits that that is her first dance, this man senses it. Seeing Leila's amazement, he says that he has been doing that kind of thing for the last thirty years, twelve years before Leila was born. He goes on in a way assuring the reader of the possibility that he is the agent of the disillusionment in this story. With his experience of thirty years, he starts to give a summary of what young girls like Leila turn out to be in thirty years. He directly addresses Leila and says that her pretty arms will have turned into little short fat ones. His projection of Leila's dance balls in the future is as follows:

‘And you'll smile away like the poor old dears up there, and point to your daughter, and tell the elderly lady next to you how some dreadful man tried to kiss her at the club hall. And your heart will ache, ache’ – the fat man squeezed her closer still, as if he really was sorry for that poor heart – ‘because no one

wants to kiss you now. And you'll say how unpleasant these polished floors are to walk on, how dangerous they are. (*ibid.* p. 200)

This is the point where the common thematic features in Katherine Mansfield's stories become functional for Leila. Now she is one of those characters of Mansfield who finally see that happiness does not last forever. She faces the grief hidden just behind the joy. The fat old man suddenly reveals the fact about those balls which Leila has never questioned up till now. Beneath the bright colourful superficiality, they seem to be one of the rituals of the "modern" society which Katherine Mansfield often criticised. It is understood that during the dances and exchange of partners, men and mothers (who were once upon a time beautiful female dancers like Leila) choose spouses. Apart from the clichéd questions about the dance floors, the only criteria left for this selection appear to be all those nice garments, hats, gloves etc. which Leila cannot ever have if she stays as a village girl. In Mansfield's fiction, such accessories represent the conformity with the established customs and those dance balls might also be considered to be a step towards conventional marriages in which the roles of both men and women are pre-determined as it is done in the balls in question. New (1999) is writer who emphasises especially the function of hats in Mansfield's fiction:

Hats, repeatedly, are signs of deference to convention... (New 1999: 113)

Leila is disillusioned now. She gives a little laugh but does not feel like laughing. She asks herself if that first ball is only the beginning of her last ball. She sees how quickly things have changed. Again the couples meet and new music is given out by the band. However, what Leila now wants is just standing where she is. After her frustration, she tends to re-adopt her countryside origins. She is on the brink of questioning and re-evaluating the ball she is in and how a life and status it represents:

Now new music was given out by the bandmaster. But Leila didn't want to dance anymore. She wanted to be home, or sitting on the veranda listening to those baby owls. When she looked through the dark windows at the stars, they had long beams like wings... (Mansfield 1951: 201)

If this story was finished at the moment of Leila's words above, the ending would not be much different from the endings of the other stories analysed in the present study in terms of their major thematic concerns. With a clearly open ending, this story also

would say nothing directly about what happens to Leila after her experience of the sudden impact and the resulting disillusionment, disappointment, grief and realisation. Nevertheless, "Her First Ball" comes to an end in a different way. A few minutes later, during her following dance which she accepts just out of politeness; the lights, the azaleas, the dresses, the pink faces, the velvet chairs all become another beautiful flying wheel and are able to capture her attention and heart again. So she seems to miss the chance of gaining a durable awareness of the realities. As a teenager, Leila can no more resist the artificial beauties of the modern life. Here is what happens when she accidentally bumps into that fat man who consciously or unconsciously warned her about the illusion Leila has been in:

And when her next partner bumped her into the fat man and he said, 'Pardon,' she smiled at him more radiantly than ever. *She didn't even recognise him again.* (*ibid.* p. 202) (my italics)

It seems that the illusions prevail and Leila has preferred to keep her imaginations. She thinks she is at the beginning of a life which promises her a permanent light just like the chandeliers in that ball parlour. Although her fat partner told her the stories of the elderly women there, whom he knows for thirty years and who were once upon a time like Leila; she appears to deny the possibility that her future might be like theirs. Despite their still nice accessories, nobody wants to dance with those women now and they are just wives who can do nothing but bring their daughters to balls to introduce them to a life which would be almost the same as theirs. Leila is at a beginning but it is highly probable that this beginning is at a point where she is close to having a male-dominated marriage and a social life (like the ones in the stories "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped", "Bliss", "Honeymoon") that have some pre-determined female roles and rituals such as the dance balls in question.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the presentation of the results attained through the preceding analyses chapter. They are three different thematic patterns that are discussed together with reviewing the literature on them. The chapter simultaneously provides the discussion of the ways in which these thematic concerns of the author might be taught.

The chapter is organised as follows: Under the scope of the main section 3.1 presenting “The Major Themes in Katherine Mansfield’s Fiction and Teaching about Them”, Section 3.1.1 presents “The Theme of Pessimism about Life and Teaching about it”. Section 3.1.2 presents “The Theme of Patriarchal Systems and Teaching about it”. The presentation of “The Theme of Social Classes and Conflicts and Teaching about it” is provided in section 3.1.3.

3.1 The Major Themes in Katherine Mansfield’s Fiction and Teaching about Them

In order to conclude with what a teacher, who wants to teach Mansfield’s themes or use her works for pedagogical or literary purposes, should be aware of and know about Mansfield’s art, it might be of primary importance to discuss what the preceding analyses of the eight stories in this study point to in terms of the author’s thematic concerns. In the light of the findings of the analyses in question, references and suggestions could be made about teaching the author’s thematic concerns. If it can be derived particular thematic patterns and consistency from the analyses in question, a teacher can benefit from it by gaining a particular way of thinking about or judging Mansfield’s stories and the thematic concerns in them. Another gain of him/her would be a general awareness of what s/he should and should not expect to occur in Mansfield’s works while considering the methods to teach her themes in general or a particular dimension of these themes. Besides, s/he could determine a relative scope of knowledge and awareness of the stories and their thematic patterns for students to gain. Thus, s/he might see how close a student is to getting at some prominent facts in Katherine Mansfield’s fiction and s/he may form the criteria needed for the phase of assessing the students’ access to what the author deals with in her stories.

At the end of the thematic analysis of the stories on which the present study focused, three features were inferred. These are pessimism about life, patriarchal

systems and the issue of social classes. As the first one was clearly detected in all the analysed stories and the majority of Mansfield's other works, it is considered to be the main thematic concern. The remaining two can be called "sub-themes" as their implications could not be found in all the stories analysed. Furthermore, in the stories in which these sub-themes are treated, it was seen that this is done in the framework of the treatment of the major theme in question. In the rest of this chapter, these three features are discussed respectively in distinct sections together with their possible references and relations to teaching.

3.1.1 The Theme of Pessimism about Life and Teaching about it

The most frequently recurring motif in the thematic analyses of those eight short stories seems to be a pessimistic view about life and/or the era. All of the eight short stories are the stories of people having an experience of realising that any feeling of happiness, joy, strength, inner peace, hope etc. is to be demolished by a moment of inevitable grief or frustration. If a protagonist is seen enjoying his/her bliss, cherishing a glimmer of hope or struggling against anything with inner peace and strength, it generally means that that protagonist thinks or feels in a way s/he should not think or feel. S/he is most probably in an illusion. Having formed some false considerations about the conditions they are in, they fail to grasp the realities of their marriage, age, relationships, in short, their lives. They consciously and often unconsciously refuse to see the way things have developed in their lives and what they are developed enough to impinge upon their immediate future. They somehow find reasons for being happy, joyful, hopeful, and self-confident etc. or resistant at least to fight against even some worst fates just as the character Ma Parker fights in "The Life of Ma Parker".

During the narrated periods of their lives in the stories, such moments of happiness seldom stay static. The protagonists in question gradually become more and more jocund, enjoy some brand-new hopes and very easily overlook some negative signs and impressions. The rationale behind such a self-delusion is generally some absurd reasons like the ones of the character Bertha of "Bliss". While the only vital fact about her marriage is her husband's betrayal with a woman Bertha thinks she understands so well, we see her thank God for her impeccable life and marriage with their perfect "modern,

thrilling” friends according to her, whereas the conversations of those are in fact hardly distinguishable from the one of a group of clowns. Another example can be the peasant girl Leila of “Her First Ball” who is fascinated at once and then illusioned by the colourful handkerchiefs of the women in the urban dance ball she attends for the first time. She easily ignores the first signs of the insincerity there given by her first two dance partners and in addition to that, the overt warnings given by her old partner attending such parties for over thirty years. Some Mansfieldian characters like Leila and Fanny of “Honeymoon” can remind readers and students of even Pollyanna.

The protagonists in the selected eight stories are from different age groups, ranging from the little girl Pearl Button of “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped” to the old Ma Parker of “The Life of Ma Parker”. This might be an important point for teachers and students to note as it can prove that Katherine Mansfield’s cynicism about happiness and her portrayal of the theme of unavoidable grief and frustration in the end, are meant to be shown valid for every people of the time no matter what their ages are. Besides, the social statuses and living standards of the characters are not homogeneous as well. For instance; while Mr. Hammond of “The Stranger” is a wealthy man, the poor Ma Parker is a charwoman cleaning the houses of the people like Mr. Hammond. However, Mansfield allots both of them a moment of painful frustration and awareness and she makes the implications of futures which seem to promise nothing but the continuance of pains for both. These two characters in question, one being a male and another a female one, reveal the fact for Katherine Mansfield that gender difference also is not a factor for the way the dynamics of life function. (However, most of Mansfield’s works include effective portrayal of women.) Thus, the protagonists from different ages, social classes, sexes are affected in similar ways by the author’s idea about life hiding sorrow just nearby any kind and form of happiness. This feature of Mansfield’s fiction is worth paying careful attention for teachers and students while studying her as it seems to be a major characteristic providing the coherence and cohesion of her works and the universality of the themes she treats.

The cycle for all the protagonists examined in this study is much the same. A character is introduced with his/her particular trait of misapprehending the realities or transforming them by unconsciously aiming at having an artificial feeling of happiness,

joy, hopefulness, satisfaction, peace etc. However, the first two or three pages of the stories can usually suffice to make students and readers sense that the living conditions of the characters require some different ways of thinking and/or behaving and treating those conditions. They ignore this generally by overlooking the signs and clues of it. A good example of this phenomenon can be Vera of “The Dill Pickle”. She refuses for quite a while to accept the fact that her ex-lover is still that insensitive man of six years ago when they used to be lovers and when he used to be a source of disappointment and a deep sorrow.

The protagonists can also be seen adopting a world of fantasies consisting of certain make-believes and fiction they have created for themselves. In that world, a character might strip other people of their real identities and give them new roles after keeping the most prestigious one for him/herself. Blanchard (1985) is a critic who notes this on the basis of one of the famous stories of the author. That is the story called “The Doll’s House” and the child characters “Burnells” there serve the main data for the critic’s views:

The make believes of Mansfield’s children – in particular, that of the Burnells – is one of their most attractive qualities, but this ability to live vicariously becomes less attractive in young women and is finally destructive in older women like Miss Brill and Miss Moss. Mansfield never moves as far as Lawrence in her commitment to alliance, but as she matures there is increasing evidence of her rejection of fantasy. (Blanchard 1985: 64)

As Blanchard (1985) mentions above, the eponymous character Miss Brill of the short story “Miss Brill” could be a clear example of this. For her, there is an imaginative stage set on the park she goes every Sunday, where every other people altogether perform a play with a perfect co-operation and understanding. In the meantime, Miss Brill seems to have appointed herself as the star of the performance who secretly follows what is going on first and then participates in whenever she wishes to do so.

The aforementioned self-deception is the detected tendency of the major characters in the thematic analysis of the eight stories involved in my study. Besides being a characteristic of characterisation, it appears to be the first and basic constituent of the recurrent thematic feature inferred from the analyses in question. Therefore, for teaching and learning Mansfield’s thematic concerns, this first constituent could well be

the first stage for teachers to consider in their plans and a learning target for students to meet.

At this point, regarding the course of the phenomena in the author's fiction, the question to be asked, discussed and answered by students about the next constituents should be "what happens to these happy, hopeful, self-confident characters next and how does it happen?" or "How does Katherine Mansfield achieve the completion of her message, what is the following constituent?" The answers could take us to another significant dimension of Mansfield's fiction. As it is mentioned earlier in the text, while enjoying their bliss, fantasies etc., the protagonists experience a moment of disillusionment and the resulting disappointment and grief. Still more interesting, it seems that the happier a character is, the closer s/he is to the impact of disillusionment. Then a student or a reader, who has been taught about this or has noted it him/herself, could be expected to find the grief lurking just nearby the joy when the characters' optimism reaches its climax. When having done this, it might be so interesting and thought-provoking to discuss the manners the author paves the way to disillusionment, frustration and grief.

On the one hand, the disillusionment in question can take place so suddenly. A striking example for this can be the experience of Pearl Button, the young girl in "How Pearl Button was Kidnapped". Just at the moment she is in that infinite, perfectly blue sea in that absolutely free land of those fairy-like strangers, the policemen with their dark blue coats from that constraining, dogmatic order of her real life come suddenly and take her back to her family's "box-like" house where she will be growing up to be just like her suffering mother under the aforesaid order. On the other hand, the coming of the blow of grief can be implied by Mansfield by certain signs or clues. The honeymooning couple of "The Honeymoon" can set a good example to this. Although Fanny clings to her idea of an ideal match and future with her husband and she fails to notice, time and again the husband discloses the signs of some clear behavioural and emotional differences from Fanny that could cause some potential problems in their marriage later. Such signs, if there are any, might be interesting and important for students to determine on their own if they are considered to have advanced a certain rate in grasping the thematic unity of Mansfield's fiction.

After the intervention of an absolute frustration, at the completion stage of the transmission of the author's thematic messages, nothing or very little happens at the end of the stories. Students and readers may not be able to make sense of why the stories come to an end there. They are needed the guidance of the teacher at this point. Here it is possible to introduce short story as a genre which has come to have such peculiar characteristics as such endings as many of the author's short stories have. At those points, students can be asked to try to come up with different endings. Thus, they can judge for themselves whether or not a different ending would look satisfying and they can see that, ironically enough, this very feature appears to be what completes, sharpens and ascertains Katherine Mansfield's pessimistic view and message about life. The characters learn that even the greatest joy has to finish and grief prevails in the end. But here the more important point is that the open endings in question present desolate and some even shocked characters who seem to be abandoned with hope of neither human nor supernatural help or pity, characters who seem to be abandoned at such endings where nothing or very little could be expected to happen. Some endings, like the ones of "The Life of Ma Parker" and "Miss Brill", are so pathetic that they might be considered to be even "tear-jerkers". However, a rational comment on these seemingly misplaced endings could be expected to come from students as follows: They are the definite victories of the realities against the fantasies of the protagonists; life should be handled by never ignoring its threats, challenge, poignancy and death, as its inevitable final.

The question why the analysed characters choose to ignore the realities could be a decent subject of discussion and writing for students. A reason may be the fact that the characters adopt such a choice as the strategy of coping with the realities. But anyhow, what cannot be discussed here seems to be their evident punishment for the philosophy they follow in their lives and that is "Ignorance is bliss", which can also be a memorable motto for students about most of Mansfield's characters. They live in an inner, subjective world with a mind suppressing or transforming the impressions of the outer world. Such a functioning of the mind takes them far away from the objective reality. Thus, the fantasies and dreams become a means of escaping from the hardships of life. But just when the dreamlike happiness, joy, peace, endurance etc. of a protagonist is about to be fulfilled, life and realities inflict their absolute rule upon him/her.

Katherine Mansfield dealt with several other thematic concerns in her fiction. The ones that have been detected in the analyses of my study will be discussed in the succeeding two sections in the text. These (for a wider and more detailed analysis) and some other thematic features in other Mansfield stories might be a point of interest for students with the aim of further and more independent studies, criticism or research. But there seems to be an “umbrella theme” derived from the eight stories analysed and that theme is the belief in an absolute grief and frustration at the end of even a great joy or happiness or a flourishing hope. This pattern can be followed in many other stories apart from the eight involved in the present study. The other thematic concerns in question generally appear to be “sub-themes” under the above-mentioned one covering them. For instance, such a story as “The Stranger” can well be considered to be about marriage and male-female relationships. However, just the neglected marriage problems themselves are the source and reason for a doubtful one-sided happiness and increasing excitement first and then a sudden blow of sorrow and frustration in the end. This general pattern should not be so hard to notice after a certain while and students should not lose such a general perspective while analysing and discussing such stories.

The pessimistic messages of Katherine Mansfield that have been discussed up till this point have also been mentioned by several critics, academicians and writers. At the beginning or the end of studying the author, they could be introduced to students, especially to the ones who are not familiar to the plotless modernist short stories like Mansfield’s. This would make them aware of what they are to seek, consider and perceive in Mansfield’s fiction from an analytical point of view.

Professor Daly and Alpers are of such academicians. Rohrberger’s (1991) reference to them in his work puts it forward as follows:

Though Mansfield affirmed beauty to the end, Daly continues, “*the casual destructive forces always lurked nearby, and in any joy sadness waited.*” “Death seen beneath transparent life, death seen ‘in a flower that is fresh unfolded,’ as she expressed it herself,” Alpers says, “this is the theme that consistently drew forth Katherine Mansfield’s finest work....” (Rohrberger 1991: 35) (my italics)

Gunstern (1990) mentions it in relation to Mansfield's use of contrasting settings juxtaposed on contrasting emotions of the characters. She symbolises sadness that destroys the beauty of life by a snail creeping under a leaf:

The contrasting setting provides Mansfield with ample background to work out the juxtaposition she so often expressed in her journal, 'the snail under the leaf', which destroys the beauty of life. (Gunstern 1990: 144)

Cowley (1922) seems to have noted it when Katherine Mansfield was alive. He comments on the overall theme and what the characters of her fiction experience as follows:

The thesis of her work is "that life is a very wonderful spectacle, but disagreeable for the actors." They discover life to be wonderful and very disagreeable.... The moment from their existence which Katherine Mansfield chooses to describe is the moment of this realisation." (Cowley 1922: 231)

Within the scope of Mansfield's this pessimistic view on life and future in which different European and some New Zealander people are presented as almost condemned to be ruined by an inevitable grief that dominates after hopes, students would not fail to see some references to specifically their own lives and/or our national experiences in general. Considering the fact that they are the members of a nation who have been affected and are still affected by the dominance of various social, political and economic realities originating from both within the country or from the lands near the country, students could make some particular connections between the disagreeable lives of the foreign people in Mansfield's stories and those of ours throughout the history and today. Teachers could plan thought-provoking writing and speaking sessions on it. These would be some of the ways for students to internalise the author's messages and fiction, to think and learn in an active and motivated manner and to appreciate studying Mansfield's fiction and in general the benefits of reading quality literary works.

Studying and learning the overall theme of pessimism in Mansfield's fiction; students may not help wondering about the source of or the reason for the author's idea of disagreeable life. If there really is such a source or reason, students could be instructed about it in advance so that they can determine the reflections of it in the stories. Being provided with background to see some particular relations, students could

more easily make sense of the thesis of Mansfield's works and her messages. If the instruction in question takes place after reading a story, it can be a useful activity for students to infer the reflections and relations themselves. This would make them read and think more over what they have read.

The source in question is likely to be found in the biographical information about Katherine Mansfield. For students, her biographies might really be as interesting as her stories to read and consider. It could be a very fruitful dimension of teaching Katherine Mansfield to motivate them to find how some biographical features are reflected in her stories. In almost every feature to be studied, students can understand that the author had a life that almost never gave her a chance of being optimistic and that urged her to wait sadness in any joy. Having had problems with her parents especially about her will to live in England as a writer, she got married hastily at the age of nineteen when she was pregnant. She left her husband on the following day and then had a miscarriage in a spa in Germany. After that, she was never in good health, weakened gradually by tuberculosis and some other sexually transmitted diseases. She had inclination to homosexuality and we can see its reflection in "Bliss." She met John Middleton Murry at the age of twenty-four, had her longest relationship with him and married him at thirty in the end after having some painful separations and reunions. He was an editor, Katherine Mansfield improved her writing and did much professional work with him. However, her marriage with Murry ended too. She had loved her brother most but she lost him in the First World War, the traumatic event in Europe's social and ideological life which she experienced and observed so closely. When she was abroad once more in search of her health in France, she died at the age of only thirty-four as a well-known writer who ironically had never been satisfied with her art herself. In her article, Lederman (1997) defines Mansfield's life as a series of struggles, shows Mansfield's own words (they are taken from one of the author's letters which have been often published and analysed and which, as a totally new form, could well be a totally new point of interest for students after such lessons focusing on the biographical reflections in Mansfield's works) as the rationale behind her comment:

Her whole life had been a series of struggles, first to shake herself emotionally and financially free from her family, followed by years of struggle with

mounting physical pain: “and then suffering, bodily suffering such as I’ve known for three years. *It has changed for ever everything – even the appearance of the world is not the same – there is something added. Everything has its shadow,*” she writes in 1920. (Lederman 1977: 37) (my italics)

After having discussed the major thematic concern found in the analysed stories of Katherine Mansfield, now the features seeming to be of sub-themes will be discussed together with their relations and references to teaching.

3.1.2 The Theme of Patriarchal Systems and Teaching about it

The theme of marriage, male-female relationships in a more general sense, draws attention in five of the stories included in this study. Among these five stories, in “Bliss”, “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped” and “The Stranger” the marriages have been and still are obviously patriarchal and male-dominated. The one in “Honeymoon” seems candidate for being patriarchal while the love affair which ended six years ago in “The Dill Pickle” appears to have ended because of the still existing patriarchal potential of the man. All these relationships are dominated or at least controlled by the men. The women do not have professions and they do not work. Their lives consist of only the housework and/or care of the children in the well-known way traditionally pre-determined by patriarchal systems and attitudes. Probably the most striking example would be Pearl Button’s mother who irons just because it is Tuesday as if she is programmed to do so. In spite of having no economic problems, the women can often be seen suffering emotionally and psychologically. Taking the advantage of their traditional dominant roles, the men are generally insensitive to the feelings of their women. They are in pursuit of satisfying their own needs and wills. In “Bliss”, the advantage in question takes the form of even an abuse, a betrayal by the husband. The men tend to consider the women to be frail, helpless and desperately in need of their protection. This is very clear and interesting to read and analyse in “The Stranger” where Mr. Hammond defines and visualises his wife by bird qualities such as “small”, “little.” By adopting the role of a keeper or proprietor of such “little women”, the men are likely to be feeling themselves better as this contributes to their egos, their consideration of their own selves.

Furthermore, due to Mansfield's skills as a writer, it is very interesting to see that men also might well suffer from the system bestowing advantages upon them. "The Stranger" would be a perfect example for students to study this. Although it is not analysed in this study, another good example for an extra study would be "Marriage a la Mode".

The thematic feature in question has also been considered to be the most prominent among the author's messages and perhaps not surprisingly, Mansfield has been a troubling figure for feminist critics. Morance (1991) is one of those who think that Mansfield's works are radical enough to make some extreme comments on:

Mansfield's writing reveals one woman's hatred and rejection of her female body based on irrational fantasies of maternal power; it also provides a salutary and sobering example of how such fantasies can affect and damage a woman's ability to sustain relationships with other women. (Morance 1991: 105)

What Katherine Mansfield often does is going into the consciousness of the women in order to portray the effects of such relationships and dominant men. In "At the Bay", a story which is also out of the scope of the present study, the female character Linda Burnell could be a very good example for students to note while studying the thematic feature of traditional marriages and the place of the women in it. After musing for a while over her marriage and life, Linda Burnell finally sees that she cannot escape from the following admission:

And what made it doubly hard to bear was, *she did not love her children*. It was useless pretending. (Mansfield 1951: 34) (my italics)

Linda Burnell might be the extreme point in the continuum including the suffering women in Mansfield's fiction. Young Fanny of "Honeymoon" is probably the opposite end as she is far from the level of emotional suffering and for now she tries to make herself believe that the dominant preferences and decisions of her husband are actually not very different from hers. However, they are distinctively different.

Being aware of these ends of the continuum in question, students might study and learn more effectively the consciousness and varying perspectives of the women in the male-dominated relationships. They could understand the women of Mansfield, who are the focus of the majority of her stories, better and thus gain a wider access to this

thematic issue which itself and the passages presenting it have also been the target of emphasis by several critics and writers. Breuer (2002) is one of them:

In such passages, Mansfield's description of the gender relation is superbly representative of late Victorian and Edwardian bourgeois ethos. The idea of female helplessness and frailty supports the male in his egocentric self-image. Thus, he can satisfy cravings for self-aggrandisement and omnipotence, fend off his own anxiety of inferiority, and rationalise his sexual and dominative drives into care and protection. (Breuer 2002: 626)

Katherine Mansfield's unsettled relationships, her marriages and divorces, her experience of a miscarriage, her homosexual tendency and her observation of the social life and marriages of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods in England are most probably the sources of this thematic dimension in her fiction. It may be very important and useful for students to study it because of its reminder quality about the social customs and matrimonial life in Turkey of even our time. It would be so hard to deny the fact that today in Turkey marriages and social life as a whole maybe are still dominated or at least controlled mainly by men. This is a time when women are even killed due to the rules shaped in men's minds. Therefore, there seems to be a similarity between the present situation in Turkey of the twenty-first century and the one in the Edwardian England. By presenting the late Victorian and Edwardian bourgeois ethos in England of that time, Mansfield treated the theme of patriarchal system in a way she can be referred to whenever and wherever the system in question causes problems. While reading the story of Bertha in "Bliss", a student might easily consider many Turkish women who are "shut up in a case like a rare fiddle" just like Bertha and some other Mansfieldian female characters isolated from social and economic life. Such relations would make students appreciate the universality and practicality of the author's themes. Besides, it would give teachers the chance of not only emphasising this universality but also exemplifying it. It could also increase students' interest in Mansfield's oeuvre and their motivation to read and understand her more. This might be the beginning of the route to being an independent and volunteer Katherine Mansfield reader.

Mansfield was one of the first intellectuals critical of the traditional marriages. They are likely to be continued for social and religious reasons in Turkey and all over the world. So the author will continue to be interesting to read with her effective

portrayal of such marriages. It might be preferable for teachers to start studying Mansfield's themes with this dimension of her thematic concerns, so that the above-mentioned relation to Turkey and our daily lives could help teachers to create the motivation at the beginning in order to continue studying this relatively difficult writer. At the end of the course, teachers could ask students to search for the Turkish literary products or films which are on this issue and make comparisons between those and Mansfield's works. Besides being a source of very useful and fruitful written and spoken brainstorming activities, this could encourage them to read Turkish literature and it would be a great experience for students to see that once upon a time, some Turkish writers and a New Zealander writer, who wrote mainly about European life and people, thought and wrote about similar things. In this way, students might see that Europeans is not a perfect community of people who have always existed as isolated from all social problems since the time they were known as "English", "Irish", and "French" etc. By the way, students might probably think that there can be some other ways to integrate into Europeans on an intellectual base after knowing the fact that they once felt and maybe still feel in their social lives what we have felt and feel.

3.1.3 The Theme of Social Classes and Conflicts and Teaching about it

Another aspect of Mansfield's themes found in the analyses is the issue of social and economic classes and the relationships between them. It is very clear in "The Life of Ma Parker" in which the protagonist as a charwoman tries to survive by cleaning the houses of rich people after losing all her family because of the ills of the late Victorian under class. One of such rich people, the other character in the story, is a literary gentleman who calls Ma Parker "a hag" and is insensitive and derogatory even to her grandson's recent death.

In different rates of explicitness, this social and sociological content is found in some other stories of the author. There are some more characters like Ma Parker who suffer from the absence of a general prosperity, limited social and economic alternatives for the working-class, lack of communication and understanding between the classes and the expectation that working-class should always swallow their suffering. They are marginalised by society. Katherine Mansfield deals with it in a very effective way in her

famous story “The Garden Party” which is not included in my study. There the rich family Sheridans give a crowded, noisy party in their nice garden during which a poor carter living in a little cottage below Sheridans’ villa dies. The young, sensitive daughter of the family Laura suggests stopping the party while the dead man is still in his death-bed just nearby the front gate of the villa. But her mother thinks Laura is being very absurd and here are her words about the party and the death in question:

If someone had died there normally – *and I can't understand how they keep alive in those poky little holes* – we should still be having our party, shouldn't we? (Mansfield 2000: 132) (my italics)

This is a striking passage showing the barriers between the upper and lower classes in the English society then. There are more in this story and at the end of it, the meeting of Laura with the dead man’s family by his corpse would be an unforgettable scene indeed. Such passages might be necessary and useful for teachers to draw students’ attention to. They would easily make them notice this thematic concern of the author, sympathise with the suffering character and thus become active readers of the story studied.

As the theme of traditional marriages, the subject matter of class distinctions contributes much to the universality of the author’s themes. It is probably not so difficult to claim that similar social situations to the ones depicted in Mansfield’s stories are present in Turkey and other parts of the world. Therefore, the author’s thematic concern in question could be a means of beneficial discussions and speaking and/or writing activities among students. The literary works written on this issue by Turkish writers and/or various concrete experiences and events that could be easily remembered considering the recent times or the ones that could still be easily observed in a society exposed to many economic crises, might be the points of reference again. By the way, the “local universality” of the author would be approved by students once more and they may get deeper into the messages of her while trying to constitute their arguments for or against the practicality of this thematic feature, the extent her messages can be valid for our country and our world at the moment. That would contribute to learning Mansfield’s fiction, and literature in a more general sense, without just trying to absorb the views of lecturer and critics, a situation which might

nowadays be valid for many literature classes. Apart from the story of poor Ma Parker and “The Garden Party”, “Tiredness of Rosabel”, “The Little Governess” and “The Doll’s House” can be used for successive or additional studies of students on the theme in question. During the literature review phase, it was seen that especially “The Doll’s House” is the most famous and anthologised one in this story group.

In addition to these, it should be said that the interesting, beautifully presented social and sociological content of particular Katherine Mansfield stories can give students a real insight into the English society and social and cultural life of the era. At a time when it is very popular to talk about integrating into the European societies, knowing them better and being like them as much as possible, Mansfield’s stories and literature as a whole presented by Mansfield’s stories, might be the invaluable means for students to know Europeans, their history and culture better. This could be a quality alternative instead of the present means which are the products of western popular culture that introduce Europeans in limited dimensions and highly affect Turkish students. As for teachers, thanks to this social and sociological content in the author’s stories and her thematic concerns based on this, they can find the help to create thought-provoking, collective lessons and have motivated, interested and keen literature students and Mansfield readers.

4.0. CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusions

The present study set out to explore some major consistent thematic features and concerns in the carefully selected eight important short stories of Katherine Mansfield as a New Zealander short story writer and an important literary figure who has not been analysed much in Turkey. Based on the thematic findings obtained as the results of the detailed thematic analyses of those eight stories, this study also aimed to suggest and speculate on the possible ways in which the detected thematic concerns of the author can be taught to Turkish students. At that point, in the introduction part of the study, the hypotheses were put forward that Turkish students can study Mansfield's fiction not only as the writings of an author who somehow became famous and included in literary syllabuses, but also as a universal literary figure whom they would find highly interesting and not irrelevant to their own social, economic and emotional lives and/or experiences.

On the basis of the comprehensive analyses section which highlights, interprets and discusses the particular parts, sentences and even the words that appear to disclose and/or constitute the author's thematic concerns in the stories, it was found that three consistent, major thematic patterns could be determined in the author's stories, the first one being the general, recurring umbrella pattern and the latter two as the sub-themes that can be clearly followed and sometimes indirectly detected when only that general one is dealt directly.

The general, umbrella theme in question was found to be a pessimistic view about life and/or the era. All of the eight short stories are the stories of people having an experience of realising that any feeling of happiness, joy, strength, inner peace, hope etc. is to be demolished by a moment of inevitable grief or frustration. If a protagonist is seen enjoying his/her bliss, cherishing a glimmer of hope or struggling against anything with inner peace and strength, it generally means that that protagonist thinks or feels in a way s/he should not think or feel. S/he is most probably in an illusion. Having formed some false considerations about the conditions they are in, they fail to grasp the realities of their marriage, age, relationships, in short, their lives. They

consciously and often unconsciously refuse to see the way the things have developed in their lives and what they are developed enough to impinge upon their immediate future. They somehow find reasons for being happy, joyful, hopeful, self-confident etc. or resistant at least to fight against even some worst fates, but in the end grief and frustration prevails.

The theme of marriage, male-female relationships in a more general sense, in which the women or especially the wives suffer, was found to be another important thematic feature as most of the stories include relationships that are dominated or at least controlled by the men. The women do not have professions and they do not work. Their lives consist of only the housework and/or care of the children in the well-known way traditionally pre-determined by patriarchal systems and attitudes.

The third thematic concern found in the analyses is the issue of social and economic classes and the relationship between them, the sufferings of the members of the lower class exploited by the various ills of the era.

As for teaching Katherine Mansfield's fiction, in the "Results and Discussion" section of the study, firstly the derivation of those three consistent thematic patterns was emphasised in order to determine what a teacher should teach about Mansfield's thematic concerns when s/he decides to include the author in a literary syllabus. In this way it was noted that the teachers, who want to teach Mansfield's fiction or use her works for literary/pedagogical purposes, can benefit from this study and its thematic findings as a basis to put their own judgement about the author on and as a source of reference to direct and then assess their students' access into the author's fiction.

Besides these, in various points of the "Results and Discussion" section where teaching about Mansfield's thematic concerns was discussed, some concrete suggestions were made about the presentation of the determined thematic features in the analysed stories. While students study the pessimistic view on life as the main thematic concern, directing them to the biographical and/or autobiographical (Mansfield's own letters) information about the author can set an example for this, as students can see there that the author did not have a life that gave her the chance of being optimistic in any way.

About teaching Katherine Mansfield's fiction, the point that was most remarkably emphasised was the relative similarities and connections that teachers and students can see between the lives of the fictional European characters in the author's stories and the lives of our real people or even their own past and recent experiences they have had in Turkey. This point was emphasised most remarkably as it can be the one that generates the motivation to start and keep studying the author's fiction. It was also noted that this significant dimension of the stories and the motivation it can create can be exploited as the source of students' independent reading and thinking, learning by comparing the events in the stories with the particular ones experienced by themselves in our country or with others narrated in the products of Turkish literature, thus by internalising the author's fiction and messages.

Katherine Mansfield's aforesaid thematic concerns and messages, that all seem to enable students to internalise her stories, can be noted here as the verifications for the hypotheses that Turkish students can study Mansfield's fiction not only as the writings of an author who somehow became famous and included in literary syllabuses, but also as a universal literary figure whom they would find highly interesting and not irrelevant to their own social, economic and emotional lives and/or experiences. Considering the pessimism exposed via the inevitable disappointment and grief dominating lives, the wives and women struggling in their lives predetermined and shaped by men, the unbearable troubles of the members of lower class in a developing country, students would feel themselves in a different literature class where they read and study the literary works they are interested in and with some concrete purposes.

The dimensions of the author's fiction mentioned so far also seem to provide teachers with some important criterion while choosing the writers and works their students are supposed to be studying if they want to see motivated and interested students in their classes to read and study literary works, also in a way that could improve the language skills of students. On the basis of well-planned lessons, Mansfield's fiction seems to be able to give various ideas for literature courses which can be very different from the ones that begin in the distant past and advance towards the present through every major 'period' on the way, usually doing this in a way that is short of writing which could be regarded as contemporary. While reading Mansfield's

stories, studying, writing, discussing about them, while considering the words “every wife ought to feel that her place is by her husband’s side” uttered by a fictional German Mansfieldian character, Turkish students can see that the literary works they are studying are not only contemporary and but also not irrelevant to their own lives. By the way, they might appreciate the quality literary works represented by the author’s short stories and be interested readers of other stories, novels, and poems.

In conclusion, I feel the need to mention that the major theme and the following two sub-themes, which have been discussed together with references to their teaching, are ones deduced from my own analyses of the selected eight stories, done by considering the literature about them and the rest of Mansfield’s stories. However, it is a fact that it was not so often I came across agreements among critics on Mansfield’s stories and on what she primarily dealt with in her stories. For instance, as it was mentioned before, while analysing the story “Bliss” I came across the claim that the story has references to Bible while another source said it has covert references to Charles Darwin’s evolution theory! In addition to this, one can easily think that in that same story what Mansfield primarily does is evidently criticising the modern bourgeoisie of the era. Therefore, it is worth emphasising the fact that a teacher, who wants to teach Mansfield’s fiction, might see some different thematic patterns or additional ones in the eight stories analysed in my study. S/he might consider different and/or additional ways and methods to teach the themes. Katherine Mansfield is still widely read and literary studies and criticism on her fiction are likely to never end. One of the reasons for this is most probably the difference, depth and subtlety in her works from which each reader, teacher and student can be influenced in different ways. It must be almost impossible to determine a point where one can be sure that s/he has understood such writers as Katherine Mansfield wholly. This is the reason why the analytic literary dimension of my study based on the selected eight stories is weighted in order to reveal some consistent thematic patterns by bearing in mind our country and Turkish students and thus, to constitute a base first on which speculations, suggestions and structured ways to teach the author’s fiction could be settled. However, teachers can benefit from the innovations, ambiguity, abstractness, depth and subtlety in her stories. This can be used as the potential for creative studies in the lessons enriched by

the brainstorming of stimulated, active students who will certainly have conflicting views on Mansfield's messages.

4.2. Suggestions for Further Research

Here I want to emphasise that the ways to teach Katherine Mansfield's themes in question have been mentioned and speculated by taking into consideration the numerous readings of the stories analysed and all the rest of the author's short stories, the data provided by the thematic analyses and Mansfield's main stylistic characteristics other than her thematic concerns and applications, thus her fiction as a whole. As it was noted in various parts of the study, the depth in her stories is the major constituent of her place in the world's literature and in this depth different studies may find some additional and/or totally different thematic features and different ways of conveying these to students. Some other studies could be on the other qualities of Katherine Mansfield's fiction (her use of characterisation symbols etc.) which can help students grasp her messages and on trying to measure to what extent they help do this.

On the basis of the findings of the present study, the next steps of pedagogical research would and should be testing the ways and methods suggested in this story through structured experimental studies which set out to explore the achievement of Katherine Mansfield's stories lesson plans consisting of particular successive activities focusing on certain thematic features and the aspects of them.

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