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DEPICTION OF CHARACTERS AND RELATIONS IN THE WORK "WHO IS AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?" BY EDWARD ALBEE

Bachelor Thesis

2023 **Karolína Cibulová**

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Supervisor: Ing. Mgr. Sonia Krajčík Danišová, PhD.

Bratislava 2023 **Karolína Cibulová**

Affirmation

I hereby affirm that I have elaborated the final thesis independently and I have listed allthe literature and online sources used.

Date: 12.5.2023 .....

(Student Signature)

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Abstrakt

CIBULOVÁ, Karolína: *Zobrazenie postáv a vzťahov v diele "Kto sa bojí Virginie Woolfovej?" od Edwarda Albeea*. – Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave. Fakulta aplikovaných jazykov; Katedra interkultúrnej komunikácie. – Vedúca záverečnej práce: Ing. Mgr. Sonia Krajčík Danišová, PhD. – Bratislava: FAJ, 2023, 49 s.

Hlavným cieľom práce je oboznámiť čitateľa s tým, ako sú v hre zobrazené osoby a vzťahy, s dôrazom na to, ako jazyk a reč Edwarda Albeeho vyjadrujú zložitosť ľudských emócií a interakcií. Skúmaním osobností, motivácií a správania postáv sa snažíme hlbšie pochopiť témy a motívy hry vrátane povahy skutočnosti, úlohy rodovej a mocenskej dynamiky vo vzťahoch a ľudskej schopnosti sebaklamu a dezilúzie.

Teoretická časť práce, ktorá je celá obsiahnutá v prvej kapitole, obsahuje teoretický úvod drámy ako literárneho žánru, historický vývoj amerického divadla a americkej drámy na prelome 19. a 20. storočia až po prvú polovicu 20.storočia. Ďalej v nej popisujeme osobnosť Edwarda Albeeho, jeho životopis, najznámejšie diela a jeho vplyv na vývoj americkej drámy.

Empirická časť práce začína 2. kapitolou, v ktorej sú objasnené ciele práce a metóda použitá na ich dosiahnutie. V ďalšej kapitole empirickej časti bankárskej práce popisujeme prostredie, dejovú líniu a hlavnú zápletku drámy, analyzujeme jednotlivé hlavné postavy a vzťahy medzi hlavnými pármi. Nakoniec sa venujeme hlavným motívom a témam analyzovaného diela.

V závere sa napokon zameriavame na sumarizáciu analyzovanej problematiky, na zhrnutie analyzovaných otázok a poskytnutie prehľadu čitateľovi.

Kľúčové slová: americká dráma, absurdná dráma, zobrazenie vzťahov, psychológia postáv, Edward Albee, rozbor literárneho diela

Abstract

CIBULOVÁ, Karolína: *Depiction of characters and relations in the work "Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf?" by Edward Albee.* – University of Economics. Faculty of Applied Languages; Department of Intercultural Communication. – Tutor: Ing. Mgr. Sonia Krajčík Danišová, PhD. – Bratislava: FAJ, 2023, 49 p.

The primary aim of the thesis is to acquaint the reader with how individuals and relationships are portrayed in the play, with an emphasis on how Albee's language and speech convey the intricacies of human emotions and interactions. We aim to gain a deeper understanding of the play's themes and motifs, including the nature of fact, the role of gender and power dynamics in relationships, and the human capacity for self-deception and disillusionment, by examining the personalities, motivations, and behaviours of the characters.

The theoretical part of the thesis, which is contained entirely in the first chapter, includes a theoretical introduction to drama as a literary genre, the historical development of American theatre and American drama from the turn of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. It goes on to describe the personality of Edward Albee, his biography, his best-known works, and his influence on the development of American drama.

The empirical part of the work begins with the second chapter, clarifying the objectives of the thesis and the method utilized to meet them. In the next chapter of the empirical part of the bachelor thesis we describe the setting, the storyline and the main plot of the drama, we analyse the main characters and the relationships between the main couples. Finally, we discuss the main motifs and themes of the analysed work.

Finally, the conclusion is focused to summarize analysed issues and provide the reader with an overview.

Keywords: American drama, the Theatre of the Absurd, depiction of relationships, Edward Albee, psychology of characters, analysis of literary work

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Introduction

The present bachelor thesis aims to analyse the portrayal of characters and relationships in the play of one of the most renowned and influential playwrights of the 20th century, *„Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"* written by Edward Albee. Considered a masterpiece of American drama, the play presents a complex web of characters and relationships that reveal the darkest aspects of human nature. Through a close reading of the text, the study seeks to shed light on the psychological depth and complexity of the characters, the intricacies of their relationships, and the ways in which they interact with each other.

The play revolves around couples, George and Martha, and Nick and Honey, who interact in a night-time of alcohol-fuelled conversations and games that monitor their hidden dreams, insecurities, and fears. Through their interactions, Albee skilfully portrays the complicated dynamics of relationships and the facades that human beings create to hide their true selves.

Thus, this bachelor's thesis ambition is to investigate the portrayal of characters and relationships in "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" via a literary lens using various literary techniques used by Albee to create credible, multifaceted, and vigorous characters that engage with each other in compelling but aggressive approaches.

By employing a range of analytical tools, including literary criticism and psychological theory, the thesis will offer a comprehensive analysis of the play, examining its themes, symbols, and stylistic features. Ultimately, this thesis aims to provide a nuanced and insightful understanding of Albee's work, highlighting its enduring relevance and significance in the contemporary theatrical canon.

1. Literary Review of the Current State of Research on the Chosen Topic at Home and Abroad

As indicated by the title of the presented bachelor's thesis, this thesis analyses the characters, relationships between two married couples, themes, and motifs in Edward Albee's play "*Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf?*". The books chosen as the thesis's primary sources cover a wide range of subjects like evolution of American plays, absurdism, Edward Albee himself, or drama in general. Since the thesis largely investigates American and English publications published in English and since the play we are analysing was written by an American author and is a highly noteworthy work of literature, we only selected one book that discusses the subject in Slovakia.

Berkowitz (1992) studies in the book *American Drama of the Twentieth Century* the range of American drama, from American writers' experimental, style pieces via plays, tragedies, and community theatre through 1990s theatre.

C. W. E. Bigsby, notable and renowned British literary analyst and novelist, has written many publications on American literature. He has also dealt directly with 20th century American playwrights, including Edward Albee. Bigsby covers the years after 1940 in two further volumes of the book *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-century American Drama* (1984 and 1990). Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Edward Albee are the three great playwrights who dominate the post-war stage and have gained international prestige. He departs from the traditional chronological process in Volume 2 to explore their accomplishments in length and depth. All three introduced a high level of moral gravity and artistic sensibility to the Broadway Theatre (covered separately in Volume 3). Dr. Bigsby provides a comprehensive analysis of the early unpublished plays and the significant works by each playwright, drawing on biographical information and political context to enlighten his interpretation of the plays, which are accompanied by photos from significant productions.

Michael Adam's *Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1985) the author deals with the whole play, i.e. the storyline, the description of the characters, the themes and the language used in the play.

1.1.Theories of Drama

According to Butterfield (1993), the term drama can be defined as follows: *"Drama as a process, as a way of communicating and understanding, is made clear. A number of basic concepts, familiar to us all, for we constantly encounter them in real life, are introduced as the background for the development of activities: concepts such as power and manipulation, status and social acceptance, morality and trust, humour, cultural attitudes, and so forth. All the activities proposed are highly practical and harness the sense of fun and curiosity which lies in each of us. The developmental nature of drama provides its own momentum; one idea spawns another and there is no need to adhere rigidly to the activities described"* (Butterfield, 1993, p. 3).

Each of the important periods of drama has been identified with certain physical and architectural conditions and social conventions that were deeply imprinted on the ways in which the plays of each period were written and received. A widely held viewpoint that has been formulated several times holds that a "*well-made*" play, true drama, or drama ought to have a high level of structural coherence. The subtleties can be turned out finally, yet the basic idea is so straightforward as to show up essentially undeniable (Alison, 1986, p. 3).

A drama should exhibit a three-part structure. It begins with (1) an *exposition* that imparts essential information and impels (2) the *complication*-a series of events rising to a turning point, after which the plot falls swiftly to (3) a *resolution* (or "denouement" or "unravelling") and its foreordained end. This ideal of efficient structure has sparked hot debates over terminology. (For example, does a "*turning point*" require a "*crisis*" or a "*climax*," or are the terms synonymous?) It is remarkable how many plays of very different types appear to adhere to this tripartite scheme despite these uncertainties. Or is this just a misconception? Can a three-part plan accommodate almost anything? One consequence of any theory of ideal structure is that plays that do not fit it are deemed deviant and inferior. As a result, this theory has been roundly attacked as reductively "*linear*" and as intolerant of an experiment, creative ambiguity, and artistic liberty, which were highly supported and executed during the 20th century, and spread widely across the globe (Alison, 1986, p. 3).

1.2. American Drama of the First Half of 20th Century

1.2.1. Original Influence and Historical Viewpoint

Professor of English, Gerald M. Berkowitz (1992) pointed out in his publication *American Drama of Twentieth Century* the following: *"By its very nature the drama the literature of the theatre - is more closely bound to the marketplace than any other literary form. Poetry exists even if it is not published, and a novel may sell very few copies but remain on the library shelves to be discovered later. But a play simply is not a play until it is put on a stage, and it is likely not to exist for posterity unless it proves itself on a stage; it is the general rule that plays are not published unless they have had successful productions. So, since forces and events that are really more part of theatrical than literary history have a direct effect on the types of plays that are written and the types of plays that survive, a brief history of the twentieth-century American theatre is in order"* (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 5).

American theatre production in the 18th and 19th centuries was born and developed under the strong influence of European theatre. Its development was also significantly influenced by the undemanding tastes of the general public, who were primarily looking for entertainment and relaxation in the theatre.

During the 19th century, several acting companies and theatres were founded in America. Their repertoire consisted largely of the sought-after sentimental and romantic plays, cheap comedies, burlesques (farces), and cabaret-style vaudeville performances.

The turning point in American theatre occurred in the first decades of the 20th century. It was caused by the emerging generation of American playwrights. It followed the exploratory innovation of European dramatic art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Bajánek, 2006, pp. 32 – 33).

The next century saw the growth of theatres in major European and later American cities, the acceptance of theatregoing as an important part of middle- and upper-class urban culture, and the slowly growing number of elite audiences in some major cities. These developments set the stage for the emergence of what is now known as "*the modern drama*", which was created by dramatists such as Ibsen and Strindberg. Chekhov, Shaw, and Pirandello-to name just the most persuasive dramatists (Allison, 1986, p. 2).

In addition to this, Bajánek (2006) stresses in his work *Americké štúdie a dramatické umenia 20. storočia,* that social plays of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, the psychological dramas of the Russian writer Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, but especially the naturalistic and expressionistic

dramas of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg and the dramatic work of the German Expressionists had a decisive effect on the development of the American theatre after the end of World War I in 1919 (Bajánek, 2006, p. 33). Their work overwhelmed the whole literary world in the next 50 years, in the range of 1880 and 1930. These dramatists, often breaking sharply with established customs and expectations, first made their impress through relatively small and dedicated acting companies working against odds in experimental and "independent" theatres-free, that is, of official supervision and censorship. A great deal of contemporary drama still bears the influence of this influential literary movement (Allison, 1986, p. 2).

The further dynamic development of American theatrical production in the interwar period, 1919 – 1939, manifested itself in a great deal of stylistic stratification. It ranged from realistic and naturalistic to symbolist and expressionist experiments. A common feature of the emerging American playwrights was the search for new artistic expression in the thematic and compositional construction of plays, as well as in unconventional, modern staging techniques (Bajánek, 2006, pp. 32 – 33).

Essayist Taylor (1968) summarised the period of the 1920s and 1930s and its impact along these lines: *"The theatre in the '20s and '30s had its moments and its artists. Realists like Owen Davis, Sidney Howard, and George Kelly kept alive a traditional mode for such new talents as that of Robert E. Sherwood and Lillian Hellman. The naturalist attitude and technique were absorbed into the American theatre by such writers as Elmer Rice and Eugene O'Neill, but, most important, were not allowed to become stultifying limitations by either of these men. Expressionistic techniques were also attempted, used, and absorbed by O'Neill and Rice and became thereby tools of the American playwright. The result is that a contemporary American dramatist inherits a highly sophisticated technique but can use it either completely or partially. If he prefers, he can employ time-honoured approaches to the problems of the playwright. So far as language is concerned, the naturalistic influence was moulded into a "poetry of the streets" or "poetry of conversation" that has become, in the hands of a great talent like that of Tennessee Williams or Edward Albee, a delicate instrument for reproducing both the reality and the transcendence of man as animal"* (Taylor, 1968, p. 11).

British literary analyst and writer, C. W. E. Bigsby (1990) describes the ensuing three decades in this manner: in the 1930s, for all the suffering, there was a commitment to the possibility of social which could free the individual's energies and preserve a self-assurance, albeit through

submission to the group. There is little evidence of this faith in personal or public transformation in the 1940s and 1950s. In a time of recuperation and gigantic material progression, with the Great Depression and war having given way to fast extension and harmony (Korea notwithstanding), the upsides of society were viewed as personally associated with the outcome of American military may and business endeavours as opposed to unfriendly to it. Consequently, those values such as fierce individualism, a concern for material advancement and self-improvement were not so much denounced for influencing individual sensibility as they were for being directly challenged by artists a decade earlier. This was the psychological theatre in which private traumas were recast as social issues. In fact, the public sphere was increasingly portrayed as the source of oppression and threat. For Williams' situation, as later in that of Edward Albee, this was maybe a reaction to his own freely menaced sexual way of life as well regarding his feeling of being a poet in an unpoetic culture (Bigsby, 1990, p. 5).

As a result, there was a shift from outward to internal feeling during the post-war years and new approaches resulting from that transition are introduced in painting, literature, and theatre. Modern art initially made people generally more irritated. It appeared for them to be overly barren and desolate, pessimistic, and nihilistic, shocking, and scandalous. According to psychologists, irritation typically develops when anything hits multiple unpleasant sites that the average person is completely unaware of, as opposed to only one bad spot that he would prefer to hide frantically. But as Barrett notes, "*There is no other art today*," and he adds, "*if we could have a different art, or a better, we would have it*" (Barret, 1958, pp. 38 – 39).

Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, and Eugene Ionesco, all European playwrights at the time, had different views on the world. These authors were compelled to envision the universe as a place over which humans had lost control due to World War II and the potential horrors of the nuclear age. They wanted to shake people's complacency about their lives and were eager to do so. They wanted the reader to feel their deep ache for the absurdity of human existence. These writers assert that nothing transpires, and nothing alters. Nothing we can do will alter the alarming state of the world, which is out of control. The critics loosely categorized these authors as Absurdists due to their hopelessness (Adams, 1985, p. 10).

Due to further technological advances, which were compounded by the events of the Second World War, modern types of communication and art forms were developed. "*Among new forms which drama and theatre have had thrust upon them rather than developed from their traditional*

soil are radio, film, and television. The first impact, certainly of television, seemed to put the very existence of traditional dramatic forms and theatre into jeopardy" (Evans, 1977, p. 17)

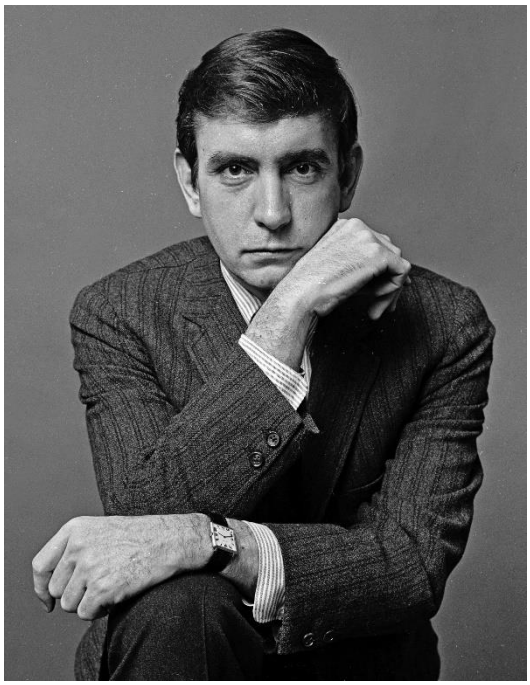
A period of prosperity also ended with the end of the Second World War, both for the movie industry and the commercial theatre. Commercial producers found themselves in worse shape than before the war. With the exception of a few cities like Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, roadshow business declined in New York. While audiences decreased and playhouses closed, ticket prices for Broadway shows increased. Actor unemployment also increased. Even during World War II, only 10% of equity-registered performers ever found employment. Even this meagre number decreased by the war's end (Wilson, 1982, p. 281).

The golden age of motion pictures also came to an end, as well, for a quite certain explanation: television made its first appearance. Movies began to suffer the same fate as live theatres earlier in the century almost immediately. Trial and error with TV, which started before WWII, was suspended during the world conflict. However, television sets began to appear in the United States as early as 1945, shortly after the war had just ended. There were forty-eight television stations broadcasting programs to more than seven hundred thousand receiving sets in twenty-five cities by 1948. Seventy stations and two million sets were operational a year later, and the numbers continued to surge (Wilson, 1982, p. 281).

This situation started to modify around the 1950s, by reason of four distinct changes in the design of the American theatre. The first was the emergence of a different kind of theatre in New York City. Young actors, directors, and designers who were unable to find work on Broadway started their own "Off-Broadway" companies on a shoestring budget. They performed in lofts, unused theatres, and other converted spaces because they wanted to be seen and practice their craft. They were free to do experimental and non-commercial work because they had so little money or prestige to lose. Additionally, some very good work was produced off-Broadway as a result of the abundance of talented promising actors, directors, writers, and designers in New York, allowing audiences and critics to discover and appreciate the potential of this new venue (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 7).

The growth of mass communication has made each artist closer to the forefront, as it were, of his public. Shaw, Priestley, Coward, Miller, and Albee, themselves early twentieth-century dramatists reveal the effect of political, sociological, and military events (Evans, 1977, p. 19).

1.3.Edward Albee



Albee in 1965 – att. n.1

One of the first questions, he was asked in the interview, was why Albee is actually a playwright, he replied: "*Why am I a playwright? Because it's the only thing that I can do halfway decently. If there was anything else I could do, I probably would do it*" (Bryer, 1995, p. 2).

The false notions of the American way of life are mercilessly shattered in his plays by Edward Albee (1928 – 2016), the adoptive son of the Albees, theatre entrepreneurs who instilled in him a love of the theatre from an early age. Albee, a native of Washington State, oscillates between the principles of realistic drama with naturalistic elements and the experimental techniques of the theatre of the absurd. He is considered by many critics to be the foremost leading figure of absurdist drama in America. Subsequent plays of Eugene O'Neill and the dramatic works of the leading masters of the European Theatre of the Absurd, Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett, were decisive influences on the formation of his dramatic style (Bajánek, 2006, p.42).

1.3.1. Albee's Life

Born on 12 March 1928, in Washington, D.C., Edward Franklin Albee III was adopted as an infant by a very well-to-do couple, Reed Albee and Frances Cotter. They created an economically

privileged existence for him, with sumptuous homes in Larchmont, New York; on Park Avenue in Manhattan; and in Palm Beach, Florida, during the winter. But Albee felt unloved and unappreciated by this couple as a child and afterwards. He grew to dislike his parents. His mother was twenty-three years younger and almost one foot taller than her husband. This seems to have inspired aversion and fear in almost equal quantities. She was, without a doubt, the foundation for depictions of domineering and menacing women, on the other hand, his father was a model for the cowed and weak men in his plays. The main relative who appears to have roused everything except young adult despise was his grandma, to whom *The Sandbox* is rather questionably dedicated and who is evidently celebrated in *The American Dream* (Bigsby, 1984, p. 250). He was also distant from his mostly silent father, who had inherited his wealth from the family's very profitable vaudeville theatres. During his experience growing up, youthful and pampered Edward went to various non-public schools, settling finally at the esteemed Choate prep school in Wallingford, Connecticut, from 1944 to 1946. He discovered Choate was his first intellectual home (Sullivan, 2004, p. 23).

Bigsby (1984) recounts his time at Choate School in more detail thus: "*Though this, too, was very much an institution for the wealthy (its former pupils include Adlai Stevenson and John F. Kennedy), for the first time he seems to have found himself in a sympathetic environment – which is to say one which did not regard a young man who wanted to be a poet, or, alternatively, a novelist or a playwright, incorrigibly undisciplined and effeminate. Accordingly, he began to write, producing poems, short stories, a novel (called The Flesh of Unbelievers and over 500 pages long) and a play. Indeed, when one of his poems, called 'Eighteen', appeared in a Texas literary magazine he could begin to fantasise about a career as a writer*" (Bigsby, 1984, p. 251).

Albee was asked to leave Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, after only a year and a half due to his failure to attend mandatory chapel and certain required classes. After that, he spent a few months living at home, drinking, partying, commuting to New York City for a job as an office boy, and generally displeased with his strict mother. He left his family when he was twenty because of a particularly tense argument, and he didn't see or talk to his mother again for seventeen years (Sullivan, 2004, p. 23). He later said that he had felt "*an enormous release*" upon leaving; "*That part of my life had absolutely ended*." as stated in the work of famous theatre critic Gussow, *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey* (Gussow, 2012, p. 71).

Leaving college in 1947, Albee moved to Greenwich Village, New York, where he worked odd jobs despite reportedly receiving trust funds every week. He shared an apartment with a

composer and through him met many individuals in the music industry. Additionally, he wrote for a radio station. His other random temporary jobs included being a server, barkeeper, sales representative, and a Western Association conveyance courier (Roberts, 1979, p. 4).

Greenwich Village in 1950 was a heaven for budding writers and bohemians looking for artistic freedom and inspiration. Although it has been suggested that Albee led a rebellious and agitated life in the 1950s, some claim that he lived in comfort and stability. Two facts can be proven: he enjoyed writing and going to the theatre. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that his most memorable play, *Aliqueen*, was written when he was twelve (Adams, 1985, pp. 7 – 8).

Albee wrote *The Zoo Story* just before his 30th birthday in 1958, following a period of unsuccessful writing. His one-act play would eventually draw attention from all over the world. Albee arranged to produce the play through friends, first in West Berlin and then in twelve Western German cities, where theatre was more experimental than in the United States. As a result, Albee saw *The Zoo Story* first produced in a language he did not comprehend (Adams, 1985, p. 8).

In 1960, an off-Broadway theatre in New York hosted *The Zoo Story's* first performance. Word immediately spread that a writer of extraordinary promise had shown up on the scene. Along with other one-act plays, Albee's popularity among knowledgeable theatregoers increased: *The Death of Bessie Smith, The Sandbox,* and *The American Dream* (Adams, 1985, pp. 9 – 10).

Mel Gussow (2012), the long-time critic and cultural reporter wrote in his monograph titled *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey: A Biography* that the next several years were filled with productions of new plays, culminating in the extremely successful Broadway production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*; the drama jury awarded it a *Pulitzer Prize* that was then withdrawn by the advisory board, which-shocked by the play's language-decided to give no *Pulitzer* in drama that year. "*Virginia Woolf"* did win both the *New York Drama Critics Circle* best drama award that year and the *Tony Awards* for best play, best production, best director (Alan Schneider), best actress (Uta Hagen), and best actor (Arthur Hill). Nonetheless, the early *Pulitzer Prize* controversy set the tone for later battles fought over Albee's work so that in 1981, when he was writing the introduction to a collection of his early plays, he noted: *"I have learned... that experimental plays, dense, unfamiliar and lacking proper road signs meet with considerable critical and audience hostility" (*Gussow, 2012 p. 322).

Albee's career could be divided into *three phases* in terms of his reputation. The *initial period* of early fame lasted from 1959 to 1966, with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* serving as the

highlight, which played on Broadway for 664 performances and afterwards was directed on the silver screen in 1966 by Mike Nichols, featuring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Albee's critics' growing discontent would mark the *second phase* with the play *The Man Who Had Three Arms* (1982), which an American essayist Frank Rich later called "*a temper tantrum in two acts*" in his review for the New York Times, was the culmination of a string of plays that opened and closed quickly. In 1983, only sixteen performances were held on Broadway, and Albee did not open another major production in NYC until 1994 with *Three Tall Women*.

From left – George Segal as Nick and The Best Actress Oscar winner Elizabeth Taylor as Martha, Richard Burton as George, att. n. 2

At the point when seen from the perspective of the 1990s, Albee's career has been unremarkable. A string of commercial and creative failures followed early promise in the 1970s and 1980s. The *third phase* would begin with that specific successful and fruitful production, for which he won his third *Pulitzer Prize* for drama: the acceptance of Albee's return to critical acclaim, at least in the eyes of New York theatre critics. Throughout his entire career, there has been a consistent interest in his work in Europe, with productions taking place in both eastern and western Europe. Albee won the Tony Award in 2002 for *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* which was voted the season's best play. This marked his definitive return to the commercial limelight (Sullivan, 2004, p. 24).

What was important was that Albee, who had long disregarded the opinion of critics ("*I have been both overpraised and underpraised*," as he had said), kept writing. He was not content to take his success for granted. He also gave generously of his time and energy to other artists, both as a

founder of the *William Flanagan Centre for Creative Persons,* in Montauk, New York, and as a member of national and state organizations furthering the arts. Albee was committed to artistic excellence and frequently shared his expertise with college students in lectures and seminars, despite his reluctance to discuss his life or past (Adams, 1985, p. 14).

Albee produced numerous plays and lectured at schools all over the country in addition to writing. He was awarded *the National Medal of Arts* in 1996. A compilation of his essays and personal anecdotes, *Stretching My Mind*, was published in 2005. That year Albee likewise got a *Tony Award* for lifetime accomplishment. Edward Albee died on September 16, 2016, in Montauk, New York State, USA (Britannica, 2023).

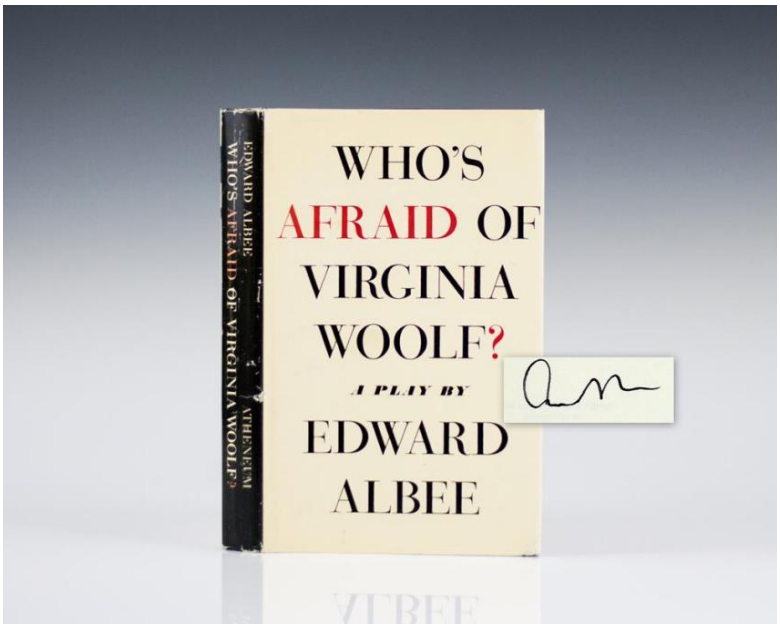
1.3.2. Important Plays

Edward Albee launched his career with a series of one-act plays. Albee is credited with altering the course of American theatre history with these five plays – *The Zoo Story* (1959), *The American Dream* (1961*), The Death of Bessie Smith* (1960), and the shorter plays The *Sandbox* (1960) and *FAM and YAM* (1960). Albee received a warm welcome from a large number of critics, including Harold Clurman. In the 1950s, the majority of off-Broadway theatre consisted of revivals of classic plays that were no longer financially viable on Broadway. Quoting Albee's answer asked by an interviewer Laurence Maslon, whom interview was recorded in book of Bryer (1995) *The Playwright's Art: Conversations with Contemporary American Dramatists*: "*When I went to Berlin in 1959 for the world premiere of my play The Zoo Story, I noticed what was being done on the Broadway stages of West Berlin of that time, and it was interesting. It was Brecht, it was Beckett, it was Goethe of course; it was the great playwrights. Maybe that's what prompted those remarks that I made, because I noticed that that wasn't happening in those days on Broadway, from which we took guidance as to what the nature of theatre was. What a bizarre country we are, where our commercial theatre does not concern itself with great art*" (Bryer, 1995, pp. 8 – 9). *The Zoo Story*, be that as it may, with its convincing and disputable exchange, and its reasonably low budget "*two men and a park bench*" minimalism, drew the alertness of critics, producers, and public the same to the regenerative potential of off-Broadway as a send-off site for new playwriting voices (Bottoms, 2005, p. 3).

Alan Schneider, acclaimed director of *The American Dream* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), believed Albee's early plays were the "*most original and powerful work I'd come*

across in years" (Schneider, 1986, p. 271). Albee's attacks on the values of a politically conservative society culminated in the already mentioned three-act drama *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1962). The play was an extraordinary success on prestigious world stages. It is a major question about the relationship between illusion and reality in American civilization. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* also shows traces of Albee's own ambivalent family impressions and experiences.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'s concerns are revisited in 1966's *A Delicate Balance*, despite speaking in a significantly muted manner. The family's fragile equilibrium is disrupted when friends unexpectedly seek refuge with Tobias and Agnes. This causes alcoholic sister Claire to engage in ever more outrageous behaviour and daughter Julia to become territorially hysterical. Tobias, however, is finally frightened when they decide to leave because they cannot bear the realization that even the closest friendship has its limits. As a result, the title refers to the fragility of individual psychology as well as social constructs (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 151).



The first edition of the author's most well-known work signed by Edward Albee himself on the title page, att. n.3

Kolin (2005) in his essay on Albee's well-known plays stated: "*Like Tennessee Williams, Albee already had a portfolio bulging with longer, unpublished and unproduced plays before he wrote these one-acts, but like Williams again and Chekhov, he made a major contribution to the genre of the short play at the beginning of his career and continued to write them, as Box (1968),*

Listening (1976), Counting the Ways (1976), Finding the Sun (1983), and Marriage Play (1987) all testify" (Kolin, 2005, p. 16).

In 1993, when the non-profit *Signature Theatre Company* launched an entire season of limited-run productions of Albee's shorter, lesser-known plays, Albee's reputation in New York began to recover after ten years as "*persona non grata*": a reappraisal was in the offing. Albee's *Three Tall Women*, first shown in Viennese obscurity in 1991, opened off-Broadway the subsequent year, garnering him his most favourable reviews in decades and a third *Pulitzer Prize* (Bottoms, 2005, p. 7).

1.3.3. Albee as an Absurdist

Since his work criticises the core principles of American optimism, Edward Albee falls within the genre of the Theatre of the Absurd. His first play, *The Zoo Story* (1958), already showed the forcefulness and bitter irony of his approach (Esslin, 1969, p. 267).

American writer Roberts proceeds to describe Albee as an absurdist in the following words: *"Early critics referred to the Theatre of the Absurd as a theatre in transition, meaning that it was to lead to something different. So far this has not happened and moreover it is rapidly becoming accepted as a distinct genre in its own right. The themes utilized by these dramatists are not new: thus, the success of the plays must often depend upon the effectiveness of the technique and the new ways by which the dramatists illustrate their themes. But the techniques are still so new that many people are confused by a production of one of these plays. But more important, if the technique serves to emphasize the absurdity of man's position in the universe, then to present this concept by a series of ridiculous situations is only to render man's position more absurd; and in actuality, the techniques then reinforce that condition which the dramatists bewail. In other words, to present the failure of communication by a series of disjointed and seemingly incoherent utterances lends itself to the accusation that functionalism is carried to a ridiculous extreme. But this is what the absurdist wanted to do. He was tired of logical discourses pointing out step by step the absurdity of the universe: he began with the philosophical premise that the universe is absurd, and then created plays which illustrated conclusively that the universe is indeed absurd and that perhaps this play is an additional absurdity"* (Roberts, 1979, p. 17).

Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? is not strictly associated with the "*The Theatre of the Absurd*" movement; however, there are many aspects of this play that are closely related to or

grew out of the dramas that are a part of it. Moreover, the development has arisen on the abstract scene only preceding and during the start of Albee's developmental, inventive years. In addition, most of the themes, motifs, ideas, and techniques utilized in the plays of "*The Theatre of the Absurd*" can be found in his early works, such as *The Zoo Story*, *The American Dream, and Sand Box*. These plays do, in fact, belong rather directly to the Absurdist movement. Also, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* makes use of a lot of the ideas and techniques from his earlier plays. For instance, the child who has disappeared or isn't there is a constant part of many of Albee's plays from all periods. Subsequently, in its most straightforward terms, Albee's initial short dramatizations are fundamental examinations of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* his first drama of any length. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* will, in part, be illuminated by a comprehension of the "*Theatre of the Absurd*" movement as a whole and the connection between Albee's early plays and that movement. This knowledge is in addition to Albee's own early plays (Roberts, 1979, p. 7).

1.3.4. The Significance and Legacy of his Work in the Literary Canon

At a time when playwrights like Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and William Inge had dominated American commercial theatre, Albee's meteoric rise to prominence in the theatrical industry occurred. These dramatists worked generally in a realistic idiom, in which the world onstage essentially mirrored the world of the audience. The world was observed objectively and in ways that generally supported the audience's beliefs and echoed traditional values. The audience was shown in these plays that men and women were basically in charge of deciding their own fate (Adams, 1985, p. 10).

Albee has unquestionably made a lasting impression on contemporary theatre. He is a playwright who dares to be experimental and maintains an ongoing avant-garde orientation. His plays can be absurdist, symbolist, or surrealist at times. He influenced other auspicious playwrights of the 1960s with his fresh theatrical voice, including Rochelle Owens, Maria Irene Fornes, Jean-Claude Van Itallie, Israel Horovitz, Adrienne Kennedy, John Guare, Megan Terry, David Rabe, Sam Shepard, and Lanford Wilson. Albee's commitment as an absurdist included playing games with the audience, mocking communication, breaking the rules of reality, bringing imaginary or surreal but still potent threats onto the stage, and generally refusing to produce work that provides easy answers. His most well-known play, "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*?", is more naturalistic than most of his work, so it continues to get attention and respect (Sullivan, 2004, p. 22 – 23).

Through the last part of the 1950s and mid-1960s, the sexual characters of some theatre artists became loosely held bits of information, known to insiders but not examined openly. According to Clum (2000), plays by heterosexual playwrights like Tennessee Williams, William Inge, and Edward Albee began to be questioned by critics for their authenticity (Clum, 2000, p. 33). They argued that homosexual playwrights could not accurately portray heterosexual marriage and women in their works. They considered plays like these to be fraudulent because they portrayed homosexual characters and relationships as though they were "normal" people. While certain pundits who posed this case were explicitly homophobic, other more progressive critics put forward a similar viewpoint, yet with the longing to destroy the lawful limitations and social biases that constrained gay dramatists to follow this "duplicity" (Schildcrout, 2014, p. 459).

Well-known university Professor Kolin wrote a book *Conversations with Edward Albee*, in which Albee said, quoting "*You see, I write plays about how people waste their lives*" (Kolin, 1988, p. 105). He emphasizes in interviews that he wants to wake the audience up, make them feel uncomfortable, and force them to let go of their illusions so that they can move on to more troubling realities and insights. Furthermore, in 1963 he claimed, "*People would rather sleep their way through life than stay awake for it*" (Kolin, 1988, p. 25). One of the reasons he often professes a disdain for Broadway is that its audience is too comfortable: "*Broadway audiences are such placid cows*" (Kolin, 1988, p. 22). For Albee, it is the role of the artist to shake up his audience. The one thing he never wants for them is to be safe (Sullivan, 2004, p. 27).

At a typical Albee play, the audience member laughs and is horrified, but in the end, they are left with the impression that the world is cruel and claustrophobic, dominated by mothers who consume their children and infantilize their partners. Practically, it can have an almost comic-book aspect. Working-class America and its materialistic qualities endured an onslaught for most of the 20th century, so Albee's topic is not unique. Although Albee's later, longer works lacked the rigour of his earlier short plays, his style is essentially what makes him important. Despite this, Albee does have a powerful voice – dark, gloomy, bitter, humorous, and witty – and this voice is his contribution to theatre of the late 20th century (Sullivan, 2004, p. 27).

Sullivan (2004) in her essay on Albee concluded: "*Edward Albee has awakened American theatre to the world of the absurd, the illogical, the painful, the dreaded, and the blackly humorous, insisting in play after play that we confront our own darker selves*" (Sullivan, 2004, p. 28).

2. Objectives and Methods of Work

2.1. Aims of the Thesis

Edward Albee's play "*Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" is a complex and nuanced portrayal truthfulness of human relationships and feelings hidden beneath the masks, exploring the many approaches in which human beings interact with each other, each positively and negatively. Through his use of language and communication, Albee created a vibrant and compelling portrait of the characters and their relationships, revealing their innermost mind and motivations. In the following parts of the bachelor thesis, we deal with the core of the thesis, which is the analysis of the characters and the relationships between them. We set ourselves two objectives, one primary and one secondary.

The primary goal of this bachelor thesis is to examine the depiction of characters and relationships inside the play, exploring how Albee's language and speech bring the complexities of human feelings and interactions. By inspecting the characters' personalities, motivations, and behaviours, we aim to undertake a deeper expertise of the play's topics and motifs, inclusive of the nature of fact, the function of gender and power dynamics in relationships, and the human capacity for self-deception and disillusionment.

In pursuing these ambitions, we hope to show a new perspective on the play's enduring relevance and significance, as well as contribute to the continuing scholarly discussion of Albee's work. By analysing the play's language, themes, and characters, we purpose to deepen our knowledge of the complex interplay among human feelings and relationships, and the many ways wherein they form our lives.

2.2. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Before conducting the actual analysis of the work, we set out two hypotheses and two research questions. The presented research questions are as follows:

1. How are the characters in "*Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" portrayed in terms of their personalities, motivations, and behaviours?
2. How are the relationships between the main protagonists depicted within the play, and how do they influence the characters' interactions and overall development?

The posed hypotheses are given as follows:

1. The relationships in the play are characterised by using a complicated interaction of affection, hate, sympathy, and strong dynamics that form the characters' moves and decisions.
2. The author uses language to create a sense of anxiety and ambiguity, inviting the reader to interpret the characters' emotions and motivations in a whole lot of ways.

2.3.Methodology and Scope of the Study

As the name of the thesis suggests, the thesis focuses specifically on the depiction of characters and relationships in "*Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" by Edward Albee.

The study employed a qualitative content analysis of the play, analysing the language, dialogue, and character interactions to draw conclusions about the depiction of characters and relationships. Data were gathered through close reading and analysis of the play text, as well as secondary sources such as literary criticism and biographical information about the author.

3. Results of Empirical Research

3.1.Setting and Plot

The setting of the play is a college town which in itself gives an extraordinary quality to the play. The drama's characters represent the kinds of people who have received the most disciplined education in the best of what has been thought and said throughout human history. Thusly, we are presented with a few extremely humanized individuals acting in a manner that is at times uncouth and brutal.

New Carthage is the name of the fictitious town where George and Martha live. Carthage is the name of the antiquated old-style city which was the site of the incredible romantic tale of Dido and Aeneas and was at last obliterated in light of the fact that it was a city of "*unholy loves*," as St. Augustine alluded to it. Additionally, significant is the stage design itself. Even though the script doesn't say it, the only set for the play is George and Martha Washington's living room, where a picture of them is usually on display so the audience can see it (Roberts, 1979, p. 19).

The central characters are a university professor, George, and his wife, Martha, who throw a social party at home. It is attended by another married couple, new university assistant Nick and his young wife Honey.

3.1.1. Act I – Fun and Games

On the real level of a family drama, the play is about the battle of the sexes between 46-year-old George, a history professor at a provincial university in New England, and Martha, his 52-year-old wife. After both have returned home late at night from a party at Martha's father's, the president of the private college, they have Nick, a young new lecturer at the biology department, and his wife Honey as guests.

George believes that one tiny nightcap would be acceptable since it is 2 a.m. and neither of them is sober, but Martha unexpectedly informs him that company is arriving. In order to be "*nice*" to this new couple, Martha's "*daddy*," who is the president of the college where George lectures, instructed her to invite them over. This is her major defence for doing so. It is already apparent from Martha's repeated mention of her father's orders three times that her "*daddy*" has an impact on George and Martha's life and will play a big role in the following acts.

She tells George to answer the door when it rings. George is made to play the "*houseboy*" role, just as she will later have Nick answer the door after he has failed in bed. However, three times before answering the door, George cautions Martha not to get started "*on the bit about the kid*." We learn from this foreboding note that George and Martha are quite familiar with the topic of "*the kid*" and that it is also very private between them. This suspense concerning the nature of "*the kid*" will only be answered in the play's last act.

> GEORGE. Just don't start on the bit, that's all.
>
> MARTHA. The bit? The bit? What kind of language is that? What are you talking about?
>
> GEORGE. The bit. Just don't start in on the bit. MARTHA. You imitating one of your students, for God's sake? What are you trying to do? WHAT BIT?
>
> GEORGE. Just don't start in on the bit about the kid, that's all.
>
> MARTHA. What do you take me for?
>
> GEORGE. Much too much.
>
> MARTHA (really angered). Yeah? Well, I'll start in on the kid if I want to.
>
> (Albee, 2000, p. 16)

The moment the door is about to be opened, George says something that incenses Martha to the point that she yells, “SCREW YOU!” It looks like she is yelling this expletive at the recently arrived visitors, Nick and Honey. The rest of the drama revolves around this remark as its primary metaphor. It soon becomes clear why Martha invited Nick and Honey: she is drawn to Nick on a physical level, and she will frequently make references to Nick's toned figure. She shouts the phrase at Nick, which is consistent with her subsequent attempts to seduce the young man.

At the moment that Martha and Honey are getting ready to go, George cautions her once again to “*just don't shoot your mouth off about you-know-what*.” (Albee, 2000, p. 26) The fact that Martha threatens to “*talk about any goddamn thing I want to*” serves as an additional frightening warning. This now prepares the reader for the necessity of severe actions when Martha does expose something about “*the kid*.”

The stark contrast between history and biology in this picture serves as an example of the conflict between two perspectives on life. Nick repeatedly fails to understand George's classical allusions (he does not know that “*Parnassus*” is the mountain where the great Greek poets and philosophers were supposed to live after death), revealing that he (Nick) is not concerned with human history, and George accuses Nick of trying to rearrange mankind's “*chromosomes*” (which he mistakes for chromosomes, showing his little knowledge about biology), and therefore to adjust the future of mankind. George puts up intellectual pitfalls for Nick early on in the scene, and he falls for them (Roberts, 1979, p. 25).

Honey returns to inform the others that Martha is altering her behaviour for the sake of her comfort. Honey is interested in learning more about George and Martha's twenty-one-year-old son. George is shocked to learn this information and makes threats to exact revenge on Martha.

In addition to openly praising Nick's physique and discussing it, Martha returns in a "most voluptuous" outfit and starts making fun of George's standing in the institution as well as his appearance. George departs just as Martha is ready to start writing a boxing narrative in response to learning that Nick was a boxer.

Martha tells her guests – and eventually the audience – how she met and fell in love with George while George is away. She had previously wed a young gardener at a finishing school, but her father quickly cancelled the union. Then she made the decision to wed someone from the college, and “*along came George*,” who is really returning right now “*bearing booze*.” George first believes

Martha's narrative to be true since it relates to their romance. When he realises that she is about to talk about his failings, he tells her to stop when he becomes aware of this.

He joins the drunk Honey in singing "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf"* as Martha continues her scathing account of George's shortcomings. Honey feels ill and goes down the hall to throw up as George continues to sing. The devastated and semi-tragic figure of George is left standing by himself as Nick and Martha pursue her. With his life now exposed, George has reached the depths of his existence. We have just completed playing "*Humiliating the Host*." For the time being, Martha has won, and George has lost.

During this "*party after the party*", George and Martha play out what seems to be a familiar ritual of mutual abuse and humiliation, in which their guests, after initial reluctance, become involved. Irritated about the vicious fight and particularly by Martha's shrill foulness, the younger couple attempts to leave, however, Martha and George, won't allow it, and compete go on with Martha being the main attacker. The games by which this ritual is played become increasingly ruthless when Martha mentions the obvious taboo subject of a son.

These conversations are all highlighted by some of the sharpest dialogue in contemporary play. However, the dramatic appeal in these witticisms comes from the fact that Martha and George have surely been saying the same amusing things to new staff members year after year, precisely in the same manner. George has already discussed Martha's drinking habits, the way she thinks, and the fundamental elements of her father's gatherings.

3.1.2. Act II – Walpurgisnacht

Throughout the talk with George (in the meantime, Martha was helping Honey), Nick shares that Honey assumed she was pregnant when they were married. However, it turned out to be a hysterical pregnancy: "She blew up and then she went down," i.e., she displayed all the signs of pregnancy but wasn't carrying a child. While she was in this state, they were married.

George goes on to tell Nick a tale of a boy who accidentally shot his mother. Years later, the boy went to a pub and ordered "*Bergin and water*", which made everyone in the place start laughing and placing their own orders. Later, while operating a vehicle with "*his learner's permit in his pocket,*" the youngster murdered his father when he swerved to "*avoid a porcupine and drove straight into a large tree."* Thirty years ago, the young boy had to be admitted to an asylum.

After the private discussion, the topic shifts back to the two wives. George declares nonchalantly that "*Martha doesn't have pregnancies at all*" after bringing up Honey's fictitious pregnancy once more. This claim should serve as a warning to us (or Nick) that their son is a fictional character.

Finally, Martha affronts George until he tries to strangle her. The first game, "*Humiliate the Host,*" comes to an end after Nick saves her. George, hurting from his embarrassment at Martha's hands, starts another game called "*Get the Guests*". All the while assuming a pretence of relating the plot of his most recent novel, George uncovers everything that Nick had said to him earlier about Honey when they had the private conversation: that she was the daughter of a wealthy but dishonest preacher. He married her because she had a fictitious pregnancy. She was horrified by George's vicious assault on that topic and immediately after George's accusation, she ran out of the room. Martha, who has no boundaries, urges and incites Nick to make love to her while still conversing with George, who is in the room, at the same time. George lays out the intricate pretence that he couldn't care less. Honey, on the other hand, has collapsed on the bathroom floor. "*Walpurgisnacht*" – the title of the second act – reaches its climax when Martha and Nick attempt adultery while playing another game called "*Hump the Hostess*", but this fails due to Nick's alcohol-induced sexual incapacity.

3.1.3. Act III – The Exorcism

Martha is alone herself in the first scene of the third act, and her monologue illustrates her sense of loneliness and yearning to reconcile with George. She envisions a situation in which they declare their undying love for one another.

When Martha and Nick reappear, she scolds George for his incompetence as a sexual partner and reveals that George is the only man she loves and who physically satisfies her, despite her need to torture and shame him. George comes in and demands that they play one last game, "*Bringing Up Baby,*" with Nick and Honey, whom they must revive.

With his entry, George raises the drama's primary issues and, more specifically, the primary issue of this act: the concept of "reality and illusion. Who is aware of the distinction? Nick expresses his most important line to date because of this worry: "*Hell, I don't know when you people are lying, or what.*"

George insists despite Martha's pitiful pleas that he refrain from discussing their son. They tell the story of his childhood together, accusing each other of being a bad parent. In a stream of dialogue in which George and Martha hurt each other, the agonizing emptiness of the hosts' childless marriage gradually surfaces. Their cohabitation is just a kind of illusion game with precise rules. At the drama's conclusion, when the *Strindbergian duel* (author's note: in which the two partners duel with each other until one is utterly defeated) of the sexes takes on uncontrollable proportions, George breaks the rules and shatters the last illusion of their lives - he announces the death of their fictional son caused by a car accident (last play with a name "*Kill the Kid*"). After Nick has seen through the child as a living lie, i.e., as an illusory substitute satisfaction of an infertile couple, he goes home with Honey, while Martha and George admit to each other their fear of the future. George and Martha, strangely at peace after Honey and Nick leave, contemplate the future without their delusions.

This tableau, however, defies clear interpretation. On the one hand, the scene statement suggests that the killing of the fantasy child has become the basis for a new cohabitation of the spouses purified of illusions; on the other hand, the feeling evoked by the linguistic text itself is the fear of the future evoked in the drama title. Albee brings his play to a close in a grammatically and logically senseless form, the paradox of simultaneous yes and no in Martha's repeated answers to George's question "*Are you all right*?" (Albee, 2000, p. 189). It remains open whether the dawning of a new day signals a new hope or is merely a respite in the old struggle.

The end scene – Martha (E. Taylor) with George (R. Burton) after the fight in movie adaption from 1966, att. n. 4

"*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* ", which opened at the Billy Rose Theatre on 13 October 1962, and ran for 664 performances, was one of the most controversial Broadway plays in years. The critics were sharply divided in their opinion of the play's merit (Bonin, 1973, p. 172).

3.1.4. Construction of the Play

A paraphrase of the content gives little hint of how artfully the play is constructed. Its external construction is that of Classical Drama, which follows the Aristotelian scheme of *exposition*, *complication*, *climax*, and *resolution* and strictly adheres to the three units of place, time, and action. At the same time, it is a variant of analytical drama in which the main part of the plot consists of the revelation of the past reasons that led to the situation presented. Each of the two couples has a big secret (invented son or fake pregnancy) that they don't want to reveal, but which is dragged into the light in the course of the play.

3.2. Overview and Analysis of the Characters

In addition to structure and language, the design of the characters shows that "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" is more than a realistically presented marriage battle of *Strindbergian* proportions. On the surface, the four characters are differentiated individuals. However, all four characters suspect – certainly to varying degrees – that something is missing from their lives to fulfil them. They are disappointed in each other and feel far from their original dream.

3.2.1. George

George is presented as a humiliated husband (cf. the part of his play "*Get the Host*"), doormat and houseboy to whom Martha constantly reproaches his failures in marriage and profession. He seems broken and jaded ("*numbed*"), his mental hardships encoded as parabolic tales of guilt over the death of his parents. After the coven of the second act (*Walpurgisnacht*), however, he increasingly gains control over himself and his partners and is reminiscent of a chess player who calculates his moves in advance, e.g. by luring Martha out of her defence, in order to then use the means of shock therapy from the death of his son to draw the action initiative to himself.

As Roberts (1979) states in his book, for George, the night described in the play is a pivotal one. Even though there are several signs that these late-night gatherings have been common for years and despite the clever conversation and scathing remarks that are made, which show a well-

developed sense of humour, this night is the pinnacle of George's life. George (and Martha) will need to adapt their way of life as a result of what happens this night and when it is finished (Roberts, 1979, p. 50).

3.2.2. Martha

Albee gives her a sympathetic portrayal despite the fact that she is not a pleasant person. Her father, the college's director, remarried after her mother passed away when she was still relatively little, and he enrolled her in a convent school. She was, in essence, an abandoned child. Martha appears on the one hand as a volcanic female, nagging, vulgar and sex-obsessed, but on the other hand, she is occasionally the father-fixated child in need of protection, who hates herself and really only wants to be loved. Then again, she is the sentimental young woman who raves about her childhood love or the mother with a child complex.

Given that Martha is six years older than George at this moment, her age is also highlighted. This suggests that she is the earth's mother, as she later claims, and that she is able to influence both George and men who are much younger than she is.

Finally, she appears at the end in the role of the "*mater dolorosa*" (Mother of Sorrows) weighed down by her mental suffering (Albee, 2000, p. 199).

3.2.3. Honey

Her name, Honey, alludes to both the overwhelming sweetness of her façade and the idea that a little bit of her goes a long way. Some readers believe Nick has given her the warm and insulting moniker "*Honey*" rather than her actual name.

On appearance, Honey, Nick's wife, is prim, eager to please, kind, and gentle at 26. She can barely contribute to the discourse since she can't control her alcohol. Her lack of thought turns out to be a sign of her incapacity to deal with reality.

On one level, Honey reveals herself to be the ever-child. She submits to her partner, takes offence readily, and gives in to regular attacks of nausea. She does, however, also express a range of complicated emotions during the performance. Honey was allegedly pregnant when she married Nick, but the pregnancy turned out to be a false alarm. Honey was the daughter of a reasonably prominent pastor who left her a substantial sum of money. Since then, she has expertly kept her

attempts to avoid becoming pregnant a secret from Nick. Her usage of covert contraceptives exposes a deep-seated dread of having children as well as a fear of maturing.

Honey exhibits maternal tendencies as a result of Martha's lovely descriptions of her own but imaginary "*son*," but the play does not allow for the playwright to explore whether these feelings are temporary or long-lasting (Adams, 1985, p. 24).

3.2.4. Nick

Nick, a visitor to George and Martha, is a young (30), beautiful, and physically fit man. Nick, a biology professor who is new to the faculty, first appears to be the perfect person, but ultimately it is shown that he is empty within. He is immoral, vain, and ruthlessly ambitious. He's planning to sleep with "*pertinent*" faculty spouses to advance in the college.

His cynicism and lack of morality are shown in his eagerness to be seduced by Martha notwithstanding the presence of his wife and George. But a vulnerable and vulgar human being lies underneath the tough façade. He admits to being impotent during his sexual experience with Martha and that he married Honey because he believed she was expecting a child and because her father had money (Adams, 1985, p. 22).

3.3. Interpersonal Relationships and Their Depiction in the Play

3.3.1. Martha's and George's Relationship

As Hayman (1971) in one of the earliest analyses of Albee's work, Martha is vulnerable, able to feel both pain and fear, as of course, she has to be for the sadomasochistic games she plays with George to have their maximum theatrical effect. The sophistication of George's and Martha's attacks on each other is immediately striking. Their jibes are not only very funny, but they also make us believe in a close emotional interdependence between them. The speed at which they change gear is also remarkable. The baby-talk between Mommy and Daddy in the earlier plays makes its point about their emotional immaturity but it takes a lot of time to do so. George and Martha are emotionally less mature at the beginning of the play than they are at the end, but at least they vary their methods of attack very swiftly (Hayman, 1971, p. 32).

MARTHA: Hello. C'mon over here and give your Mommy a big sloppy kiss.

GEORGE: Oh, now...

MARTHA: I WANT A BIG SLOPPY KISS!

GEORGE (*preoccupied*): I don't want to kiss you, Martha.

Where are these people? Where are these people you invited over?

MARTHA: They stayed on to talk to Daddy... They'll be here... Why don't you want to kiss me?

GEORGE (*too matter-of-fact*): Well, dear, if I kissed you I'd get

all excited... I'd get beside myself, and I'd take you, by force, right here on the living-room rug, and then our little guests would walk in, and . . . well, just think what your father would say about that.

MARTHA: You pig! GEORGE: Oink! Oink!

MARTHA: Ha, ha, ha, HA! Make me another drink... lover.

GEORGE (*taking her glass*): My God, you can swill it down, can't you?

MARTHA (*imitating a child*): I'm thirsty.

GEORGE: Jesus!

MARTHA (*swinging around*): Look, sweetheart, I can drink you under any goddam table

you want... so don't worry about me! (Albee, 2000, pp. 14 – 15)

Although the play's language may be appropriate now, the audience in 1962 found the beginning to be striking, if not frightening. After attending a party at her father's house, George and Martha get home in the play's opening scene. After a loud collision, Martha begins cursing, yelling, braying, as George describes it, and insulting her husband, George using words such as "*cluck*" or "*dumbbell*".

MARTHA (after a moment's consideration). You make me puke!

GEORGE. What?

MARTHA. Uh... you make me puke!

GEORGE (thinks about it... then...). That wasn't a very nice thing to say, Martha.

(Albee, 2000, p. 12)

MARTHA. I can't even see you... I haven't been able to see you for years. ...

GEORGE. if you pass out, or throw up, or something…

MARTHA.... I mean, you're a blank, a cipher. ...

GEORGE.... and try to keep your clothes on, too. There aren't many more sickening sights than you with a couple of drinks in you and your skirt up over your head, you know....

MARTHA. …. a zero….

GEORGE. …your heads, I should say. ... (Albee, 2000, p. 15)

Martha is sensitive, intelligent, and well-read, but her intellectual prowess is hidden by a brassy, abrasive, and vulgar appearance. She seeks to dominate and rule her husband for two reasons: she dislikes his incapability to take on her father's position, both professionally and mentally; and George appears to take pleasure in playing the victim to her tormentor.

As an attempt at communication, Martha and George argue practically constantly. They punish each other while also trying to connect because they live lives full of self-hatred. Both engage in heavy drinking, and Martha attracts several younger guys. Martha, who calls herself a "*earth mother*," acknowledges that these meetings leave her feeling empty; George is the only man who has truly pleased her. However, one of the cruel ironies of the play is that their shared desire is never able to be communicated to one another.

Only after George effectively puts an end to their illusion of becoming parents does Martha disclose a fragility and a fear of the future that she had previously kept hidden, but it is unclear what lies in store for her and George going forward.

The crude realism of vulgarities with which George and Martha torment themselves and into which their guests are increasingly drawn is stylised as a boxing or wrestling match, as evidenced by numerous references in the main and subtext: "*I'm going to knock you around, and I want you up for it*" (Albee, 2000, p. 166); "*like wrestlers flexing after a fall*" (Albee, 2000, p. 111); "*cocks her fist, doesn't swing*" (Albee, 2000, p. 167). With its triple restart after pauses, the rhythm of the piece is that of a fight by rounds, with the spiral of aggression spiralling upwards until it freezes in the calm of the final tableau.

3.3.2. Nick's and Honey's Relationship

In contrast, Nick and Honey seem much less individualised, and they are only epigones or imitations even in their insults. Nick is a sometimes tactical, sometimes blasé campus careerist without a tangible inner life, who cleverly exploits the advantages of youthful strength and appearance for his professional advancement. His main goal was to marry Honey for her wealth, where an analogy is made to George's situation in the past, where George also primarily married Martha because of her status and money.

Nick is unaware of his wife's anxiety about having children. He basically treats her like a little child. Despite the irony, he never objects to Martha's similarly strong language. He is continually worried about George's language in front of Honey. And while he freely engages in sensuous dances and flirtation with Martha, he takes offence if George even hints at Honey's sexuality (Roberts, 1979, p. 55).

His wife Honey – whom he married also for a sudden fake pregnancy – is a sometimes giggly-naive, sometimes hysterically anxious, but always a rather colourless, uninteresting, and average person, with whom one does not quite know, even at the end, whether her exclamation "*I want a child*" springs from a new insight or remains a mere tearful remark. The Honey who informed George an hour ago that she wanted no children completely transformed herself and her stance. Albee on the other hand, gives no clues about future of Nick and Honey.

3.4. Themes, Symbols and Motifs

The drama "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" is a complex work that contains many analogies, symbols, themes, and motifs that defy the standards and descriptions of the "*Theatre of the Absurd*". In the following subsections we have summarized the main themes and motifs and described the title of this work, the meaning of which is not clear to every reader.

3.4.1. Title Analysis – Why Virginia Woolf?

The obscure title of the play also refers to the fear of the future felt not only by an unstable marriage, but also by a sterile America and an altogether aimless Western civilisation. Albee claims to have chosen it only after writing the play (the title was initially intended to be The Exorcism) – on a spontaneous whim when he discovered the title in a New York bar where someone had smeared it on the toilet mirror. It seems that Albee instinctively sensed the poetic suggestiveness of this

saying, which is actually a corruption of the children's verse about the Big Bad Woolf ("*Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Woolf?*"). At the university president's party preceding the dramatic events, it was greeted as an intellectual joke; it is used by George at the end of the first act as a fight song in his confrontation with his wife, while at the end of the drama he sings it as a comfort and lullaby for Martha, who has been robbed of her life's lie. Of course, the saying is also reminiscent of the English novelist Virginia Woolf (1882 – 1941), who became famous above all for her technique of depicting consciousness – often of states of anxiety (Albee, 2000, p. 202).

The meaning of the title is certainly not clear not be unambiguously resolved but is subordinated to a suggestive power which, in its linguistic realisation as a word joke, loud song, or quiet question, conjures up the most contradictory feelings and moods: aggression and comfort, pain and comedy, or, as Albee puts it in a scene instruction, "*laugh [...] mixed with crying*" (Albee, p. 145). The title thus certainly fits the typical mixture of styles in the play, although the dominant underlying feeling always remains that of fear of the unknown. New Carthage is an ambivalent world that lies in ruins at the end of the play, but whose ruins also hold out hope for a rebuilding (Albee, 2000, p. 203).

3.4.2. Illusion and Reality

This concept is stated openly in Act III by both George and Martha as the distinction between the real and the unreal begins to become hazier for Martha in particular. An illusion – the imaginary kid they had together, and which must now be "destroyed" if they are to confront reality – has kept their marriage, and perhaps even their lives, together. Other things George and Martha say in the play are called into doubt when they admit this delusion to themselves and to Nick and Honey. For instance, did George in fact kill his parents, or is this another urban legend that has grown to mean anything to them?

Other aspects supporting the concept, such as Honey's fake pregnancy, George aiming onto Martha's head with a shotgun that turns out to be a toy, and the accidentally hit chimes by Honey which George uses to announce the telegram's fictional arrival with a message that their imaginary son is dead. Alcohol, sex, and verbal abuse against one another are just a few of the methods the characters employ to avoid dealing with the actual, real world throughout the play to avoid their problems that are waiting for them "out there". Additionally, the characters' surface "*truth*" conceals their true nature; they are not who they appear.

It's largely accepted that "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"* has a fundamental message about how important it is for people to learn to live without illusions. The characters fight to defend their own interpretations of reality throughout the play while demolishing one another's. But in the end, the characters are all made vulnerable to the reality of their existence.

3.4.3. Communicative Incompetence

Constantly yet ineffectively, the characters try to connect with each other on a deeper level. Up until the final scene, when they eventually come to some sort of agreement, Martha and George engage in verbal combat and verbal abuse. However, they appear to be making sincerer attempts to communicate than passive couple, Nick and Honey, who appear to know each other just on shallow level and who purposefully mislead one another – Nick with his adulterous act with Martha, and Honey with her covert use of birth control and dishonesty about her pregnancy.

Through the play's use of clichéd remarks and everyday expressions that make fun of language's hollowness, the normal social dialogue is mocked. From the start of the play, George seems fixated on confusing Nick with wordplay, quick subject changes, and purposeful obscurity.

The story of George and Martha's boxing bout, his toy gun, and their physical altercations serve to illustrate violence as a means of communication. George and Martha's persistent attempts to embarrass one another and George's determination to "*Get the Guests*" are examples of psychological violence as a way of communication.

3.4.4. Games

The play is full of games – literal and otherwise. Several are expressly addressed, including *humiliate the host, hump the hostess, get the guest, bringing up baby,* and *kill the kid*. Games, rules and regulations, toys, victors, and losers are all frequently mentioned as well. George and Martha are always joking about, trying to outwit one other, and looking for an upper hand. Additionally, the exchanges between George and Nick have been compared to a game of chess in which one player is trying to outwit the other.

George and Martha's child, a creation of their mind that must be killed since Martha violated the rules by naming him, is the ultimate game in the play. The kid is a terribly serious game. Future for George and Martha are up for debate when the game is ended.

3.4.5. Sexuality

Impotence, sexuality, and sex are major themes in the drama. Martha is a sexually aggressive "*earth mother*," who allegedly "*attacked*" a Greek artist in addition to seducing the school's gardener. Even worse, George claims she attempted to molest his made-up son. And one of many such escapades is likely Martha's seduction of Nick throughout the performance. The four characters make several sexual innuendos to one another.

Martha, Honey, and Nick all appear to be sexual "*users*." To convince Nick to marry her, Honey could have pretended to be pregnant. Nick makes suggestions about wanting to advance at the college by sleeping with significant faculty spouses. To avenge George, whom she holds responsible for her unhappiness, Martha engages in sex with others.

But in the drama, sex is a metaphor for infertility and nothingness. Honey's fictitious pregnancy and fear of giving birth, George and Martha's imagined kid, and Nick's inability to please Martha, the most significant faculty wife, are all problems. Even the town's name, New Carthage, alludes to the antiquated civilisation that Rome destroyed and salted to prevent fruitful development. The universe of this play depicts sex as neither a source of solace nor source of growth.

3.4.6. Death

The play's central topic is death. As George reads from the liturgy for the dead, the exorcism symbolically murders George and Martha's kid. George could have killed his mother and killed his father himself. Throughout the play, there are several instances of murderous threats, accusations and implication about literal and metaphorical death.

The play's early morning setting, which denotes the end of one day or the start of a new one and suggests the topic of death and rebirth, is the first clue. The sense of decay and mortality is further heightened by the characters George and Martha, who appear to be caught in an unending existential dilemma. As the characters' falsehoods and deceptions are exposed throughout the play, the play also examines the idea of the death of illusions. Their illusions about one other and themselves are destroyed as the reality about their relationship and goals is revealed.

Thirdly, the play also addresses the loss of innocence when Nick and Honey, the younger couple, are dragged into George and Martha's poisonous environment, which results in the erasure of their innocent ideas and aspirations.

Finally, the play explores the issue of real physical death since George and Martha's son, who passed away years previously, continues to be a constant in their life. They are haunted by his absence and passing, and the play's finale features a frightening sequence in which George imagines killing of their imaginary son.

3.4.7. History vs. Science

Nick teaches biology, whereas George is a professor of history. George's work focuses on the seemingly limitless range of human drive and endeavours, whereas Nick's work, in George's opinion, will produce the "*perfect man*," a being without a desire for genuine joy, art, philosophy, diversity, or any of these things. Albee delivers the moving talks, so George, it's been said, that Albee is exploiting George's persona to blame science for a number of human issues.

3.4.8. American Dream

In several of his plays, Albee methodically analyses the "*American dream*"; he even gave one of his early one-act plays that name. He criticises many of the ideals that are generally associated with that dream, including marriage, children, prosperity, riches, education, religion, and so forth in "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?".*

According to Bigsby (1984), we quote: "*George and Martha, named after the first President and his wife, embody the fate of the American dream which has moved progressively further away from the supposed liberal idealism of those revolutionary principles*" (Bisby, 1984, p. 266).

The town's official name is New Carthage. Albee's selection alludes to the once-thriving culture of *Carthage*, which was conquered by the *Romans* during the *Punic Wars* (third and second century B. C.). Albee appears to be drawing comparisons between contemporary society and the Carthaginians. George has given New Carthage several nicknames that come from diverse sources. Shakespeare's Twelfth Night is set in an idealised version of *Illyria*, a region of the Balkan Peninsula. The novel Penguin Island by Anatole France (1844 – 1924) takes place on a fantastical island that has been destroyed by capitalism, in a same way as capitalism. The biblical city of *Gomorrah*, along with *Sodom*, was destroyed due to its immorality and shamelessness (Adams, 1985, p. 52). In compliance with Albee, capitalism, sinfulness of American people is destroying American ideals, values and its importance in present time within the world.

Each of these ideals, according to him, is hollow and leads to loveless and sterile unions, unsuccessful jobs, unjust money, wasted education, and a religion that is ineffective or corrupt. Albee seems to be arguing that because these ideals have deteriorated so much, the nation has become a wasteland where individuals must create alternate realities in order to make up for what is missing (Adams, 1985, p. 32).

Conclusion

"If Edward Albee had not existed, he would most certainly have been invented" (Bigsby, 1984, p. 249).

To summarise, "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" is a strong American drama that explores the intricacies of human relationships as well as the catastrophic implications of living a life of fear and delusion. The play's central protagonists, George, and Martha, as well as their visitors Nick and Honey, negotiate a turbulent night of drinking and argument that culminates in a terrifying conclusion.

The play's representation of the connections between the characters is among its most noteworthy features. George and Martha's troubled marriage is full of strife and resentment, and their ongoing betrayal and manipulation of one another serves as a potent allegory for the harmful effects of co-dependency. While Nick and Honey represent a more traditional relationship, as the night goes on, their own weaknesses and secrets are revealed.

The play's protagonists frequently act erratically and unexpectedly, which reflects the turmoil that they are going through. Particularly adept at utilising subtle body language and words to cause emotional harm to one another, George and Martha are masters of passive aggression. Throughout the play, their mental and emotional conditions deteriorate, leading to a violent encounter that leaves them both broken.

"*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" has several, nuanced themes and motivations. As the characters try to reconcile their own conceptions of reality with the harsh facts that are revealed during the night, the drama investigates the nature of truth and illusion. The drama also explores how relationships may be damaged by secrets and feelings of hatred. In the end, the play seems to imply that facing reality head-on is the only way to go on and that there is no escaping the past.

And lastly, the dramatic work "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" explores the most pernicious regions of the human brain in a powerful and emotionally touching way. Every contact between the characters exhibits tension and struggle due to their deep and complex personalities. The drama presents humanity in a sensitive and sad way, and its concepts and motifs are timeless and universal. Because of its compelling story, compelling characters, and sophisticated treatment of complex topics, "*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" is today considered as a timeless example of American theatre.

Résumé

V tejto bakalárskej práci s názvom „*Zobrazenie postáv a vzťahov v diele "Kto sa bojí Virginie Woolfovej?" od Edwarda Albeea"* sme sa zaoberali dielom „*Kto sa bojí Virginie Woolfovej?"* od významného amerického dramatika Edwarda Albeeho, v ktorej sme sa venovali najmä analýze postáv, ich správaniu, zmýšľaniu a konaniu a témy, ktoré nie sú explicitne pre čitateľa alebo diváka v diele vyobrazené. Ťažisko práce spočíva v analýze. V prvej kapitole bakalárskej práci sú opísané teoretické východiská týkajúce sa histórie americkej drámy, od konca 18. storočia až po prvú polovicu 20. storočia. Toto obdobie slúžilo ako hlavná inšpirácia a vplyv na Albeeho tvorbu. V ďalších podkapitolách sme chronologicky spracovali život dramatika Edwarda Albeeho, venovali sme sa aj jeho najvýznamnejším hrám a dielam, ktoré napísal počas svojho života. Nakoniec sme opísali jeho vplyv na moderný svet drámy. Skúmali sme aj rôzne interpretácie a hodnotenia spomenutých diel zo strany kritikov, analytikov či známych esejistov.

Nasledujúca druhá kapitola opisuje metodiku, hypotézy, hlavný cieľ a taktiež aj vedľajšie ciele práce. Stanovili sme si dve hlavné hypotézy a to v znení: „Vzťahy v hre sú charakterizované použitím komplikovanej interakcie náklonnosti, nenávisti, sympatií a silnej dynamiky, ktorá formuje kroky a rozhodnutia postáv*"* a „Autor používa jazyk na vytvorenie pocitu úzkosti a nejednoznačnosti, čím vyzýva čitateľa, aby si emócie a motivácie postáv vykladal celým radom spôsobov."

Ďalším dôležitým prvkom práce bolo rozoberanie motívov a tém diela, ktoré sa týkali smrti, sexuality a impotencie, pomyselného zápasu medzi históriou a vedou, neschopnosti komunikácie a najmä rozdielu medzi ilúziou a realitou, ktorých hranice vieme rozoznať v tomto diele častokrát len veľmi ťažko. Všetky vyššie spomenuté témy sú kľúčové pre porozumenie diela a jeho posolstva.

V štúdii bola použitá kvalitatívna obsahová analýza hry, analýza jazyka, dialógov a interakcií postáv s cieľom vyvodiť závery o zobrazení postáv a vzťahov. Údaje sa zbierali prostredníctvom dôkladného čítania a analýzy textu hry, ako aj sekundárnych zdrojov, napríklad literárnej kritiky a životopisných informácií o autorovi.

Ústrednými postavami sú univerzitný profesor George a jeho manželka Martha, ktorí doma usporadúvajú spoločenský večierok. Zúčastní sa ho aj ďalší manželský pár, nový univerzitný asistent Nick a jeho mladá manželka Honey.

V práci som sme sa tiež venovali vzťahom práve medzi týmito hlavnými a v podstate jedinými reálnymi postavami v hre. Analyzovali sme vzťahy, emócie, interakcie a ich význam pre celkový príbeh. Zobrazenie vzťahov medzi postavami patrí k najpozoruhodnejším prvkom hry. Problematické manželstvo Georgea a Marthy je plné sporov a nevraživosti a ich neustála zrada a vzájomná manipulácia slúži ako silná alegória škodlivých účinkov vzájomnej závislosti, ktorú si za roky spolunažívania medzi sebou vypestovali. Rozbor vzťahu medzi predstaviteľmi hlavných úloh, Marthou a Georgom, slúžilo ako ústredná téma mojej analýzy. Nick a Honey síce predstavujú tradičnejší vzťah, ale v priebehu noci sa odhaľujú ich vlastné slabosti a tajomstvá.

Protagonisti hry sa často správajú nečakane a nevypočítateľne, čo odráža zmätok, ktorým si prechádzajú. George a Martha sú obzvlášť zruční vo využívaní jazyka a slov za účelom spôsobenia citovej ujmy jeden druhému a sú priam majstrami pasívnej agresie. V priebehu hry sa ich duševný a citový stav zhoršuje, čo vedie k násilnému duelu, ktorý ich oboch napokon zlomí.

Okrem štruktúry a jazyka aj charaktery postáv ukazujú, že dielo „*Kto sa bojí Virginie Woolfovej?*“ je viac než len realisticky podaný manželský súboj strindbergových rozmerov. Na prvý pohľad sú štyri postavy odlišnými individualitami. Všetky štyri postavy však tušia, určite v rôznej miere, že im v živote chýba niečo, čo by ich napĺňalo. Sú navzájom sklamaní a cítia sa na míle vzdialení od svojho pôvodného sna.

Na základe týchto analýz sme dospeli k záveru a aj k potvrdeniu oboch hypotéz, že dielo „*Kto sa bojí Virgínie Woolfovej?*“ je nesmierne komplexným a vrstevnatým príbehom, ktorý ponúka hlboký vzhľad do ľudskej psychológie a spoločenských vzťahov. Pomocou analýzy postáv, tém, jazyka a motívov sme sa pokúsili ukázať, že každá postava predstavuje určitý aspekt ľudskej bytosti a že každý z nich je dôležitý pre celkové posolstvo diela. Autor úmyselne používa jazyk na vytvorenie pocitu úzkosti a nejednoznačnosti u čitateľa, čím autor poukazuje na fakt, že zobrazené emócie a motivácie postáv je možné si vyložiť celým radom spôsobov.

Cieľom tejto bakalárskej práce bolo preskúmať, zobrazenie medziľudských vzťahov a pocitov hlavných postáv spod pera jedného z najvplyvnejších a najoceňovanejších dramatikov dvadsiateho storočia. Cieľom práce bolo tiež pokryť témy, ako sa jednotlivé postavy vyvíjajú a ako ich charakteristiky ovplyvňujú ich vzťahy s ostatnými postavami v príbehu. V rámci skúmania osobností jednotlivých postáv, ich motivácií a správania sme sa snažili získať lepšiu odbornosť v témach a motívoch hry, vrátane reality a ilúzie, dynamiky vo vzťahoch, smrti,

manipulatívnych taktík a hier či konfliktu medzi vedou a históriou. Práca sa snaží poukázať na to, ako Albeeho jazyk a reč v hre dokážu priblížiť zložitosť ľudských pocitov a interakcií. Daná práca poskytuje ucelený pohľad na zobrazenie postáv a vzťahov v tomto významnom divadelnom diele.

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Attachments

Attachment 1: Jack Mitchell – Edward Albee in 1965, [cit. 2023.4.10] Available on the Internet: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/postscript-edward-albee-1928-2016>.

Attachment 2: George Segal as Nick and Best Actress Oscar winner Elizabeth Taylor as Martha, Richard Burton as George, [cit. 2023.4.10] Available on the Internet: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/whos-afraid-virginia-woolf-read-750750/>.

Attachment 3. First edition of the author's most well-known work signed by Edward Albee himself on the title page, [cit. 2023.4.17] Available on the Internet: <https://www.raptisrarebooks.com/product/whos-afraid-of-virginia-woolf-edward-albee-first-edition-signed-1962/>.

Attachment 4: The end scene – Martha (Taylor) with George (Burton) after the fight in movie adaption from 1966, [cit. 2023.4.17] Available on the Internet: <https://thesouloftheplot.wordpress.com/2012/11/11/whos-afraid-of-virginia-woolf/>.

Abbreviations

a.m. – Ante Meridiem, before noon (p. 25)

B.C. – Before Christ (p. 39)

D.C. – District of Columbia (p. 14)

NYC – New York City (p. 17)

TV – television (p. 13)

WWII – Second World War (p. 13)