

Narrating The Psychological Trauma: A Detailed Perspective Of Zadie Smith's Short Stories 'Hanwell In Hell', 'Martha, Martha' And 'The Embassy Of Cambodia'

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Abstract:

Zadie Smith, a notable British women writers stands in the canon of black British immigrant literary personalities. This article is about the short stories where she carried out the themes of her novels: identity crisis, multiculturalism, and search for being. She creates characters that are both culturally alienated and displaced. The stories introduce the characters who are dispossessed and alienated and their life is in turn largely depended on upon their ability. Hence creating their own identity within their loosely constructed global community and that was fragmented by their circumstances. She depicts them (Hanwell, Martha and Fatou) and portrays them through classical themes, besides being amusing and engaging in their own right.

Key words: Displacement, psychological trauma, alienation, emancipation, multiculturalism

Zadie Smith, a notable able to hang around by just being themselves as in "Han well in Hell", "Martha, Martha" and "The Embassy of Cambodia", Zadie Smith is randomly associated with the novel rather than the short story. These short stories characters are from the traditional archetype of novel hence are The potentiality of the three stories is they carry out the similar structure and the theme as in her novels: identity crisis, multiculturalism, displacement and search for being. Her portrayal of the characters is significantly amplified in both culturally alienated and displaced aspects. The stories introduce us the characters, chiefly the protagonists who are dispossessed and alienated and their life is in turn speculated largely upon their vulnerability to survive against odd situations. Hence struggling to create their own identity within their loosely constructed community and that was by their circumstances be it Hanwell or Martha or Fatou perform their roles. We can cherry pick the process of decolonization and its concepts: suicide (wife of Han well), abandonment (Hanwell and Fatou), domestic abuse, sexual exploitation (Fatou) and loss of place (Martha) to circumvent their own situations and rediscover their home at the end. Further their existence is made silenced and often sacrificed in the midst of the story for the survival of their own cultural counterparts.

However, the characters have more scope than Zadie Smith's novels. The story Martha is all about a youthful black British girl who reveals that her search for the apartment is directly

proportionate to exploration for identity. 'Hanwell in Hell' is a dark tale about an emotionally traumatized man who struggles to cope with the death of his wife and estrangement from his daughters. The third story 'The Embassy of Cambodia' is about Fatou, an Ivorian grantee of Ivory Coast. In 'Hanwell in Hell' Clive Black, recounts his encounter with Hanwell to Hanwell's daughter after the newspaper missing advertisement of Hanwell. Even Mantha goes with the situations from placement to displacement rather along with her destiny. Though Fatou is maid at Derawals, family they subjugate Fatou to all the protocols of the contemporary slavery.

Hanwell symbolises the human tragedy. This detail is perfectly placed and weighed within the narrative, giving it a genuine poignancy. In the story the readers we introduce to follow a solitary British man, Hanwell through one night, as remembered by the acquaintances, Clive Black. As the evening progresses, Hanwell is revealed as a widower with three estranged daughters. As it is Zadie Smith's narration, it is clearly understated that the Hanwells are a multicultural family with "tangled roots" (8). The narration pacifies that there is definite difference between the ways the father and his daughters are described. Hanwell is in "pink", the archetypal Briton and his three daughters are "dark" This is significant given that in Smith's novels, the biracial characters Caucasian British father and Black mother from Jamaica. Hanwell's story is the distinctively familial and relatively content in its multicultural existence to a family which is at the brink of the collapse for the very same circumstances.

"Hanwell in Hell" is all about class and place besides being a story dealing with cultural alienation and displacement of the female characters and their loss of home and each other. The female characters feel that they are taken for granted and unwanted by their father after the death of their mother. The narration surfaces the way that colonization of men and decolonization of the female characters is a very poignant way leading to their psychological trauma. Equally traumatized is Hanwell's daughter, Claire, who is often in hopelessness as to why she and her sisters are left with relatives in London. Hence it is also a story about the women's lives coherent to the feelings of abandonment, displacement, utter hopelessness and despair. The characters hence are in the psychological trauma tracing their own hope of emancipation. This made Claire to write a letter seeking information from anyone who may have known her father. Here in the same situation is Clive who lost his home, business, and family. He connects with Hanwell who starts to hear his story desperately because of sense of similarities with his own. The irony is that Hanwell suffers from colour blindness but his love for his daughters to show them the bright side of the life which he is unable to see is shown when he paints his house bright yellow. The irony is at surface it is his colour blindness and deep at the heart is his trauma for the loss of identity and death of his life. His psychological trauma is underappreciated when he opts to remain in his pit of loneliness, searching himself in the hell of displacement which is the upshot of his own creation. Zadie Smith puts the question: who abandons whom? (43) seems significant in the narrative, that had Hanwell abandoned/neglected his family, or did his family have no other choices but to abandon him Like Hanwell, Martha who is an English Nigerian is estranged and is in search of new home. Albeit on reaching Massachusetts prior, Martha possesses improbable perceptions on different sorts of properties she could manage. She is in tandem as she feels to belong of the working class in England, but desires to join a university and to acclimatize to specific cultural awareness. Mantha incessantly exhibits abrupt and uncouth behavior, tending Pain to cease that she is typical and to certain extent a picture which has her son and her husband. This spurious photograph is far less emotional and affecting than Hanwell's aesthetic fall

Similarly, Fatou a refugee of Ivory Coast settles as a household maid for the Derawals, who are a wealthy Arab family. They deploy her in such circumstances that sets trend to the contemporary slavery. Her masters seized her passport: they preserve her wages, mistreatment her physical as well as with verbosity. Further to her solace she is allowed her to go out for the recreations, and to visit church on every Sundays. In fact, the story surrounds around the embassy building as well as Cambodia's history regarding genocide centers the theme of Fatou's narration. That is as an immigrant and a slave in present England. As a result it is a traumatic situation to Fatou.

To navigate her past Fatou had always been in such a situation which made her to wonder if she herself was a slave. She realizes it was not the kidnappers but her father, who brought via Ivory Coast to Ghana. and on reaching Accra they got employment in the inn they reside. Succeedingly after two years. when she turns eighteen, it was her father again who led Fatou to Libya and there to Italy. Hence Fatou stands at the core of this compelling story of class conflict which is subsequent stage to psychological trauma. Eventually interwoven is the contemporary tale of her growing friendship with Andrew and her productive life. She met Andrew on a park bench who convert her to Catholicism so that she can resort to peace. He is also her savior when she is put in a disastrous position she used to have casual conversations with Andrew and it is where she finds her ways of venting her psychological trauma as an immigrant. Hence Zadie Smith concludes the story with a note of despair and 7 wrenched condition of the fourth generation or displaced generation who has been thrown apart. "Feeling in need, she continues to turn to religion, although she feels doubt as to whether "her new relationship with Jesus" (28) had changed everything.

In such circumstances and milieu, "The Embassy of Cambodia" leads to a multidirectional consideration of diverse spatial, temporal and cultural communities. Zadie smith never unfolds the legal status of Fatou in England in the narration, but the readers understand poignantly that her expedition from Ivory Coast to Ghana, from there to Libya, Italy and last destination to England. This complete trip is of illegitimate immigration from African continent to European continent. The reader can understand that her supposed category as an illegal migrant ends her in hopeless sensitive susceptibility causing her a trauma of loss and despair, which is further swollen by her working status. If Hanwell is freed of his blame when he is reunited with his three daughters at the end. Martha is recuperated at the sight of a photograph in a flat and Fatou doesn't wants to be identified as a migrant on pretext of her comparative liberty and she feels so because she is able to get out of the house for succinct periods of time. In this way though the three am suppressed by their past and present conditions personally and by their displacement they are urged to find solaced just by making up their minds. Hence they are objectified and thus making them invisible. Fatou submits rape as an offense and finds peace in divine activities albeit proves anesthetizing effect. Fatou displays immense pliability, albeit at the end of the story where she is shot to death and so she is emancipated her of physical and psychological trauma. The end of three novellas presents a sheer act of sensing, not at a trauma, but at the personification of an subtle disturbance that many of us never admit and believe . From this point of view Fatou , Hanwell and Matha are observed as the characters that have been dehumanized in their conditions, whose lives cannot be considered to be grieved. Nevertheless, the inability to take action at the end of their stories is to dismantle the gulf between theory and practical situations, a fissure that should be bridged so to accomplish a healthier and a complete decolonization of trauma. All the three major characters Martha, Hanwell and Fatou are the tonmented characters that lost their identities. All of them have a self realisation only when they

come in contact with the other characters. It was Martha's presumption that she is the only one to suffer and her life is full of uncertainty regarding existence in this White world. Added to it, she feels that her past life haunts her and blocks her dreams. But these just are blown to air when she knows about the heavy is the past of Pain. This made her to apprehend and make her to run away at the end of the story. Hence it is Pain's influence on Martha that changes her motives. So is Hanwell, it is Clive's interaction and company that makes him unaware of the colour he paints owing to his colour blindness. He also feels that Clive's past is much ambiguous without any destiny. He feels much better when he meets Clive and shares his tragic past. Hence it is through Clive that the readers have an insight into the character of Hanwell. Even for Clive, his encounter with Hanwell, somehow changes him when he says, "when you feel lost in the world, there is some joy to be gleaned from exact imitation of familiar things" (113). Similar to Martha and Hanwell, Fatou there is person with whom she feels much light to share all the background and experience. It is through Andrew that Fatou was able to vent her grievances. Hence Fatou's interactions with Andrew facilitate for the betterment of her from an unpaid domestic servant into an independently strong woman. It is this part of the charm of Smith's characterisation, that her characters adhere to the concept of self-reliance (even though later) and thus finds it hard to vent out their apprehensions. At large Zadie Smith portrays these characters, who are not offensively interesting when isolated from their periphery, but genuinely they become parts of a scrupulously formulated artifice giving the reader a sense of how London treated the immigrants in their times. Hence the trauma part becomes a fragmented self which is core to Smith's novellas. In all the three short stories female characters centre the narrative structure. The women characters are rudimentary victims of trauma and despair. Though they are not completely hopeless in their living they are attempting to embark their decolonized life style despite their struggle to survive. This is true about Martha and Fatou only. In this case Martha centres her story. It is through her we see the other characters. Martha appears to be in desperate search for her settlement in London, whereas Claire is caught on the borders between two cultural spheres and between exile and home, movement and stability. Smith portrays her that she is in search of home, which she hardly remembers but longs to possess. This is so because Claire does not know how to blame her mother for committing suicide hence Laura attains only symbolic significance. Above all it is her sacrifice for their survival in London. The family's cohesiveness and longevity was severed by the women- Clive unnamed female companions; the dead mother Laura; the estranged daughters- Claire, Cool and Emily and finally Tanya Bessy. Hence Zadie Smith portrays all her characters (female or male) as the victims of psychological despair caused by isolation. This psychological trauma as in Martha it is her suppression that has caused her to flee from her son and husband to Willesden. For Fatou's her suppression is vented away by her own self. Swimming is the only place after Andrew; Fatou recalls and cherishes her past. Besides it is the depression of Laura's Claustrophobia that led her to commit suicide. Claire's suppression at her aunt's house compelled her to see her father. For Hanwell, it is the feeling of traumatic suppression that he is unable to support his three daughters financially and finally estranged them. However he is also depressed for he blames that he is reason for his wife's death. This leads him to feel disillusioned and alienated in his own land. Though he returns to his daughters but never seems to forgive himself about Laura's suicide. For Hanwell, Martha and Pain the psychological depression is concern with their past, for Claire it is both present and future. For Fatou it is related to the place 'Embassy' Therefore all the characters of these works according to Smith shared a same platform of dispossession; lack of ethnicity and

existentialism and on whole a traumatic situation within their respective realms .

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