

The Theatre of loss and the Significant Role of Psychoanalysis: An in-depth Study of Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

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ABSTRACT:

*The life of nearly everybody has been enormously affected by writing. Suffering or Injury can be identified with a specific occurrence or a progression of annoying encounters that left a permanent impression upon the mind of a person and also results in unpleasant outcomes. There are numerous reasons for pressure, consistent stress and injury like sexual maltreatment, aggressive behavior at home, holocaust, war, unfairness, provocation, double-cross, colonization, or any kind of separation and so forth. Edward Albee delineated the issues and the battles of the people in the majority of his plays. The Plays of Edward Albee are known for featuring and speaking about the regular trouble. His plays manage the topics of death, human misery, misfortune, danger, uneasiness and so on. Albee discussed the foolishness and purposelessness of human survival by following Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco and Jean Genet. This paper will endeavor to concentrate on certain mental perspectives, the condition of anxiety, feeling of misfortune, human sorrow and breakdown of correspondence experienced by the various characters in *The Zoo Story* (1958) and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962) by Edward Albee.*

Keywords: *Absurdity, anxiety, depression, isolation, psychoanalysis, trauma*

Every person is different and so their response towards situations is dissimilar as well. Not everyone has the same strategy of dealing with the awful and unpleasant issues. Fundamentally, trauma does not generally have a negative importance; Margaret Atwood likes to give another frame of mind to this advancement. It is a development which shows a scene of changing which starts from injury, enduring and torment to information and comprehension; it is this female therapy advancement that makes the books open to the analysis of women's activist. We should realize the subject of Atwood's works, enveloping the good, the political, and the psychoanalytical mentalities. She concurs with Freud's clarification of hypochondriac and mentally unstable individuals. Sigmund Freud explains that:

They have, indeed, driven it out of consciousness and out of memory, and apparently saved themselves a great amount of psychic pain, *but in the unconscious the suppressed wish still*

exists, only waiting for its chance to become active, and finally succeeds in sending into consciousness (Freud, 1382, 21) [1]

Trauma as a fresh phenomenon has a very significant role in the literature. Albee's works like *The Zoo Story* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* are considered as the candid examinations of the contemporary situation of the world. Edward Albee says:

The act of writing a play is an act of commitment, unless you're intentionally writing a play that has its essence in a previous century and its commitment only to imitative entertainment values, then you are making a statement of contemporary commitment. The act of writing is commitment in itself (March, 1964) [2]

In Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*, Jerry's sense of failure and desolation was due to many psychological aspects. He was living an isolated life, devoid of any sort of feelings and affections. His seclusion and lack of sense of belonging drove him into ending his living by committing suicide. Jean was an isolated figure having no warmth of relations, no family and friends in the whole American society. Jean's psyche can be observed in the beginning of the play during his conversation with Peter where he mentioned his adulteress mother and an alcoholic father. He was raised and brought up in an unstable and disturbed family. Jean's mother eloped with her lover and father died in a terrible accident. Thus he spent his earlier years with his cruel and unkind uncle. Jean being in detached and cold life finds it hard to communicate with others. His heart turned into a graveyard of his own aspirations. Jerry remained unmarried even after acquiring the age of 30 Years. His bitter childhood experiences made him believe in the futility and absurdity of life. Besides, Jerry's tale concerning his landlady's dog discloses a lot about his approach to social communication. Joiner said that "People are not born with the innate capacity to damage themselves" (Joiner, 2002) [3]. But Jerry after being hopeless decided to kill himself in order to get eternal relief from the anxiety and distressful life, "Peter...thank you. I came unto you...and you have comforted me. Dear Peter" (ZS, 184) [4]. He started considering himself as a burden and faced multiple consequences. Jerry's isolation filled his life with trauma and tragedies that ultimately smashed all his want and made him tough to confront his own death. Jerry was strong-willed to commit suicide for the reason that he never gained a blissful life. He wished his demise to compensate all he had missed in his wretched past. He decided to end his life in the Central Park (Public place), in order to attract media attention. As by doing so, his demise would surely draw the same kind of consideration and attention that he had been craving for all over his life.

All the plays of Edward Albee question the problems and the various issues of the modern man who is living an imprisoned life. Jerry's strong desire for relationship came on surface in his very first meet with Peter. Not everybody's life is same, there are people who stay blessed for the whole of their life like Peter of *The Zoo Story*, who was at peace after acquiring all the amenities of life. Peter constantly avoided Jerry and was unwilling to hear his story "I... I don't understand what...I don't think I...Why did you tell me all of this?" (ZS, 177). Life and its circumstances have an immense role in the making of one's personality; Peter is quite because he is living a comfortable life in his posh apartment unlike Jerry who is violent and aggressive.

Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Like Jerry of *The Zoo Story*, too experienced a very disordered and hectic childhood that left an indelible impression upon her behavior and conduct as an adult. She lost her

mother at an early age. The second marriage and the busy professional career of her father kept her away from any sort of affection, paternal love and care. So, as a teenager, Martha lacked confidence and was incapable to face the hardships and the reality of life. Like any other child, Martha too required her parents to give her the direction and guidance to help her exist and be in this world with self-confidence. Martha was packed up with lots of issues, fear and chaos. "Martha suffers from a strong lack of self-confidence; she does not have the capacity to face a real-life situation" (Stenz 52) [5]. Martha wishes to have a partner who can keep her happy and gratify her ambitions of life. All her desires were chiefly the result of the lack of attention she got from her parents in her early days. The load of Martha's guilt can be seen when she confesses in the following lines:

...The one thing I've tried to carry pure and unscathed through the sewer of this marriage; through the sick nights and the pathetic, stupid days...the one thing, the one person, to raise above the mire of this vile, crushing marriage; the one light in all this hopeless...darkness...our son (VW,227) [6]

Martha's father filled in Martha with an idea that she must tie the knot with a man of her own standard. So when she got married with George she thought that he could fulfill her desires and fill the emptiness in her life. But nothing like that actually happened which gave Martha the biggest and major disappointment of her life that fueled her psychological struggle. Martha experienced psychological trauma in her childhood and was also a sufferer of the American capitalist civilization, which pressed her more into the world of delusion and fantasy. C.W.E. Bigsby sums up the predicament of the present man: "History and Science, as represented by George and Nick, become forms of evasion, rationalizations, they are fictitious ways of structuring the world and experience in such a way as to deny its contingent power" [7]. George and Martha's disappointment regarding almost everything packed up their married life with lots of resentments and severe issues. Instead of being conscious about Martha's ambitions and frustrations George followed his heart and refused to go by his wife's personal desires for him. In his article entitled "Some Things Are Sad, Though: Accident in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" James Kastely comparably contends that George and Martha endeavor to control their destinies, yet without much of any result. James Kastely, in particular, looks at their "childlessness...[as] a fact over which they have no control, so their life is, at a fundamental level, determined by a capriciously uncooperative nature" (Kastely 45) [8]. George refused to light Martha's cigarette and by doing so declined her dominating personality:

No...there are limits, I mean, man can put up...with only so much without he descends a rung or two on the old evolutionary ladder...it's a funny ladder... you can't reverse yourself...start back up once you're descending (VW,51)

At the point when George understands that Martha was losing her control before their visitors, he attempted to drag her outside from her illusionary world and constrained her to strongly face her feelings of dread as the last was horribly hesitant to confront reality of her troubled circumstance, "I don't remember anything, and you don't remember anything either" (VW, 211), "I don't want to know anything" (VW, 178). Her imaginary child somewhat compensated for their failures in marriage. Except George she never disclosed the truth of her imaginary son to anyone. In the Tulane Drama Review Alan Schneider once said that:

If the child in Virginia Woolf is merely a 'gimmick' then so is the Wild Duck, the Cherry Orchard, that Streetcar with the special name, even our elusive friend Godot[9]

So just to bring Martha back to her senses, George declared the death of their imaginary child to their guests for the reason that living in the world of delusion did not add anything good into their married life.

Martha...our son is...dead...He was...killed...late in the afternoon...on a country road, with his learner's permit in his pocket, he swerved, to avoid a porcupine, and drove straight into a...large tree (VW, 231)

After hearing the news Martha responded by saying "You cannot do that" (VW, 231). As exhibited in *The Zoo Story* and as will be seen with *Who's Afraid*, Albee's intentional obscuring of human and creature isn't to delineate a viciousness inalienable in person characters however as a route for Albee to remark on how we as people convey. All through his ordinance, the breakdown of correspondence is Albee's most noticeable subject, extending from its scarcity in that department to the foolishness of endeavoring to defeat fights with semantics.

This examination inferred that the times of youth and pre-adulthood and the issues of the present, which actuate the recollections of contention before, can spur a person to make proactive move because of specific dangers, which thusly may prompt false positive responses. Notwithstanding, the individual may likewise keep the event of genuine mishaps, in this manner clarifying why individuals with nervousness don't kick the bucket in regular mishaps. Consequently, nervousness is a preventive system that is intended to keep a person from taking part in conceivably hurtful practices.

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