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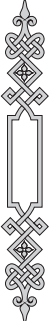
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reflects the ugly face of modern parenthood, the critics describe it a dark side, actually it is dark.

Harris's *Our New Girl* is a typical example of modern family which it lost main principles of a perfect family because the modern life obliged one of the parents or sometimes both of them, to be absent for many days outside his house. She gives the parents a lesson of education, she wants them to take care to their family and children. The children are the easiest victim of all problems, they may pay the cost, the most dangerous one, they may suffer of psychological diseases, such in this play the child suffers of trauma.

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it up"(Harris 91). But Danial still doesn't say anything he is in shock which leads to aggressive behaviour because he believes that his father is a liar in spite of that he pretends as an innocent person with more advices and warnings to his son, saying "Now I'm going to give you another chance to tell the truth here. Tell Hazel it was a lie" " I don't want to look at you- if you are going to make up stories. I don't want to see your face. Get out. Get out..." (Harris 92). Hazel discovers the truth when she saw the marks on Annie, she believes her son and immediately orders Annie to leave their house while Richard is preparing himself to travel just like every time he leaves the problems hanging on. But Hazel insist to fix their relationship, she wants to give him a chance for the sake of their son and their (new girl) "we have to fix this.. We can't keep lying"(Harris 101).

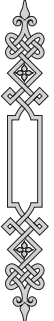
Conclusion

Through studying traumatic dilemma in Nancy Harris's Our New Girl one can conclude that any child is vulnerable to trauma because his/her body

is in developing process, furthermore they are depended on their parents and are lacking in awareness and less experience of the external society.

The play is an example of modern parenthood, the playwright shows the dark side of the parenthood. She wants to say that there is no perfect family or perfect parents now- a- days even if they are suitable to each other but the difficulties of life are reflected deeply on the children. The victim here is the child, Danial who suffers more alone, he needs to be loved and feel safe, he faces difficulties in talking about his problems. Trauma controls his behavior that confuses and distresses his parents, they should be emotionally available, and they should present treatment such increasing their child's feeling of safety, helping him to develop a positive view of himself, developing his relationships with family members and outside world, teaching him to control his emotions.

Harris is functioning the psychological drama to reflect modern parenthood's problems and at the same time to make the audience think and find solutions for these problems. She





in Harris's blistering text. Harris has several perspectives, giving an equally powerful voice to all sides. (Stewart 3)

Caruth as a specialist declares that "the victims of trauma are unable to explain their own traumas, they find it more difficult to use words, they may switch to nonverbal methods of communication, such as drawing or painting" (Pederson 336).

They really need to methods of communication to be close to their child. The problems start when Daniel faced trouble at school and his mother finds it difficult to relate to her son. John Maslen in his review, illustrates Danial's character as:

He portrayed a neat persona that was a mix between sneering and apprehension. He is witnessing to the kiss and cuddle between nanny and his father when they were undress which should be potentially traumatic and puzzling for him, but when he relays this information to his mother in front of the errant pair, it is delivered in a matter of fact way rather than containing elements of anger, bewilderment and sorrow as perhaps

it should. (Maslen)

Nancy Harris wants the audience to expect that Daniel may explode at any moment and attack his parents and Annie. (Johns 3) Actually it happened when Danial exposes his father and Annie in front of his mother, saying "In the middle of the night. I saw you kiss the marks on Annie". But Annie lies "I don't have any-marks on me, Daniel."(Harris89)

The problem starts here when Richard denies the truth" I have absolutely no idea where he's getting this. What sort of TV you've been watching lately." Hazel wants the truth" I want to know if he's telling the truth." But Richard accuses his son as a liar "Children make things up"(Harris 89). Meanwhile, the play reaches its climax, Danial traumatized by his father as a liar and also by Annie because she was close to him. So he doesn't say anything when his father blames him as he created a story, saying "What did I tell about lying, hmmn? Liars are dangerous people. Most of the bloody problems in the world today are caused by-You do not want to be a liar.. Now tell Hazel you made



mas David M. Lawson states that :

early childhood is a time when human are most vulnerable to the impact of trauma, especially when it occurs within the family or with trusted caregivers. Children are developing of foundation for communication, relationships, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation and basic sense of initiative and self- efficacy. Exposure to frequent and intense traumatic experiences such as physical and sexual abuse increases a child's experiences of high levels of affective and physiological a rousal and tendency to interpret even the smallest demand as dangerous and anxiety producing. (Lawson,498)

Nancy Harris wants to give the parents a lesson of education by choosing this kind of characters to employ the job of nanny. Annie appears naive covers by politeness, but actually she is shrew(Stewart 2). Harris shows us the modern families where the parents have no time to talk to each other, even the children have no chance to express their selves. Unfortunately, Annie becomes the solution to young Daniel but she is herself represent a

dilemma that makes the things worse. She is less welcomed by Hazel especially when she allies herself to Richard (Jones 2).

David Finkle gives good description about Nancy Harris's style:

She knows how to put the parts together for does a creep_crawly experience. The first thing she shows us is young Daniel in the dead of night moving about a good _looking London kitchen, just when it looks as if the methodical lad is going to cut off his right ear with a hefty knife, the teaser scene ends. He is accused of ominously staring at a new girl. It is not surprising that Annie begins to have greater hold over Danial than earthier Hazel or the returning Richard, a robust type who calls his son "Big D" and initially registers as a calming influence. (Finkle 1) Danial addresses his parents by their Christian names; Zachery Stewart answers this wondering about the issue above: "Yes these are the kind of "modern parents". Who allow their children to refer to them by their first names. That kind of liberal, (and its hypocrisy) is singled out for special ridicule





the young nanny with a high stress, who had lost her mother at the age of nine, arrives from Sligo carries with her all the traumatic childhood. She is aggressive because she had deeply affected childhood that is obviously reflected in her behaviour . David M Lawson illustrates the concept of aggressive behaviour as a reaction of trauma:

The child reacts with intense and dysregulated when he witnessed his mother and father frequent verbal or physically aggressive encounters. The parents mistake the child's traumatic response as expressions of defiance and disrespect. The child reacts in this manner any time the parents are talking in a loud tone whether hostile or not, or whether the parent are together or separates. It would be important for the parent to understand the effect of this dynamic on the child. (Lawson 499)

Hazel is a powerful women who portrays a mixture of feelings, such love, patience and anger because she is pregnant with her second child(Maslen1).

According to David Finkel:

Pregnancy, certainly Harris considers it an issue. She is thinking seriously about what women undergo during pregnancy and using the drama's ingredients as metaphor for the condition's discombobulating potential. Perhaps needless to say, she's also taking men and their reaction to a wife's pregnancy in to account in her portrayed situation. (Finkle 2)

The husband's presence is the same of his absence because he usually leaves the problems without solutions though Hazel asked him a help. The only aid, that Richard presents, is Annie who reflects her traumatic memories on their child Danial(Ibid2). Unfortunately for Annie's case there's no an opportunity for treatment because there is no parents to understand or treat her traumatic problem. Ferenczi states that " the traumatic past, however, results in precipitations in the self, which is thus a collection of scars of shocks in the ego and the ego becomes as though capable of being molded photo chemically"(Bo'kay 111).

Annie lacks maternal feelings early that makes her lives in dark trau-



threateningly out of control" (Ibid).
Our New Girl

The critics describe it as a witty powerful piece of theater, a psychological and startling drama which reflects the dark side of modern parenthood. The dark side in this play is characterized by two main considerations: the first is the absence of the father from his house all the days of the week, the second is the secrets and the lies of the father that deeply impact his child, Danial(Taylor 2).

These considerations constellate around the mother, Hazel, the main characters. She made a decision to leave her profession as a lawyer to take care of her young son and work at home and also after observing that she is pregnant with her second child(Jones 2). Richard, her husband is a plastic surgeon, left her alone with her heavily pregnancy and has embarked on his latest charitable mission to Haiti that makes her obliged to send him a SOS, the respond was by hiring Annie, a full-time nanny from Ireland. In the opening scene Hazel surprised by Annie's arrival at her door " The last thing I want is

a nanny"(Harris 12) declares Hazel. Actually Hazel needs an extra help from her husband, she insists that she doesn't need a nanny but she is not in a situation to say no to more help(Stewart 2). Annie said "Mybe he wanted to surprise you...He said you were tired."... "He said you need some support.."(Harris 11).

Chris Jones reports for Chicago Tribune the following:

Actually, Our New Girl, deals with pretty much every insecurity parents have about nannies: that they will be litigious, or a third wheel in the way of togetherness, or they'll end up as junior's main emotional support. Darker yet, there is the fear that a young nanny might tempt the husband in a way with which a pregnant wife cannot easily compete. Skillfully constructed and never dull for a moment, Our New Girl goes to all those places. (Jones 3)

Harris writes about the problem of parenting in a shape of triangle among the main characters (the husband, the pregnant wife and sinister nanny). Hazel considers motherhood as a dilemma she can't get out of . While





Meaning of trauma

Trauma is a term originated from a Greek word meaning wound. It is used within different branches such as psychology, philosophy and sociology. It means an emotional response to a sudden psychological, emotional or physical intense event that threatens or causes harm for a person. Freud noticed that:

The traumatized subjects are neurotic and keep the memory of that sudden event in their unconscious. This event will come to the surface and the conscious repeatedly and the traumatized subjects suffers from those repressed memories. As the memories return, the subject will react to them by having nightmares or undesirable behaviour. (Forster259) For Cathy Caruth,

Trauma is an experience so intensely painful that the mind is unable to process it normally. The victim may totally forget the event, but if memories of the trauma return, they are often non-verbal, and the victim may be unable to describe them with words.

For MC Nally, unlike Caruth "trauma is a memorable and describable". In her book *Unclaimed Experience*,

Cathy Caruth explores that the traumatic experience is "unclaimed":

In trauma, the horrific moment arrives with such world shattering force that it scrambles the brain's function, and the victim is unable to process the experience in a normal way. Trauma forces the self into hiding and while the sensory manifold keeps "recording" sights, sounds, smells, and feelings, the brain fails to work them through. (Pederson 334-335)

Ferenczi states that the trauma is not a memory but a repetition, adding that "Freud is right when he teaches us that it is a triumph for analysis when it succeeds in substituting recollection for acting out"(Bo'kay 131).

Farrell believes that "the notion of trauma has come to serve as a cultural trope that expresses many fears of our time"(Bracken 3). He follows the field in which trauma becomes a central motif in various cultural narratives (drama, novels, films, screen play, and other works) of the 1990s. He believes that "trauma is both clinical syndrome and a 'strategic' fiction that a complex, stressful society is using to account for a world that seems



Abstract

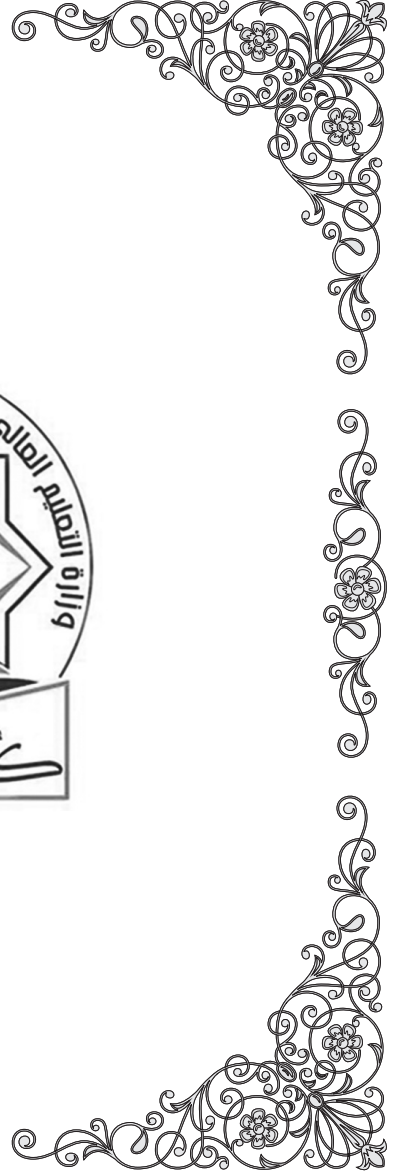
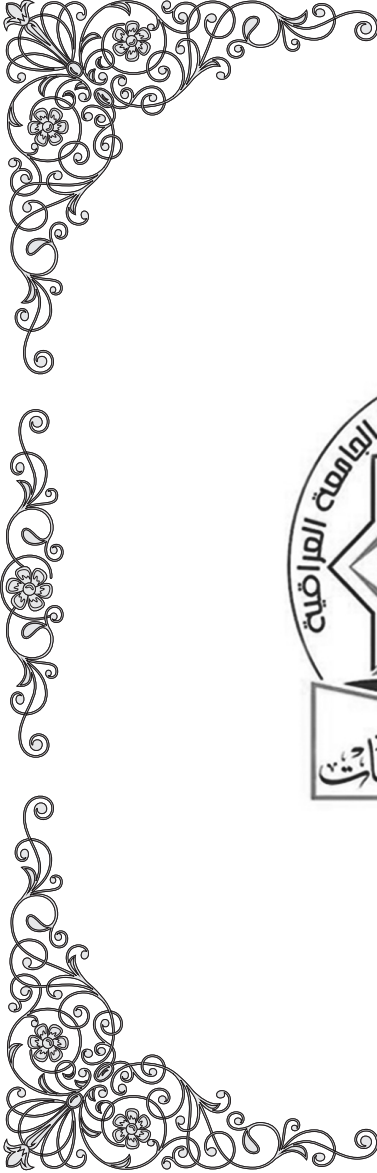
This study explores the effect of trauma on the child, Danial, who had traumatized by an intense incident. This study deals with trauma as a dilemma in Nancy Harris's play Our New Girl. In fact, it provides a brief analysis of the impact of trauma on a child who is traumatized by his father's deeds and lies. Danial could not find his parents available, neither emotionally or physically, when he needed them, the thing that made Annie, his nanny, took the role of his parents. She becomes close to him, she was available and kind when he wanted someone to express himself. But the problem is with Annie because she also has a trauma at age nine when her mother committed suicide and her father did not know how to treat with her. The main intense event that shocked Danial when he saw Annie with his father at night undressed. This Danial's intense event results much more things such a distrusting of his parents and others, an aggression, disobeying, dissociation, and feeling unsafe. Hazel, the mother who feels tired and isolated because her husband leaves the things hanging up without giving solutions, the only solution that he had presented was bringing Annie to their house. This kind of child's environment impacts parent-child relationship that finally caused a stress and frustration inside child's mind then the child grows up with memory from the past controls his future.

Key words: Trauma, Modern Parenthood, Children, Behaviour, Nancy Harris.

ملخص البحث

تستكشف هذه الدراسة تأثير الصدمة على الطفل (دانيال) الذي أصيب بصدمة نتيجة حادث شديد التأثير. تتناول هذه الدراسة الصدمة كمعضلة في مسرحية نانسي هاريس (فتاتنا الجديدة) Our New Girl. وهي تقدم تحليلاً موجزاً لتأثير الصدمة على الطفل الذي أصيب بصدمة بسبب أفعال والده وأكاذيبه. لم يتمكن (دانيال) من العثور على والديه متاحين، لا عاطفياً أو جسدياً، عندما كان في حاجة إليهما، الأمر الذي جعل (أنى)، مربية الأطفال تقوم بدور والديه وأصبحت قريبة منه، حيث كانت موجودة ولطيفة عندما أراد شخصاً ما ليفصح له عن مشاعره. لكن المشكلة مع (أنى) لأنها تعاني أيضاً من صدمة في سن التاسعة عندما انتحرت والدتها ولم يعرف والدها كيف يتعامل معها. الحدث المؤلم الرئيسي الذي صدم دانيال عندما رأى (أنى) مع والده في الليل وهي عارية. ينتج عن هذا الحدث المؤلم الذي قام به (دانيال) أشياء أكثر بكثير مثل عدم الثقة في والديه والأخرين، والعنوان، والعصيان، والانفصال، والشعور بعدم الأمان. أما بالنسبة للأم (هازل)، التي تشعر بالتعب والعزلة لأن زوجها يترك الأشياء معلقة دون تقديم حلول، الحل الوحيد الذي قدمه هو إحضار (أنى) إلى منزلهم. يؤثر هذا النوع من بيئة الطفل على العلاقة بين الوالدين والطفل والتي تسببت في النهاية في حدوث توتر وإحباط داخل عقل الطفل، ثم يكبر الطفل مع ذاكرة من الماضي تتحكم في مستقبله.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصدمة، الأبوة الحديثة، الأطفال، السلوك، نانسي هاريس.



**Traumatic Psychological dilemma in
Nancy Harris»s play Our New Girl**

معضلة صدمة نفسية في مسرحية نانسي هاريس: فتاتنا الجديدة

الباحثة

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