

The illusion and the Reality in Friedman's Short Story "Beautiful Scars"

((الوهم والحقيقة في القصة القصيرة (الجروح الجميلة) لفريدمان))

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ملخص البحث

أن هدف البحث هو توضيح التأثيرات السيئة كعارضة أزياء خصوصا وان حياتها تقع بين الوهم والحقيقة حيث أن البحث يوضح تلك التأثيرات السيئة (المرأة المثالية ، تكوين صداقة حقيقية و حب حقيقي وعمل عارضة الأزياء و اسلوبها وتصرفاتها) للوهم بالتعاقب اعتمادا على القصة القصيرة (الجروح الجميلة) لفريدمان. نتيجة لذلك أصبحت كل تلك التأثيرات السيئة للوهم تتناقض مع الحقيقة التي أظهرتها الكاتبة من خلال الإيمان بالمسيح والصداقة والحب الحقيقي وحقيقة نهاية البشر التي أظهرتها الكاتبة من خلال موت الشخصية الرئيسية (جاد) في نهاية القصة. أخيرا يعرض الباحث النتائج التي تم توصل إليها حيث أن الكاتبة استخدمت التناقض بين الوهم والحقيقة والحياة والموت للتركيز على مشاكل حياة عارضة الأزياء وكنتيجة لذلك لا يوجد امرأة مثالية ولا صداقة حقيقية في عالم المظاهر ولا حب حقيقي في عالم الإجراءات ولا العمل كعارضة أزياء مثاليا" كما تتصوره الفتيات.

Abstract

This paper probes the bad effects of being a model girl whose life gets entrapped between illusion and reality. The paper illuminates those bad effects (being an ideal woman, making real friends and lovers, and modeling career, behavior and style) of illusion respectively, depending on Friedman's short story "beautiful scars". These bad effects of illusion contrast with reality that Friedman shown through the faith in Jesus, real friendship, real love. Sheshowed the complete reality of human

being via the death of the main character "Jade". The paper presented the findings that the writer explained by making the contrast between illusion of life and reality of death to focus on the problems of modeling life. Finally, Friedman approved that there is no everlasting beauty, no real friendship in the life of appearance, no real love in the life of temptations and modeling career is not a perfect one as being thought by young girls.

<u>Table of content</u>		<u>Page</u>
		<u>No</u>
Section One	A-Introduction	1
	B-The plot	2
Section Two	1.The meaning of illusion	3
	1.1-The illusion of ideal woman	3
	1.2-Illusion in making real relationships as friends and lovers	5
	1.3-Illusion about being fashion model (behavior, style and the job).	6
Section Three	1.The meaning of reality	8
	1.1-the reality in faith in Jesus	8
	1.2-The real friendship	10
	1.3- The real lover	10
Section Four	1-Examples of Xmodel Girls with their confessions	11
	2-The findings	13
	Conclusion	15
	References	16

Section one

A-Introduction

This paper focused on the life of model girl to show the fake in all the aspects of her life including style, manner and the job of modeling. Also, this paper based on real confessions of model girls.

It introduces the plot of the short story "beautiful Scars" which is written by Aileen Friedman. The incidents of the story are about a young woman her name is Jade who is very beautiful; her life was changed after

the car accident. The change is happened in her beauty, manner, style and job. Her life was a journey from illusion to reality.

The terms "illusion" and "reality" are going to be discussed according to Friedman's story. The story is full of misconception and contrast as they are illustrated next papers.

In concerning about illusion different themes are discussed as an ideal woman, unreal friends and lovers and being fashion model (behavior, style and the job) which they are contrasted with themes of reality as faith in Jesus, real friendship and the real lover. Moreover, the paper shows the contrast between eternity of life and an ever beauty which they are illusion of human beings and death and faded beauty which they are the reality of human beings.

Finally, the both terms are clarified with the findings that depending on different references.

B-The plot

"Beautiful scars" is a short story written by Aileen Friedman. The story was written by using the first narrator technique. It was about a very beautiful female her name was Jade. She was from South Africa a town city called Cape. Jade had all the elements of beauty; she owned silky olive complexion blond hair, dark blue eyes as the nose shaped perfectly and a rosebud mouth. Her legs miles length was within the standards of beauty as she had the most desired body that woman would die to get it.

Friedman's short story is full of contrast; the address itself is a contrast. The word "beautiful" means perfect thing or shape while "scars" means a trace of wound or ugly shape. Friedman uses this contrasted meaning to show from ugliness born the beauty. The life of her protagonist "Jade" in the beginning of the story is contrasted with her life after the car accident. In beginning, Jade was completely blind by her beauty and the world of appearance. She was selfish arrogant, and spoiled. She was living in illusion of ever beauty, but the accident has been opened her eyes on the truth. Jade realized the reality through the real friendship, real love relationship and through Jesus. Also, Friedman uses the theme death as a contrast of life and that is the reality of human who they are going to die. At the end, Jade had a lovely family and a beautiful son and finally she died leaving the world. The journey of Jade's life between the illusion and the reality is shaped the false conception and the real one.

Section Two

The meaning of illusion

According to the Oxford English dictionary "illusion" means an example of a wrong or misunderstanding awareness of a sensory experience. In other words, the person has either deceptive appearance or impression or false idea or belief. Human beings are caught between illusion and reality, as the mind stay in the subjective world of ideas and concepts, but physically one exists in the world of objective reality that cannot be directly experienced or fully understood. So Illusion is defined as a perception that represents what is perceived in a way different from the way it is in reality. An illusion is a false mental image or conception which may be a misinterpretation of a real appearance or may be something imagined. It may be pleasing, harmless, or even useful [Stein, 1982, p. 662].

So Friedman has showed the false conception of Jade, who was the main character in Friedman's short story "beautiful scars". In fact Jade has false conception about her ever beauty, about her modeling career, about her relationships and her behavior. Before the car accident she was living in illusion but after the accident, Jade was completely changed and perceived the reality.

II-The illusion of ideal women

Friedman embodied her female character as having perfect body. She resembled her as a goddess. In her short story "beautiful scares" the central character Jade was possessing with her perfect body as she taught from her childhood through the beauty she was going to gain the fame and fortune. In fact Friedman criticized the media; wherever Jade was, the media went crazy. According to Reiser and Gresy, The media is a key socialization agent [Reiser, Gresy, 2011]

The media was chasing Jade wherever she was going; they run after her to take her photos showing on the cover of their magazine. So, most of the images of ideal women in the magazines come from fashion world. So the illusion of ideal women as portrayed far away from the reality in fact she was very close to imaginary female. In other words Jade's perfect beauty was looking like a Goddess that was imaginary figure. According to Durkhiem ideals are found far away from reality and women' magazine promoted for creating ideals as they are just imaginary shapes [Durkhiem.1911:117]. Susan Brownmiller pointed out that women become as "obsessive concentration" and they try to look a part that does

not exist. In fact Brownmiller has blamed the media to promote those imaginary shapes of women.[Brownmiller. 1985:25] In Friedman 's beautiful scares, the sexism is very clear when Jade described her perfect ideal body by saying that she had the most desired body that woman would die to get it. Researcher Viren Swami and colleagues found that sexism presents where beauty ideals and practices are firmly addicted and followed [Swami et al. 2010:367].

So, we found that all Jade's priority was her body; she did not eat actual meal in order to maintain zero percent body fat and if it happened choose actual meal she would either feign a lack of appetite or making up any feeble excuse. In many cases, she was vomiting the few bites of food into the toilet [p: 10]. Consequently, jade was maintaining her body within the standard of beauty, thinking less about negative effect on her health as eating disorder. Moreover, the idea of having a baby one day was disgusted her because it was going to destroy her "goddess –like body" [p: 13] Friedman showed the beauty within human's standards is not natural or it cannot be got without one interferes to shape it and this is the illusion.

III-Illusion in making real relationships as friends and lovers

Those ideals women created their personality for the consumer and strengthen the sexist idea that one gender "male" is superior to the other "female". [Eggins and Iedema. 1997: 189] In the same way Jade's personality developed for the consumer's benefit by explaining her life as a fashion model spending her nights in Nightclubs to watch every man's eyes to catch one of them to have pleasure with him. She always won the challenge games and the other model would go either empty hand or with second prize. The behavior of Jade was instructed according to the magazine's inspiration. [Eggins and Iedema. 1997: 189]

The ideology of patriarchal society that treats women as an object is very clear especially when she is speaking about the man who is going to spend one night with her that he had won the trophy woman for the night, and he counted himself lucky. In other words, all Jade's relationships with men were not serious “Human behavior has often been explained in terms of unidirectional causation, in which behavior is depicted as either being shaped and controlled by environmental influences or drives by internal dispositions.” [Bandura 1999:23] Levy shows that the objectification of male gaze is internalized by numerous women that

spread through "a raunch culture", driving them to take part in self objectification with willingness, falsely believing that it is a type of woman strengthening and sexual freedom. [Levy. 2005]

Friedman describes the world of fashion model is empty. There was no real friendship in the world of fashion model so we find Jade's opinion on the other models by saying that "every model girl was competition to her" [p: 9]. She also said there was, of course, a lot of "envy" from the other models [p: 9]. Jade was aware about the falsehood that surrounded her life. When she won the title of the Miss World, she said that "the other contestants surrounded her with hugs, kisses, false adoration and congratulations"[p: 9]. She confessed that "the lack of female friends did not have any impact on me at the time"; she was" sadly under the misconception that everyone loved her". Consequently, Jade's misconception about being loved by people around her in concern men, is far away from reality.

IV-Illusion about being fashion model (behavior, style and the job).

To shed light on the modeling career means that someone always touches the female body. [P: 10] Jade was disliked of being touched by other "strange hand'. She perceived that her career was not good choice but she appraised it paradoxically as good one. So jade's evaluation to her job was positive especially when she met the eight years old girl. In spite of Jade felt something wrong with her career as being a fashion model but she was living in self-deception. According to Gur&Sackeim referred to the self deception that truth is stored in unconscious mind where as the falsehood is stored in conscious mind and these are the different presentation of reality.[Gur&Sackeim 1979:37] Also the self deception is the way of convincing the self that a lie is the true.[Kunda 1990; Mele 1997; Pyszczynski& Greenberg 1987]

In fact Jade had reached to the degree to fake her fame. Sometimes she was telling any person where she was going or she would phone the newspapers under a false name giving details where she was going. In fact, she was being possessed by the fame. The astonished opinion of the young girl has been reflected the fact that being a miss world is not very important as being loved and in return one would love others. In other words, is not essential to wear a crown in order to be beautiful but the essential thing is the ethics. Through the accidents of the story, Jade had a very bad mood. She disliked ordinary people; according to her they are

lower than her. When she saw the Captain in first time, her impression towards him was he had not had a bath since the last seventeenth century. Also her reaction towards the Captain's son was very bad. In spite of the Captain's son was looking pretty and he had a very good manner; he shook Jade's hand warningly when they were introduced to each other, but he was still a fisherman to her opinion. So once again the idea of being disliked to be attached by a strange hand was aroused again, after the shaking hand with the fisher boy, she asked for hand sanitizer. Friedman frames her main character as being selfish and wants to show those famous people as shallow characters. Specifically, they are ugly even if they have beautiful face. Bobbie Shafer stated that "ugly" is a word that defines a person's action, feelings, and lifestyle. [Shafer. 2009]Kahlil Gibran said that Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart.

Also, being a fashion model as a career, it is not good choice, Jade explained through her story that she must have a shoot in different climate conditions, positions and places. She gave the details of the place in harbor where she was going to have a shoot for commercial trade; the weather was windy and hot. In such situation was very difficult and uneasy to have a shoot. This proves Jade's misconception of her career. Ashley Mears is a Sociologist, stated "There's a lot of misleading conceptions about what the modeling life is like. This is a bad job" and she added "It is uncertain work. It is unpredictable, it is insecure, and you don't get benefits like health care or a retirement package." [Mears. 2011] In addition of Jade's bad mood and manner and selfishness, she was also jealous kind of a person that when she saw the fisherman in the advertisement was looking handsome, she annoyed. She did not want anyone taking the fame lights away from her. Consequently, the world of fame and lights is a world of illusion.

Section Three

A-I-The meaning of reality

As the plot being developed by Friedman, Jade's life was going to change after her car accident. In fact that accident was opened her eyes to confess the reality. In Wikipedia, "reality" means "perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward reality." Jade was going to see the facts and how she was living in illusion. As Mr. Kumar from "Life of Pi film" said "There are no grounds for going beyond a scientific explanation of reality and no

sound reason for believing anything but our sense experience." [Life of Pi, p.27]

The left side of Jade's body and her back are burnt with second and third degree burns. The skin of her left arm is burnt and her luscious hair is gone. The imperfect beauty is the reality of human beings. "My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents and I lay them both at his feet." [Mahatma Gandhi]

Jade is going to find the reality through the religion, real friendship, and making a family.

II-the reality in faith in Jesus

Jesus said "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" [Bililca.2011:6]

Jade, after being burned, she was left alone in the hospital. She realized her loneliness because no one visited her no friends', no lovers, no family and no media chasing her. And that was the first time, has been known the reality of being alone. She noticed that other patients have been visited by number of people or other patient had a loved one who sitting beside his or her bed unlike Jade had not seen or heard from anyone sincethe accident.[p:25] when jade's bandages were left and saw herself for the first time after the accident , she shocked and sobbed for her body being damaged. He nurse, Mary, was continually taking Jade to other burnt patients who they are children of different ages. When jade saw all those children with different burns in different places of their body, she disgusted. Because jade was not used to see imperfect people, she did not want to see those children or stay with them. Among those disfigured children, one girl with black hair begun to be a friend with Jade. At this point Jade was completely broken, she was lonely and imperfect but all that have changed through the real friendship between Jade and Leah. Through that friendship, Jade had known the way of Jesus. Leah was used to be in the hospital chapel, everyday pray to God. After a while, Jade joined Leah to the chapel, both prayed to their God and Jade had felt relaxed since the horrible accident. Actually, Jade found the relief through the faith as the faith itself gave her the power to continue her life. Friedman wanted to show the contrast between Jade's life before the accident and after it as her character was going to see the reality through the faith. In spite of those children who were in the burn unit, were ugly because of their scars but they were beautiful because

their innocence as they were always keeping smile that situations gave Jade the hope." I closed my eyes and spoke to Jesus, not knowing at all whether what I was saying was wrong or right. I just told Him how unhappy I was and asked Him why I had to live like this. Strangely when I was finished talking to Him, I felt warm and refreshed, as if I had unloaded a burden I had been carrying around for eternity" [p:30] Before Leah was going to leave the hospital, Leah's father gave Jade the Bible marked with important scriptures to help her to find Jesus. Then, Leah gave Jade her small booklet that helps her to read the Bible. Jade continually goes to the chapel but her prayers were about the children who were burnt and were not about herself. This was another contrast between selfishness and humbleness and between illusion in temptation world and the reality in faith world.

III-The real friendship

It is the first time that Jade has a real friendship far away from envy as when she was in modeling career. Her friendship with Leah is very strong because they share the same pain of burning scars. They go to the hospital chapel everyday making their prayers. When Leah finally left the hospital, Jade felt loneliness. It was very hard to her to stay away from her friend. Jade confessed that the people who were in modeling career, were not her friends they did not visit her or ask about her even her agent had visited her once. So that is the contrast between the real friendship and imaginary one. [P: 31] "I only knew how to be a spoilt, selfish, self-absorbed career obsessed perfectly beautiful model."

Jade and Leah continued to see each other, going to the Church. Merwyn and Molly were Leah's parents; they were very kind people to Jade. "I was overwhelmed by the friendliness and love I received from everyone. Why did it have to take such a major catastrophe in my life for me to find the Truth? But I had found it and it was exhilarating." [P: 33]

IV- The real lover

In Mauritius, she met the fisherman again, his name was Markl. Jade surprised of being recognized by him. In fact, he was in love with Jade but she did not know as he knew about her accident. They have a conversation about different subjects including her accident whenever Jade talked about her accident; she felt a kind of relaxation and releasing the burden that she had. They begun to meet in the Church, Jade begun to feel that Markl gave her too much care he did not care about being imperfect "I shuddered at his touch – not that it was unpleasant, it was

very pleasant – but he touched my ugly scars without hesitation, without concern that I was imperfect" [P: 39] Jade's relationship with Markl became so deep and spending all her day with him and his father Estiban. She began to think about him and she was in love with him. Friedman wanted to show that even if a woman is less perfect, she has the chances to find the real love as Jade and Markl. "I was finally in love." [P: 42] Markl also confessed to her that he was in love with her since the last time of her shooting. He asked her to marry him and she agreed. Friedman showed that Jade was changed when she had known the way of Jesus, be Christian means that marriage is the true love not different relationships with men. Wilson and Musick showed that religiously homogamous couples are more likely to be married those religiously heterogamous couples. [Wilson and Musick, 1996] accordingly, Jade before to be religious, did not think about marriage as she was able to get any man by her perfect beauty, but after being religious, Jade wants to have a family even if she is imperfect. So, faith plays an important role in Jade's life to see the reality of the life. Specifically, Jade and Markl have the same faith they attend the same Church and they are religiously homogamous couples. In the wedding day all her friends were there Leah and her parents. Jade has a family now, real family and real friends. She has a baby boy, Kylar, from Markl, all were living happily. Friedman ended her short story with Jade's death, she was died by larynges failure, lifted her husband and her son alone. The end of the story shows the reality of human beings who they are going to die leaving this world behind which is but illusion.

Section Four

1-Examples of Xmodel Girls with their confessions

Jessica Schiffer is an x model, sharing her own story of being a model, she is talking about the reality of modeling career which is not glamorous as being thought by others. First thing that she faced of losing weight because most of modeling agencies and especially the "good one" do not accept girls who do not have suitable weight for modeling career. So she need to lose more weights "36-inch hips" is not matched. She ended with eating disorder. She continued that she did not eat anything and if she ate little bit, she would purge it, and that is exactly what had happened with Friedman's character "Jade", as it is explained in section two "The illusion of ideal woman". Moreover, she talked about the apartments of model girls are a breeding ground of sex and drugs. As the

shooting places were terrible no one care whether the climate was freezing or rainy. Finally, she confessed that she did not have real life but illusion one.

Sara Ziff is another model girl, she talks about the "ugly truth of fashion model behavior'. She talked about Sexual abuse and systematic theft, as well as model career encourages dismissive, misogynistic attitude. So "nudity" is the most important theme of shooting. For instance, Anand Jon who was a designer was found a guilty of rap. Finally, she asserts that model life is an awful life.

Cameron Russell, one of the most successful Victoria's Secret models, once said, "Models have the thinnest thighs and the shiniest hair and the coolest clothes, and they're the most physically insecure women on the planet."

Those examples reveal the truth of the model girl's life and in relating to Friedman's story; it can be found that Jade's life before the accident was similar to both Jessica and Sara.

Erica McDonald was another model girl revealed the truth through telling her story in the article titled "The Life of An International Fashion Model Is A Glamorous Lie -- Trust Me, I Used to Be One." She explained that although people express the modal career is an excellent one, but the fact of being very bad career was hidden with fake reality of those thinner young girls. They have unhealthy life, as Friedman showed that when Jade was keeping her body zero percent fat. [P: 10] They have controlled life as Jade was controlled by the agent who had determined the place and the time of taking a shoot. They have negative thoughts, as Jade had never thought to have a baby because it was going to destroy her body.[P: 13] They ventured a lot as it was very clear in Friedman's story. In addition, Donald talked about other things as eating disorders, sexual assault, financial manipulation, loneliness and superficial interactions; which those things were showed clearly in Friedman's story as it was explained in the paper. Accordingly, Donald confessed that all the model girls whom she worked with, they were unhappy but just pretending. Finally, Donald got out of modeling career. All these examples are revealing the ugly reality of model's life and they were deceived by modeling career.

2-The findings

1. Friedman used the contrast between the life of illusion and the life of reality through different themes that are illustrated previously.

2. Illusion means the false concept or idea or wrong belief about something whereas reality means perceptions beliefs and attitudes towards reality. The illusion and reality are showed clearly.
3. Firstly, Jade before the car accident had false concept about being ever beauty; the beauty will never be changed as a goddess. Secondly, she had false concept about friendships in the world of appearance in the modeling career. Thirdly, she had false concept about making love relationships in the world of temptations or only to prove that her beauty was being irresistible by men. Finally, she had false concept of having perfect job as being a model which means that strange hands were going to touch her body constantly, or having a shot session in different places and situations.
4. After the accident, first, Jade perceives the reality through real friendship with Leah, second, through her faith with Jesus, third through real love relationship with Markl, fourth and finally, in making a family.
5. Friedman shows the reality through the death that the story is ended with the Jade's death; and it is contrasted with being a goddess that has ever life. Death is the reality of human beings' mortality.

Conclusion

Most people are living in illusion. They don't think or care about others. They are selves conceited. Friedman's short story is the example of living in illusion. The protagonist "Jade" was very self conceited, selfish, arrogant and unkind. She was living her life by following the temptation. But after she made care accident and because she became an ordinary person "less perfect", her eyes were opened on the reality. She changed to be kind, humble, have a faith to Jesus, and care to others. Her catastrophe changes her life to be better than before and to find the truth. Finally, Friedman ended her story with the other truth of human being which is death. Death is the reality of the life unlike beauty is faded when people have got old so ever beauty is the illusion of the life. The theme of religion is very clear in Friedman's short story as faith in God is only reality that human should follow and anything out of the faith is completely illusion.

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