

Zadie Smith's 'On Beauty': A Novel on Racism, Discrimination and Exploitation

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to research the major theme of Racism and also to research the problem of Exploitation happening with the black race in America. It also aims to research the exploitative and racial relation of Americans with that of the Haitian region as well as the role of American Educational institutions in aggravating the problem of Racism and Discrimination in Zadie Smith astonishing satirical work 'On Beauty'. This novel deals with the issues of the underprivileged in the America and how they are indirectly denied the education, a right to get educated which should be available to every citizen despite his or her socio-economic and racial position. 'On Beauty' was published in 2005. It was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and is the winner of Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, 2006. Here also like her earlier masterpiece 'White Teeth', Smith follows the style named by British Critic James Wood as Hysterical Realism to tackle the problem of racism and underprivileged. 'Beauty' derives its title from the essay of well-known American professor named Elaine Scarry titled 'On Beauty and Being Just'. Even though the title of the novel may be 'On Beauty', but it primarily deals with the ever-present air of discrimination and racism in the America, the country which has long been associated with the clashes of two races, where the conflicting events of racism come to surface from time to time in new and in popular culture and art forms like paintings and majorly in the form of rap, a song genre primarily associated with the black race. Smith presents us with the tale that deals with the Belsey family who is constituted of Howard Belsey of Britain and his black wife of America and their mixed-race children namely Jerome, Zora and Levi. It also deals with conservative Monty Kipps of the Kipps family who oppose the education of the underprivileged blacks in Wellington University and other black characters who bear the pain of discrimination. Thus the novel is also said to be taking inspiration from the idea outlined by the great Liberal English Fiction writer Edward Morgan Forster's magnum opus 'Howards End' which tackles the idea of social conventions. 'On Beauty' is also the terse satirical literary work on the conservative policies of the elite Universities which go against the idea of 'Education to all'. It not just deals with the differences in the races but also the reaction of one race to the culture of another and the mental trauma dealt by underprivileged black youngsters in the land where education and respect to them is the distant dream.

Nelson Mandela once truly said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." This former South African president has written his famous book named "Long Walk to Freedom" in which he has told about the struggle the black man faces in the land filled with the discrimination. His words are valuable and every professor agrees with it. But in her novel "On Beauty" Zadie Smith literally through the means of fiction brings out the ground reality of the policies of the well-known universities in United

States which are in the total opposition of the Mandela's believes. She uses the example of the fictional Wellington University to highlight that in States the education is the powerful weapon but only for the privileged few. She wants to show that racism is not talked about openly but it still is has continue to persist in the hearts of the white individuals inside not just the Educational Institutions but also in the public life as well as in the Americas attitude towards other black places like Haiti. Smith is probably one of the most critically acclaimed novelists of the 21st century but also has in her favour the wide readership. It is a fact that her debut novel has made her a literary sensation but her 2005 published '*On Beauty*' has played a major role to keep her place of honour permanent among the contemporary novelist. Since its publication the novel has got lot of attention and it was shortlisted for the 2005 Man Booker Prize on 8th September 2005. Her work has been bestowed with the Anisfield Book Award, The Commonwealth Writers' Best Book Award [Eurasia Section] and was selected by New York Times as one of the 10 Best Books of 2005. Zadie Smith was born Sadie Adeline Smith on 25th October 1975 in Brent, London in England to the Jamaican mother and English father.

Racism is ever present but no one talks about it. And those who talk in terse offensive manner are labelled as Racist. The things that makes this work *On Beauty* a work of importance is in the hidden fact that it tells us that Racism is the fact that is felt even though it is not straight forwardly talked, by the black who live in America. Another contemporary Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, with whom Smith has had many discussions regarding the problems of the contemporary world, has written a very good dialogue in her well known work named '*Americanah*' which aptly points the sheer helplessness of black people in being unprivileged : " Why must we always talk about race anyway? Can't we just be human beings? And professor hunk replied – that is exactly what white privilege is, that you can say that. Race doesn't really exist for you because it has never been a barrier. Black folks don't have that choice." White privilege can be defined as the privilege that exists in the society that benefits the white people over the other non – white people in social, political and the economic conditions. In Smiths novel *On Beauty* she points out exactly the same thing. The issue of the privileged and the underprivileged which has been not just present in the America all through the land but also in the great universities policies which are only open for the fortunate few. She fuses the issue of racism with the weak economic conditions of the blacks who live in America and also come from the other nearby poor nations like Haiti as well. She depicts in *On Beauty* that discrimination is practiced not just by the whites but also by the elite blacks like Monty Kipps, an antagonist in the novel who is shown as the conservative and does not believe in helping the poor black youngster like Carl to afford the university education. He exploits the innocent the native people by buying their authentic native art and become economically strong in America. Smith wants to suggest that the black people who have succeeded in America have failed to help the people of their own race to develop and gain respect. He himself has drowned so much in the respect that he has completely forgotten that his people who are not as fortunate need the respect too and that it is his duty to help them considered the great struggles of black hero's Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela etc. To put it in more apt words, Black American Minister Benjamin Hooks has said, '*Black men who have succeeded have an obligation to serve as role models for the young men entrapped by a vicious cycle of poverty, despair and hopelessness.*' Sir Monty Kipps is a Caribbean- British intellectual. He is not just the famous academician but also has published various famous books which adds up to Howard Belsey's misery and frustration. Monty Kipps is the intellectual enemy of Howard Belsey. While Monty Kipps is the Conservative, Howard Belsey is from the Liberal side. Kipps and Howard have opposite beliefs. They both never agree on anything and least the works of the great painter Rembrandts. Monty Kipps has two children namely Michael Kipps and Victoria Kipps. Monty Kipps is the respectful and religious man in the social and the academic circle but he is not faithful to his wife Charlene Kipps who is very sensitive and knows more about

the art than him. She is never bought in the outer circle by Monty. He is invited to talk from England in the Wellington which makes Howard angry.

Smith has clearly said that the novel *On Beauty* is based loosely on the Howard's End but the things that sets this novel apart from the old work is that the already existing socioeconomic discrimination is further intensified by the issue of race and racial discrimination as well as exploitation. The two main families i.e. Belsey and the Kipps are nearly of the black race except the Belsey being of the half white from the side of Howard. Even though the similarities the two are of the totally different political ideologies and social ideologies including the upliftment of the poor black youngsters like Carl, Cho, Felix and others who regularly face the torments of racism and discrimination. Both rival families belong to the well earned, privileged with the free access of best Wellington education to them. But Smith here says that blacks have no idea what the poor young of their own race are going through. Smith liberally uses the satire to point out this rift, the stratification which lies between same black races of different economic position. There is also the parental drift shown by Smith, between the young and the aged generation especially at the start of the novel between Howard Belsey and his son Jerome Belsey based on the political ideologies. Although Smith has always tackled the mainstream issues of societies like Racism, Discrimination, and Exploitation etc. But she has always included the theme of the issue of misunderstanding between the parents and children. Jerome loves his father but his father comes to hate him because Jerome has gone to live with the Kippses and is totally bent on becoming a staunch Christian, something that liberal Howard hates to digest. The rift happens also by the issue of race. Howard is a white British man and Monty Kipps is the Black man which also causes the opposition between them to increase. Although love is the biggest force in the universe and is said that love does not see who is Black and who is white but Smith in her work challenges the popular belief when she shows the fights and arguments happening between Howard and his black wife Kiki based on the issue of race, even though they have always loved each other and regardless of the opposition of Howards father, have married. Smith starts by giving certain e-mails which Jerome sends to his father Howard although Howards hates him and Monty Kipps so much that he never replies to Jerome. One of the e-mails Jerome sends to his father reads. "I love living here it's the different universe. The house is just wow – early Victorian, a terrace assuming looking outside but massive inside- but there's still a kind of humility that really appeals to me – almost everything white." Smith gives the correct picture of Monty Kipps by giving the description of his house in England which by Jerome. A Black family living in the White Victorian House depicts that Monty and his family no longer consider themselves parallel to the poor blacks living on the streets. That they are too good for their own people. Although Jerome is a innocent boy attracted to the Kippses new way of living and sends the following e-mails only to describe his father how Monty Kipps lives and looks, his white father takes his mails otherwise and thinks that his own son his belittling his white father and telling him what he lacks when compared to Monty Kipps. Following mails like "And he is huge! He's got two inches on you at least." Howard takes this internally as the racial belittlement by his own son but is shown never speaking about it to his black wife Kiki. Although Racism is connected with the word Race, Ali Rattansi argues that they are to be viewed more differently and studied in the more dynamic way rather than the rigid view accepted by people. This idea of how confusing the ideas of Race and Racism is can be perfectly to be found in the words of Ashley Montagu's book named *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The fallacy of Race*. Here she writes the following about this subject: 'An important subject about which clear thinking is generally avoided.' Rattansi says 'Racism is not easy to define.' Rattansi's words could not be challenged as it is really hard to define in clear terms who is being a racist and who is just talking without any racist intention in mind. For example the excerpt from the novel says 'Kiki's face resolved itself into impassive blackness. It was the sphinx –like expression that

sometimes induced their American friends to imagine more exotic prominence for her than she actually possessed.' Kiki's friends could be making these comparisons without any racist thing in mind whatsoever. Thus in this instance Smith wants to suggest that not all the time thinking about colour is being racist. Sometimes it can be a simple comparison in a well intentioned manner i.e. Kiki was from Florida but her impassive black expression that reminded them of something oriental like the Sphinx statue's facial expressions. But here too she, like in all her satirical works, left some scope on the readers to give the answer of who is the culprit and who is not. Is always a white person be seen as the one doing discrimination? To this question she herself shows by what she means by this. It relates to the incident between Kiki Belsey and the newly appointed maid servant Monique. Monique has migrated from Haiti's poor life to America in hope of getting a job and hence she is ready to work at Belsey household for any meagre amount of money like four dollar, the amount for which little to nothing can be bought for survival in US. Smith writes, 'Monique stood where she was, clutching her zip. Kiki stayed in her strange moment, nervous of what this black woman thought of another black woman paying her to clean.' Smith wants to show that the historical narrative of White Master exploiting Black servant has long been present and that narrative still lives in Kiki's mind. Kiki is struggling with the thought of what the new poor Haitian maid is thinking about her, is she thinking about her as the helping women who is giving her the employment or as the exploiting women giving her small sum to clean big house taking advantage of Monique's poverty filled desperation? Even though Kiki hires the maid but it does not feel normal to her to see one black woman the servant of another black women. It is not that there are the racial clashes between Kiki and outer people but also with her own husband, Howard too. Howard and Kiki have married each other despite the different in race because they love each other. Smith suggests that although love is capable of transcending any kind of differences may that be race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion and any kind of differences that divide, but in the times of clashes the differences between two people are bound to come up. Just like that when there are the marital arguments between Howard and Kiki, it is shown that the race issue always comes up regardless of the original cause of argument. For example it is shown in this incident when Kiki is arguing with Howard and in the fit of rage he says the following to her, 'I want to understand what is it you think we've done to you. Your family. What is it we have done? Have we deprived you of something?' Howard Belsey, form this questions to his black wife, suggests that he and his white family are still the masters and the black relatives of their are still inferiors 'the ones who can be deprived.' Kiki and Howard love each other but the attachment fades for some time when the races come into the arguments. Just as Howard asserts his white race, Kiki too asserts her domination in return. According to the plot of 'On Beauty' the big house that Howard Belsey lives in is inherited from the Kiki's side. Smith includes lot of images to suggest how Kiki is asserting indirectly to Howard that he should be respectful and thankful of the Kiki's side as the house they live in came to the Belsey's form her lineage. Here is the image of the photographs arranged by Kiki carefully which suggest her supremacy: 'After the children come four generation of Simmond's family line. These are placed in *triumphant deliberate sequence*: Kiki's great-great grandmother, a house slave; great- grandmother, a maid; and then her grandmother, a nurse. It was Nurse Lily who inherited the whole house from a benevolent white doctor with whom she always worked for twenty years, back in Florida. An inheritance on this scale changes everything for a poor family in America: It makes them middle class.' Smith makes a liberal use of effective literary tools like Irony and Satire without overdoing it. For which an example may be taken as following, 'A rogue white arm clinches what was then an extremely neat waist... this arm cut off at the elbows is Howard's. This is the picture when Kiki is in important even and the white arm holding Kiki humorously suggest the habits of the white people to form the colonies and take control of the Caribbean and Haitian lands which are not theirs. Their habit of dominating the blacks is outlined in this satirical image of Kiki.

Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th President of United States once said, “*Education is the key to opportunity in our society, and the equality of educational opportunity must be birthright of every citizen.*” Smith has always suggested that political words are always ideal sounding but the social institutions and the systems leaders talk about are always filled with corruption, discrimination and many a times racism. Again to highlight the difference between ideal equal world and the discriminatory real world she includes in her novel an image of Howard and the Wellington Universities Humanities department: ‘A large photo of Howard, towering over other members of the Humanities faculty as they arrange themselves tidily around Nelson Mandela.’ As already stated Mandela believed that education is most powerful weapon to change the world but he also believed that no discrimination should be done on any basis in imparting the education as it is everyone’s right to get educated but Smith wants to suggest that same university which poses with the man of such great belief has age old education imparting policies which are purely based on discrimination. *E Pluribus Unum* was the motto proposed for the Great Seal of the United States by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. It is the Latin phrase on the seal of US. It was the reminder of the America’s bold attempt to make one unified nation form people of various races and origins and cultures. But it sounds tragic that such is the motto of the country which was and still continues to be the chief abode of Racism, Discrimination and Exploitation of the weak. It has become the instrument of irony and satire. No one believes that the equality exists and black kids take their blackness as the source of joke which is outlined in the following incident, when Howard is on a way to bring back heart- broken Jerome from the Kipps household in England , he asks Levi if he has any message for his older brother and Levi says, ‘ Yeah... tell him, said Levi smiling turning to Howard..., ‘tell him, “I’m just another black man caught up in a mix, tryna make a dollah outta fifteen cents!”’ When taken in context the chief cause of the rivalry between the two families, it was because of the difference in the culture. Here while Kipps family are staunch orthodox people, the Belsey families have the American liberalism filled in them. Howard has the issue of race in his heart and because in his family everyone is black except him, he tries his best not to offend anyone black based on race. But on the other hand Monty being black himself [Caribbean origin] talks totally against his own people to gain the favour of the fellow whites and also given the fact that he is conservative. Monty Kipps believed that the very concept of equality was myth. Monty suggested that the minority groups too often want the equal right they had not earned, that the very fact that they were the minority did not make them eligible for any help. Zadie Smith may be satirical in suggesting that Kipps family, especially Monty’s son Michael believed that there is no such thing of being black as an identity but just a matter of pigment. Smith pictures Monty as a sort of black man with the beliefs of white. Howard being a liberal hates him and he starts to hate his elder son Jerome too when he starts to tend towards religion and loose the much valued liberalism of Belsey’s. On Beauty although Race and Discrimination as the main theme but there is also present the undercurrent of male domination over and inability of understanding the female emotions as well as their children’s emotions. Smith includes the incident of Jerome and his mother listening to the tune of Mozart in a concert. She is unable to understand the highly genius and elite music but when she looks at her son Jerome, she is surprised to find that her black son is able to understand every bit of the music and is crying as a result of being able to understand the pain hidden in the highly complex composition. She is filled with Pride and imaginarily starts advising the imaginary mothers of young black men to get them educated so that the identity of inferiority that America assigns to them based on their blackness could be washed away. Smith writes, “Yet surely no one among these white people could be more musical than Jerome, who Kiki now noticed was crying.... Kiki felt moved and then another feeling interceded: Pride. I don’t understand, she thought, but he does. A young black man of intelligence and

sensibility, and I have raised him. After all, how many young black men would come to the event like this? Kiki continued her imaginary speech to the imaginary guild of the black American mothers, 'And *there's no big secret, not at all, you just need to have faith, I guess and you need to counter the dismal self image that black men receive as their birthright from America – that's essential – and I don't know... get involved in after school activities, have books around the house.*' Another incident included to touch upon the image of a young black man in the mind of white Americans is also of the concert. When Zora mistakenly takes the Disc player of the black man named Carl who she does not know yells at her from behind to stop her. Smith writes, 'Hey! Hey! But there was no names to put on the end of Hey and a six foot two athletic black man shouting Hey in a dense crowd does not create easiness wherever he goes.' Carl is the poor youngster who has to drop out of the college because he had no more money to continue. Carl has lot of talent and love the Rap style of music. In his Discman he has lot of the songs of the black rap artists. Considered that some of the best poetry has been that of the social struggles and discrimination, Smith comparison of the rap musicians to the modern day poets seem appropriate as in their verses they often talk about the social injustice toward the black men. Rap verses have often played a major role besides the mainstream black literature, to highlight the rampant racism in America. Smith has given the special attention to the importance of poetry in her novel. She has stressed over the idea of why the poetic form is one of the most important genre when one is wants his voice to be heard. Besides comparing the rap musicians to the modern day poets she has also stressed it in the following conversation between Kiki Belsey and Charlene Kipps. "Mrs Kipps said 'but I do love poetry. Everything I cannot say and I never hear said. The bit I cannot touch? Kiki could not tell at first what kind of question that was or wheatear she was meant to answer it, but a moment's pause proved rhetorical. 'I find that bit in poems' said Mrs Kipps. Kiki stopped. The same time that had distracted Mrs Kipps distracted her. Just passing by the gate five white teenage girls... where going by. They were all speaking at once. 'There is such a shelter in each other, repeated Mrs Kipps.' Here both Charlene is talking about her love for poetry. She stresses on the fact that one in the society cannot say some controversial things like racism and fear of racism in the straightforward manner but in poem it is all said but indirectly. She and Kiki talk and feel good. When she and Kiki see the group of five only white girls going on the road across them, Charlene says the poetic line she loves the most, i.e. there is such a shelter in each other. It means that when she sees the white race girls she knows that they are feeling safe and at home and feeling the support of each other. She wants to stress that no matter how mixed up America becomes with different race; she will always feel more secure with other people of her race by her side. It is nit that she hates white, it is just that she feels noting common with the white people. Hence she loves poems to recite all the feeling in the indirect manner. Another instance of discrimination can be seen when Carl comes at the wedding anniversary party at which most of the white people are present, a thing that even Levi hates. When Howard opens the door and sees the black Carl, he stoops from opening the door fully and speaks through the gap. When Carl says that his son Levi had actually invited him, Howard says the following words: 'Look' said Howard rudely, I don't mean to be rude, but Levi shouldn't really have been inviting his ----- friends.' Howard gives the pause after the word his but it clear that he meant 'Black'. He did not say the word in order to prevent any offence to the black man. Carl leaves with an anger and says to himself that he should have never come there. Besides this there are many incidents include by Smith in the part where Howard and Kiki are holding their party. For example in the party Howard tries his best to avoid his academic enemy he hates the most, i.e. Sir Monty Kipps who in the party gathers all the crowd because of his fame in the Academic fields. Clair Malcolm who is friend of Howard's is in awe of Kipps and praises him, saying to Howard, 'See how he works the room? He is everywhere somehow.' And Howard replies to her praise of Monty by comparing Monty to something that can be no less than an offensive racist term, Yeah like a Plague.' Plague in England was also called a 'Black Death' which makes it clear why he calls him a Plague who

is somehow everywhere. Contrary to the hard-core academicians like Howard and Monty, she is a poet first and then the academician later. Hence she approaches Monty Kipps and says to him and Howard alike, 'All your silly ideological battles... 'she said...' and then grinned at him foolishly, her lips pulling away from her... gums to reveal her expensive American teeth. 'You both know that they don't really matter. The country has got bigger fish to fry now.' By the word 'bigger fish' Claire means problems like racism, discrimination and exploitation etc. She thinks that the rivalry between the two academic on their view about the paintings of Rembrandt are useless issues, the issues by which no help will be done to the weaker section struggling with more relevant problems. Her views match with the view of Howard's eldest son Jerome who in the start of his mail says to his father that 'most of the hate in the world is just the misplaced energy.' The same energy in Clair's view could be used to solve the problem shown in the text.

In the novel there is the unique relation shown between Carl and Zora Belsey. Zora meets Carl at the college swim complex. When she tells him that she is successfully pursuing her carrier in the Wellington he praises her in a funny way and gives the message that the black girls should study more hard. He says, 'Educated sister. Tats cool man- tats really- that's really an amazing thing right there, that's ... good for you, you are going the right way... that's the prize, education. We all gotta keep our eyes on the prize, we are gonna rise, right?' Carl affirms with the good opportunity that Zora is taking full advantage. He suggests that if the black race has to rise about the others in America then they must make best of every opportunity. But he further tells her about how people do not praise the young talent and discriminate in favour of famous people in the field by saying, 'And so anyway man it turns out that the main business of the Lacrimosa was by the guy Sussmayr... cos it's like the best thing in the Requiem and it made me think damn, you can be so close to the genius that it like lifts you up – it's like Sussmayr, this guy stepped up to the bat right, like a rookie and then he went and hit it out of the park – and all these people be trying to prove that its Mozart' coz that fits in with their idea of who can and who can't make music like this' He suggests to her that at least talent should be spared of any discrimination. Carl is a black man facing the discrimination and racism, thus he further adds, 'The future's another country man, said Carl mournfully and then the punch line seemed to come to him; his face surrendered to a smile. 'And I still aint got a passport.' He believes that future for unemployed black men like him will take another country because America has still not accepted him as one of their own and given him a chance to prosper. Smith further includes the poem On Beauty by Nick Laird, an author as well as Mrs Smith's husband, to stress the trauma of the sins committed by whites on the black and that one cannot just make a list of the sins because they are uncountable. Following are the one quartet from the mentioned poem:

"Speech is beautifully useless.

They are damned.

The beautiful know this.

They stand around unnatural as statuary."

Poem talks about the issue of racism and the most impactful is the first line, which says that no matter how much now the words are talked or written or sung about the horrendous crimes on the black people, these words and speeches will still be beautiful but useless. Black is beautiful but they are damned by the identity assigned to them by the American society. He compares them to the group of statues just existing around. Because of Howards betrayal of Kiki to a white women Professor Clair Malcolm, Kiki is certain that she is going to separate from Howard. She is aimlessly sitting by the road, crying. Her son Jerome calls her and says that she will deal with the problem as she is 'A Strong black women.' When they are talking a fire engine goes by Kiki and Jerome recognises it on the other side of the phone. Here Jerome is shown remembering that it was his childhood hypothetical moments when the white firemen saved the Belsey household. Smith has used the

image of white men who save peoples life and the other image of the white man who has destroyed the life of a black women. It is a paradox used by Smith. She is suggesting that a women heart is a women heart and has nothing to do with the race. Kiki feels betrayed in the two ways: One way by Howard Belsey and other way by a White man by marrying whom she sacrificed all her ambitions. Everyone coloured among the family of Belsey get the true taste of what the racism means in different way. Levi is the youngest of the family member. He is innocent but is different from his other two siblings in the sense that he does not believe in education and is rather interested in leading a free and independent lifestyle, hence he starts to work at the music store to earn his own money. Levi is happy to work on the Hip- Hop section of the music store but after some days when he hears that the white manager of the store is going to make them work full day on the Christmas day, he gets angry and decides to call the meeting to revolt against the manager. But when he holds the meeting it is shown that only the white kids attend the meeting. Smith by this wants to suggest that black kid could not be able to muster up the courage to revolt against the master. Bailey is the evil manager who takes advantage of Levi and pays him very less. When Bailey catches Levi leading the revolt for Christmas day against him he threatens Levi in the purely racist term, 'Don't- act- like-a-nigger – with – me- Levi, said Bailey in a whisper, each word with the momentum of its own, like darts he was throwing at targets.' manager further continues in these words to keep offending Levi. He says, 'Let me tell you something. I know where you are from, brother. I've said what I had to say, I aint saying no more. Now get you *black... back* in there and do some work.' Because of being racially abused so much Levi decides to quit the job and then wanders aimlessly on the streets, saddened by the harm done to him. He realises that he should not have rallied against the manager. Now he had no money and he had lost his sole identity without the money as his parents may be soon getting separated. When Levi come out of the store he is sidelined and interrupted by the group of Haitian street hawkers who sell the fake purse of big fashion brands and the pirated copies of the latest movies and songs. Levi is immediately attracted towards them and goes to them. Smith writes about how these Haitian youngsters leave an impression on the young boy. 'They stuck Levi as splendid beings, from quiet another planet than the one he had been in only five minutes ago- spring footed, athletic, carelessly loud, coal-black, laughing, immune to the frowns of Bostonian ladies passing with their stupid little dogs. Brothers.' The first word he remembers when he sees these people is Brothers from the lecture of his father and re-imagines it in different context. He thinks that he has found other people like him.

In the novel *On Beauty*, Zadie Smith has included a lot about Haiti and its relationship to American people. Haiti is the land that had often been hit with the natural disasters which cause the mass exodus of black people to America. Chronic instability, dictatorship and the strings of natural disasters in the recent decades have left it as the poorest nation in the Americas. Zadie Smith wants to tell that Haiti is so near to America but even after that no citizen of America hears about it. Haitian author Edwidge Danticat's words about Haiti solidify the intent of Smith. He says, "*I think Haiti is a place that suffers so much neglect that people only want to hear about it when it's at its extreme. And that's what they end up knowing about it.*" Levi only is shown reading about the struggle and exploitation happening in Haiti in a book. Even though he does not get the full picture of the issue of poor land, he still is tormented and struggled by the horrendousness of exploitations and harm done by one to another. In the novel there are many images shown which indirectly show about unrest. For ex Kiki is shown watching the TV where the unrest scene is being shown. Smith writes, 'Then remotely, the television was roused. Kiki watched, but could not hear, a wild gang of raggedy boys, in hand me down sportswear of wealthier countries than their own, carrier down a tropical back alley. Halfway between a tribal dance and a riot. They punched their fists in the air and seemed to sing. The next shot was the another boy, hurling a simple home-made firebomb. The camera followed its trajectory, showed an explosion rocking an

empty army jeep, which had already collided with a palm tree.’ Kiki is watching this and feels sad for the people like her and their weak socio-economic condition in Haiti as well as in America. She continually feels betrayed by her white husband infidelity to her. Because of the news scene and her betraying husband she comes to hate the whole notion of ‘whiteness’ and equates whiteness to betrayal and unfaithfulness and domination. She now thinks that coming in contact with white people means loss of one’s identity. She feels more lost and betrayed by the fact that even she knew all this she trusted and loved a white man and same thing happens what she feared. I.e. loss of identity. Following is the extract from the novel which makes it clear, “A little *white* women, ‘yelled Kiki, across the room, unable now to control herself. ‘A tiny little white woman I could fit her in my pocket. ... You don’t even notice it, you never notice. You think it’s normal. Everywhere we go, I’m alone in this ... this sea of white. I barely know any black folk anymore, Howie. My whole life is white. I don’t see any black folk unless they be cleaning under my feet in cafe in your... college. Or pushing a ... hospital bed through a corridor. I staked my life on you. And I have no idea anymore why I did that.” Zora Belsey after repeated attempts to get the admission into Professor Claire Malcolm’s poetry class gets the entry to attend. Prof. Malcolm takes all of her pupils to this Moroccan restaurant, which Smith points out, has not lost its identity in the ever-changing America. This restaurant is also the hotspot of the –poets and presenter to perform their words in front of everybody. Here everyone performs including Carl. Carl is appreciated for his lines more than that Haitian group of boys’ with whom Levi also performs. When Zora says to Levi that Carl was far better than those Haitian guys he replies, ‘That’s my boys, they got the suffering people behind them – that dude just got a dictionary, man.’ Smith has included a phrase called ‘Essence of Blackness’ when Levi describes how Felix, the leader of the Haitian group looks. ‘There are a few rare souls like Felix whose hands are as dry and cool as a stone. Levi wondered whether it was something to do with his blackness. Felix was blacker than any black man Levi ever met in his life. His skin was like a slate. Levi had this idea that he would never say out loud and that he knew didn’t make any sense, but anyway he had this idea that Felix was like the essence of blackness in some way. You looked at Felix and thought: This was all its all about, being this different; this is what white people fear and adore and want and dread.’ Smith shows that this ‘Essence of blackness’ is what white people have complex relation with, that the relation between two races is not simple but actually a complex phenomenon. They hate this blackness but also are intrigued by it.

Great leaders of the world have always believed that education is the best tool to give everyone the opportunity to grow. But since Wellington is not walking on the footsteps of the leader’s ideals and have limiting educational policies which ban youngsters like Carl to get educated, Zora Belsey, Prof. Claire Malcolm, Carl and others are planning against to speak against this policy in the meeting. When Zora sees that poor coloured youngsters who should be getting educated are living on the streets, just because they can’t afford it, she feels tormented and raises her voice to say , ‘ I mean what are we doing here, asked Zora loudly, if we can’t extend the enormous resources of this institution to people, who need it? It’s so disgusting.’ Claire seeing the enthusiasm of Zora and her ability to point the issue correctly decided and suggests her to talk at the meeting for people like Carl. At the same time the Belsey family is falling apart. Because of this Howard decides to go and take the advice from his father who is hard- core racist which is the very reason he has some tension in his relation with the Belsey family. Harold Belsey was a former butcher who has politically incorrect views and does not like black people. Following are the dialogues between Howard and his father: ‘Kiki and me...actually Harry, I think we’re finished.’ To this Harold replies in a disgusting racial way: ‘She found a black fella. I spose. It was always going to happen, though. It’s in their nature.’ Smith has tried to put forth through whole novel that people hate each other without any reason and that ‘most of the cruelty in this world is just misplaced energy.’ If only the love for Humanity exists then the problems such as Racism, exploitation of one

human being by other and discrimination and all other problems will disappear. Levi by this time is totally involved with the Haitian group and grown to be a friend of Felix and his helper Choo. By this time he is also shown reading two books one book is about Haiti and other is about the murder of famous musician Tupac Shakur. 'Each time he returned to Haitian book he felt impassioned; he wanted to stop Haitians on the streets of Wellington and make better for them somehow. ... Enslavement ... interference, American occupation and corruption. It all became a haze of history to him. He retained only the searing, unwelcome awareness that somewhere, not far from him, a people were suffering greatly.' Levi visits Choo. Choo lives like a poor man and Levi is surprised to see this. Levi does not know this but he besides selling the fake things by the road also is called in the Wellington parties to serve as waiter. He is not happy and thinks that he is free but still the slave of the white people. Choo is the one who tells Levi everything about Monty Kipps and how he has exploited his people by buying the cheap native paintings and selling the high rate in America and be a rich man. Both he and Levi listen to the song called 'Fear of Black planet'. His words are very heart wrenching and gives the correct picture of how the black boy who is akin to a beggar feels in America. Choo says, "I was thirteen but suddenly I understood: America has ghettos! And Haiti is the ghetto of America! I was there Tuesday, said Choo, ignoring him. In the *college*.' He treated this word like ink upon his tongue. '... serving like a monkey ... teacher becomes the servant. It's painful I can tell you, because I know. He thumped his breast. 'It hurts in here! It's... painful.' He sat up straight suddenly. 'I teach, I am a teacher, you know in Haiti. That's what I am. I teach in high school. French literature and language.' 'And now, 'continued Choo, 'my cousin says come and do this, serve them one night, thirty dollars in hand, swallow your pride! Wear a monkey suit and look like a monkey and serve them their shrimps and the wine, the big white professors.' 'And then they pay us in cents to serve them. The same old slavery. Nothing changes." Choo further tells sad Levi the truth about Monty Kipps and how he is making money. "Choo pointed his long fingers right in Levi's face. 'If you know him know him know this; that man is a liar and a thief. We all know about him, in our community, we follow his progress- writing his lies, claiming his glories. You rob the peasants of their art and it makes you a rich man! A rich man! Those artists died poor and hungry. They sold what they had for a few dollars out of desperation- and they didn't know. Poor and hungry! I served him his wine- Hero Choo lifted his hand and pretended to pour out a glass, with a crude servile look on his face. 'Don't ever sell you soul my brother. It isn't worth twenty- two dollars. I was weeping inside. Don't ever sell it for few dollars. Everybody tries to buy the black man. Everybody, he said pounding the carpet with the fists, tries to buy the black man. But he can't be bought. His day is coming.' Choo is very angry by Monty who takes the advantage of people in desperation. Kiki protests and tells Monty that he should not be working against his own race even though he may be conservative; he has a position from which he could uplift his people. Kiki says to Monty, "I don't know...I just think it stinks of a kind of, well, a kind of self – hatred when we have black folks arguing against the opportunities of black folks. I mean- we don't need to be arguing against the opportunities for black folks. I mean- we don't need to be arguing among ourselves at this point. There is a war on. We got black kids dying on the front line on the other side of the world and they are in that army' coz they think college has got nothing to offer them. I mean that's the reality here.' Kiki tells him that if he just thinks for a second, nothing could be more depressing than a black academician working against the educational opportunities of kids of his own race, but Monty never agrees for he is filled with hate and greed which stops him from helping people. Dean Jack French of Wellington devises the unique way for Carl to get into the University on the insistence of Zora and Prof.Malcolm. Although Carl cannot get the permission to study, he could get a job in university. He gets the job as the Music library archiver. Carl feels respected when walks in the gate of the Wellington university but soon Elisha, his black colleague tells him that the places like these great universities do not really belong to people like him and her and that the white people never actually acknowledge and respect them. When Levi

meets Carl, he thinks that Carl is given the fake respect. He thinks that Carl is being idiot and thinks of him as 'a played out fool, this shell of a brother in whom all that was beautiful and thrilling and true had utterly evaporated.' He thought that he became fool of a white man. In the end Carl is unable to bear the confusion arising in him because he can no more take the discriminatory attitude people have towards him. But before disappearing forever he says the truth about Black- Americans discriminatory and ruthless attitude towards poor black men like Carl. Even though Prof Malcolm and Zora try to help him but in that process they do not realise that they have made a mascot out of Carl. A mascot for poor black men. Every character in the novel including blacks uses him and in this process he has lost what is unique in him. He has lost his identity of being a unique individual. He says, "I'm just trying to get a stage higher with my life. Carl laughed bitterly. But that's joke around here, man. People like me are just toys to the people like you. I am just some experiment for you to play with. You people aren't even black anymore, man. I don't know what you are. You think you are too good for your own people. You people are all the same, said Carl, looking down, addressing his shoes. I need to be with my people, man. I can't do this no more. Carl equates the educated high class blacks to the shoes. He thinks that they have become like the people who made them slaves and completely forgotten their uniqueness and that they all have become one group of people who use the weak people, that the educated blacks are too good for their own people.

Novel is ended when Zora is called for the investigation of the theft which has occurred. It is informed that the valuable painting of the voodoo goddess of Monty Kipps is stolen. And Carl, since has disappeared, is suspected of the theft. They ask her about Carl and further continue the investigation. But when Kiki Belsey finds the valuable painting under the bed of Levi she is very angry that Levi is the one who has committed the crime with the other Haitian boys. When Kiki asks why he committed the theft, innocent Levi says that the painting does not belong to the greedy professor but in actuality it belongs to the people of Haiti. He says to his mother that she too is not very different from Monty Kipps who exploits the poor, desperate blacks. He says, 'People in Haiti, they got NOTHING, RIGHT? We living off these people man! We- we living of them! We sucking their blood – we're like vampires! You OK married to a white man in the land of plenty –you OK. You doing fine. You living off these people man!' Levi's tells truth about America in the end. That indeed it has lived on the means of the poorer countries. Smith has, in the novel *On Beauty* made harsh critics on the faults that exist in America. She wants to, through novel suggest that faults can only be filled when one race and one class has total respect and love for another race and another class. That without love and respect any problem regarding Racism, Discrimination and Exploitation will ever be solved.

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