

# Dislocation, trauma and ambivalence essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ For what it’s worth: It’s never too late to be whoever you want to be. I hope you live a life you’re proud of, and if you find that you’re not, I hope you have the strength to start over. ” – F. Scott Fitzgerald Every year, hundreds of thousands of immigrants come to the United States. They all search for different things. Some come for refuge against civil and political unrest, while others come for a chance at a better life. Each immigrant has their own story. Each story is different because they all come from varying backgrounds and cultures.

In Aleksandar Hemon’s short story, “ The Bees, Part 1,” he represents his family’s experience of immigration and exile. His story presents the reality of his life – dislocation, trauma and ambivalence. In Hemon’s short story, the theme of dislocation is conveyed throughout the entire text, but is mostly focused on in the last chapter, “ The Well. ” He talks about his father writing another true book, *The Well*: a story about a well near the father’s childhood home, people from the village and their cattle, and their intersecting destinies. “[His father] remembers, that somebody’s mule escaped and came to the well, sensing water.

But its head was tied to its leg – that’s how people forced the mules to graze. The mule got away, found water, but then was unable to drink. It lingered around the well furiously banging its head against the trough, dying of thirst, the water inches away” (Hemon 73). This text represents that although the father is living in a new country with a new life, he cannot assimilate since the past is haunting him. He still carries the damage and anguish that comes with being an immigrant. No matter how hard he tries to fit in, he does not feel included in the mainstream community.

Another theme in “ The Bees, Part 1,” was the theme of trauma, and the difficulties of dealing with it. For example, Hemon’s father was not able to accept fiction at all. This is shown in the first chapter of the story, “ This Is Not Real. ” Hemon explains how his father was yelling, “ People, don’t believe this! This is not real! ” to the audience watching a movie at the theater (Hemon 55). He also tells a deeper story of why his father does not like fiction. It took place when his father was in college and had a recurring dream full of danger, pain and mystery.

Every morning his father “ would wake up to face an audience simultaneously demanding the resolution and hating the prospect...[but] kept evading the conclusion, hoping it would come to him eventually. His audiences dwindled, until one of his roommates accused him of lying” (Hemon 56-57). This not only shows a background and history of why he does not like fiction, but it also gives the reader a deeper understanding of the father’s grasp on life after his experiences as a refugee. It conveys the fact that he is suffering from PTSD and cannot accept the reality that some people need fiction to have some sort of purpose in life.

A final theme conveyed in this story is the reality of an immigrant’s life. Hemon represents that some countries – specifically the United States and Canada – do not understand the struggle of true labor and loss that immigrants and refugees have, since these countries are so privileged to live somewhere without war. He explains how his father became a beekeeper after meeting a Hungarian immigrant. Hemon says that he had “ twenty-three beehives and collected a few hundred pounds of honey a year, yet was unable sell it,” and that, “ Canadians don’t appreciate honey.

They don't understand it" (Hemon 73). This shows that when his father is talking about selling his honey, he is referring to the fact that the Canadians would not understand the experiences and pain he went through. However, though he cannot voice his experiences, the father is able to communicate with other immigrants well, because dislocation is the unspoken language of trauma. Additionally, Hemon's writing style portrays a lot of depth and meaning. It was abrupt, and was similar to the way of how his father attempted to restart his life over and over again.

He presents that sometimes the American dream and perspective – if you work hard enough you will be happy – does not always happen in real life. Furthermore, he ended the story with a cliffhanger. There was no resolution and the audience will never know what happens, because in real life some cannot recover from certain trauma. There is just no cherry on top; no closure. Yet, he also conveys that though life is hard and absurd with “no meaning” and just “one thing after another,” when people get the “sweetness” life gives, one must cherish it.

Throughout the book, Aleksandar Hemon conveys the themes of dislocation, trauma and ambivalence in an immigrant's life. The depth and breadth of his story is expressed through the exploration of his family's experience of immigration. He uses specific diction to voice his family's struggle of coming to a new country and attempting to become acclimated with the new social norms. Though he technically does not end his story, he was able to create a meaningful impact on the reader by concluding that some things in life have no solution, but the world keeps going on.