

The Narcissistic Mirror: A Post Modern Reading of “Brick Lane”

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Abstract

This research aims to bridge this research gap by discussing the nature of Chanu in terms of NPD, thus advancing our general understanding of narcissism as applied to the characterization of literature. This research paper examines how Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) was portrayed in novel Brick Lane by Monica Ali by studying the character of Chanu. Whereas the concept of narcissism is depicted in the literature as a stable and even heroic quality, the characterization of the victims of NPD has undergone under-exploration, especially in this novel. The aim of the study will be to determine the psychological factors which led to the narcissistic nature of Chanu. The research applies a qualitative approach to the research and deploys the close textual analysis technique as popularized by David Greenham that uses the theoretical perspectives of Kohut to explain narcissism to structure the research. According to the findings, the character of Chanu has apparent signs of NPD, which are based on overemphasized self-importance and a sense of strong necessity to be validated, which greatly define his interactions and self-image. This study has value in literary criticism because it provides a combination of psychology and literature, provides a more in-depth view of the representation of mental health in fiction, and highlights the significance of subtle literary interpretation in helping the society to learn more about personality disorders.

Keywords: Narcissistic Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Brick Lane.

Introduction

The Narcissism is the coinage of Greek mythology, a process which is preceded by fictitious character, i.e. Narcissus, with whom fame goes together with his vanity and self-love. Among these myths is the fact that Narcissus was a young attractive man who falls in love with his reflection in the water pool. It is a term originating in the 20th century within the psychology discipline under Sigmund Freud who introduced it and developed it as a psychological term meaning self-admiration and narcissistic personality. This has been broadened and has been modified to include various forms of self-obsession.

This is what Sigmund Freud thought of in 1917 as a result of his article, On Narcissism: An Introduction. It is a life development stage that involves the libido of individuals being concentrated on oneself, as opposed to other people. Freud divided the primary and secondary Narcissism as well.

Heinz Kohut interpreted the Freudian theories in his self-psychology theory. He proposed the concept of the Self-object and it concerned the Importance of self-cohesion and self-esteem. According to Kohut, Narcissism is a related condition of self-failure.

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Narcissism was defined by Otto Kernberg according to the personality structure. The fragile self-esteem, the deficiency of empathy and defensiveness are believed to be in narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). He paid attention to interior processes of NPD and relationship in the development of NPD. The Narcissism this is a short sighted definition of Narcissism.

NPD is a new current age borderline personality disorder. NPD people possess an excessive feeling of self-praise, self-significance and attention. It is a psychological personality type disorder which gains momentum after puberty and becomes severe. Individuals affected by NPD do not experience empathy towards anyone, which affects various life areas, employment, social and economic relations. People possessing narcissistic/borders personalities are highly resistant to behavioral alterations and are highly sensitive to subtle/ slightest criticism.

General knowledge of NPD is comprised of various symptom groups, the first group is a sense of importance, the second group is a determined need to be noticed by others, and the third group is the inability to empathize with other people. Such typical features serve as a shielding mechanism as they conceal their feeling of insecurity and people with such attributes are sensitive to even the smallest criticism toward them. Monica Ali wrote *Brick Lane* and it is about a Bangladeshi community residing in London, the plot of the novel gives an insight background to explore many issues in the novel, such as the intricate thoughts, feelings and attitudes of the characters. The novel reports on the way the brains of the characters operate and react to various situations. Nonetheless, the strongest character in the book is the one belonging to Chanu which offers a thrilling prospect of getting to know more about this important character in the book. *Cakmaktepe* is the setting of the story of the *Brick Lane* as it is presented in the 2010 where the life of the immigrants in London is reflected and more information is revealed about their social life and the social interaction. This kind of work is very interesting and it is full of emotional and culture information to read it. The character portrait of Chanu especially offers the role that is most significant in terms of its versatility. Other researchers that were carrying out a research on this character personality have discovered that there are some specific features that can be matched in the characteristic features of NPD. The present study bridges this gap in the studies. Whereas NPD is being conducted within other disciplines such as social and clinical disciplines, there have been fewer or no studies conducted in the literature discipline regarding NPD and how and why it has affected certain characters in a narrative. This is in line with what Samra Abbas (2016) has said.

The contribution that primarily attempted to explain and analyze the personality of Chanu with references being made to his NPD character features that are eminent in his character such as the need to seek admiration, superiority, sense of entitlement and lots more. These features of his personality are studied in such a way that to realize that the features contribute to the shaping of his behavior, character and personality by recalling the impact of the culture and society on his character. These traits are examined taking into account the views of Chanu against his approach of social identity and his interests in academics. This character study reveals his personality that has shaped his behavior towards other people in his environment. In the paper, the impact of these characteristics on him and his personal life is discussed. To learn more about his social life and his life choices, the NPD approach to his behavior would be more suitable.

It also sensitize the people about the psychological issue and how it is connected to the cultural identity to show the connection between the psychological traits and culture through NPD by referencing to the life experience of Chanu. These works determine the connection between the world surrounding the individual and NPD and the influence and the effect of such world on these traits in an individual and the reverse on our sensitivity toward others.

This study is a mix of a literary study and personality study in the Monica Ali writing i.e. *Brick Lane*. This is why NPD explores the characters in such a way that such a study explains how

culture, society and personal struggles can help in understanding of NPD traits in an individual better and how it is expressed in the text. The paper shall examine and discuss the nature of Chanu at length, so as to perceive not him as a fictional character, but as a manifestation of psychological sufferings, which are experienced as a consequence of cultural restrictions. The paper contributes to our understanding of NPD further so that we could learn more about the word and provided useful information that can be handy not only in the literary works but also in our real life. Such an analysis, through the study of the properties of NPD, connects the two literary genres i.e. fiction and psychological reality i.e. connects them.

Statement of the Problem

The analysis will aim to address the research gap by addressing the nature of Chanu as a person with NPD, therefore contributing to our general understanding of narcissism as it is applied to the literary characterization. The issue of narcissism is prevalent in society and in our daily life and is therefore represented in literature. The selfishness conduct of the characters in the book is only revealed/unveiled in a normal state of mind. However, they are hardly presented as victims of NPD when it comes to Brick Lane. It is not a huge study which has been carried out on the novel Brick Lane on the basis of NPD. The current writing also tries to examine and evaluate the personality of Chanu as a form of NPD to construct a new approach to the novel and to make an attempt to cover the topics that are not raised in the previous literature.

Research Objective

To illustrate the psychological and situational factors contributing to the development of NPD in the character of Chanu.

Research Question

How do psychological and external factors contribute to the development of NPD in Chanu's character?

Significance of the Study

The study is important in relation to the given novel in relation to different points of view, the given research can be used to understand character of Chanu in terms of NPD. It is an instruction to any researcher, who may be interested in the works of Monica Ali in Brick Lane. The current paper helps to provide the data about the NPD which is addressed in novel. It will guide the students of English literature anytime they want to engage in the same research. It is also good because readers can surmount the symptoms of NPD that many people hate. It is significant in a number of factors because it targets the NPD, a severe and severe mental disorder which is stigmatized by the general population. This research is primarily aimed to create awareness regarding NPD, which is a psychological disorder that is dominant among most individuals who lack awareness. However, there is a lack of research (so far as we are aware) on the NPD aspects of the Brick Lane novel. Therefore, the aspects not considered by the former literature should be highlighted. In such a way, the personality of Chanu is victimized once again and considered within the theoretical set of NPD to further develop the knowledge and insights on the novel and its overall implications within society and the feasibility of its publication.

Literature Review

The question that Dyer, (1994) poses is that in Herman Melville, novels of the nineteenth century, the psychoanalytic account of the narcissism, as later conceived by Sigmund Freud and Hans Kohut is anticipated, by excavating the issue of the dilemma between the limitations of the human and the ambitious ambitions reminiscent of a god. The authors came up with a

psychodynamic model, which, in a very precise manner, presents the ego ideal in contrast to the restrictions imposed by reality, as well as restrictions inherent to human life. Captain Vere in the novel *Billy Budd* is seen to be the image of the metamorphoses of narcissism in the individual who has reached the state of maturity. Captain Ahab in *Moby-Dick* on the other hand, presents a contrasting view of the character who has narcissistic traits. The artistic literary works of Melville continue giving us significant knowledge about the complexity of the human nature.

Colletta, (2000) explores the fact that the current research employs psychoanalytic theories regarding joke work and gallows humor when analyzing literary works by Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, Ivy Compton-Burnett and Virginia Woolf. According to Freud, the quality of humor is its power to express the grandiosity of the ego, when the latter overcomes the difficulties and disruptions of the external world. Sardonic and ironic view point adopted enables an aggressive response to an aggressive reality, as an instrument as well as a method of dealing with the situation. Rather than submitting individual subjectivity to the disruptive influences that might potentially compromise it, the ego uses the forces as the means of self-development and assertiveness. Since humor is essentially a social phenomenon, and since much of the comic and painful situations that these authors explore are created by the process of negotiating increasingly complex and contradictory collective identities, this aggressive position is especially appropriate in the context of social comedy and satire. Unlike traditional theoretical approaches to the concept of satire, which usually focus on its curative role, dark humor is not a source of all-inclusive solutions or physical health benefits. This essay assumes that dark humor is one of the specifics of modernism, as it is the method of reassessing the literature of the period and reintroducing the works and authors that have often been neglected. Modernism is a term that is ambiguous and exposed to academic debate. Overall, it includes both creative and literary works that intentionally adopt the features of avant-garde, as well as aim to provoke the traditional canons that began to be used in the nineteenth century.

As Murray (2000) points out, narcissism often comes out in plays of alienation mostly in modernist and postmodernist fiction. Through the narcissistic characters the authors dramatize the lack of connection between the self and society and the boundaries between sanity and delusion are frequently blurred. This has gained even greater relevance in the current literary literature of digital identity and performance culture, as well as the psychological ramifications of hyper-individualism.

According to Brummett (2008), literary narcissism tends to emerge during ambitions, power, and identity, especially in cases where characters are in need to create an idealized version of themselves in contrast to what the society wants them to be. Often, the main characters of a tragedy or psychological fiction are narcissistic characters whose self-centeredness ultimately causes them to suffer a personal fate.

It reviews the findings on pathological narcissism and the NPD and it elaborates the most important issues related to the four anomalies in phenotypic descriptions and taxonomic models of clinical theory, research and practice. These criterion problems will be addressed in order to define the nature of normal and pathological narcissism and involve the integration of narcissistic traits in new diagnostic criteria and measures. It suggests that narcissistic grandiosity and vulnerability themes are to be united, that overt and covert narcissism cannot be regarded as having two different forms and that pathological narcissism should be systematized as to do so. It gives the definition and measure of narcissistic behaviour (Lukowitsky, 2010).

Another study has assessed the cognitive and emotional empathy of NPD patients. The key characteristic of NPD, discovered by clinical observation, was the absence of empathy. The study subjects were 47 patients with NPD and 27 clinical controls who had personality disorder of borderline (BPD). Classical type of questionnaires were tested together with cognitive and

emotional empathy. The data received were subjected to Multifaceted Empathy test (MET) and Movie to the Assessment of Social Cognition (MASC) tests. The findings made revealed that NPD subjects had severe gaps in emotional empathy with MET. In addition, these patients lacked cognitive feeling towards MET/MASC. It has been determined in the paper that the lack of cognitive and emotional empathy induced by NPD cannot be altered (Fydrich, 2011).

The literature frequently relies on the narcissistic qualities to provide psychological substance to main characters who are grandiose, lonely, manipulative or self-idealizing. Marcus (1984) states that the role of narcissism in literature serves as a cultural manifestation of individualism—one that criticizes the contemporary society that is obsessed with self image and its disconnection. In the same way, according to Snodgrass (2011), the narcissistic literary characters usually reflect the anxiety of collective society in the status, recognition, and authenticity of interpersonal relations.

In its conception of social humor in its era, modernism saw it mainly as satiric and therefore conservative. The huge bulk of social comedy was thus neglected, unwittingly continuing the culture that modernism was to challenge and oppose. But the complexity of human life means that no system can be able to understand human existence completely because of the nature of any given system. This causes the black comedies of the interwar British social satire to have a strong sense of ambivalence, making every ideological and societal structure equally repressive to the human beings existing within it. Instead of contrasting the solemn and the hilarious, the mainstream and the avant-garde, this paper will explore the similarities and common features of most genres in a historical framework.

Research Methodology

The immediate study is qualitative in the response to the questions. It qualitatively aids in analyzing or detecting the causes of NPD on the character of Chanu. The data is considered in terms of NPD theory. David Greenham applies the close reading techniques to the present novel. The novel text is the source of data of the study. Using the textual analysis and closed reading technique gives profound insights and comprehension about the Brick Lane novel. The causes of NPD and the personality of Chanu are examined.

The interpretivist paradigm is founded on the assumption that reality is socially and culturally constructed, and the researcher tries to figure out meanings, feelings, and purposes, looking through the perspectives of people involved (Creswell, 2014). This method is especially applicable in terms of literary analysis since it enables the researcher to explore the psychological, social, and cultural strata of the story and characters. In this work, the character of Chanu in Brick Lane is understood to be an expression of the psychological patterns, guided by the pressure of the culture and the emotional experience- interpretation that cannot be expressed by the positivist or strictly empirical paradigm.

The study has a theoretical framework named NPD as by Kohut who says that narcissism is the overvaluation of self and inferior feelings that are dependent on other people. It is a borderline personality disorder of the present age. NPD individuals harbor an overestimated view of self-praise, self-importance and attention. It is a personality disorder that is mental and that becomes widespread and severe post puberty. Individuals who experience NPD do not experience empathy towards others, and therefore, this affects various areas of life, work, social interactions, and financial issues. People who possess narcissistic/ borderline personality are also hard to change and very sensitive when it comes to the smallest/ slightest criticism.

Close reading technique refers to a qualitative approach of methodology that will allow the text of the novel to be looked at and studied in a closely detailed manner. In such a manner, one interprets a text, going through its structure, language, meanings, etc., to gain a comprehensive insight into the text. It encompasses comprehensive reading and further examining of the structural and formal elements in a text working together to provide the broader ideas. Under

this technique, the researcher closely examines word choice, a text structure, meaning of the context and literary devices, paragraphs and even a text in a text are also examined closely using this technique. This methodology offers qualitative data, several views and contextual information. It provides a detailed interpretation of the text and is popular to apply it in analysis and literary criticism.

Discussion and Analysis

New age borderline personality disorder is NPD. NPD individuals possess the exaggerated self-admiration, self-importance and attention. It is a mental personality type disorder, which turns out to be widespread and severe after the age of puberty. NPD sufferers do not empathize with others, and this affects various facets of life, work, social interactions, and money issues. Narcissistic/borderline personalities are people who are not ready to change their behavior and who are extremely sensitive to the smallest/ slightest criticism.

Typically, personality disorder is characterized by the persistent nature of the internal experiences and external behavior that is not within the societal and cultural norms. These practices and experiences are habitual regardless of the circumstance, unchanged with the passage of time and bring about distress and anxiety. Besides, NPD possesses significant symptoms, including a feeling of grandeur and importance, evidenced by the inclination to overestimate personal accomplishments and achievements, the need to impress other people to look better than others, the willingness to be admired and appreciated by others and being accompanied by the lack of sympathy or altruism.

Monica Ali is a Bengali-origin born writer who, together with her family immigrated to England and spent her life in England as an immigrant. Her book *Brick Lane* depicts her life and sufferings in England, where her upbringing was. *Brick Lane* is a book that made her a winner of the award of the best of the young British Novelists in the magazine *Granta*. In *Brick Lane*, there are themes of identity struggles, cultural hybridity, assimilation, empowerment, and expectations of the society. The setting of the story in the novel takes place in the UK, and the main character, Nazneen is depicted as an immigrant who tries to find the sense of identity, personal freedom, and empowerment and explore various facets of life. It is a fictional novel that portrays real life experiences and struggles that the author Monica Ali had to endure in England.

Nazneen is a mother, a wife, she fulfills the role of a typical wife in captivity of the rules and regulations of a certain culture and follows her home. Over time, she becomes aware of the new culture and the introduction to the new forces and starts to wonder who she is. Her curiosity about the world and her suppressed sexual Emotions resemble a study of the liberation of women and their self-exploration. The symbol of her new empowerment and independence is her close friendship with other women and English classes.

Nazneen relationship with her husband is the opposite of her shifting perceptions, which displays ideological and generational clashes that immigrants have to overcome. The questioning of her marriage is an indicator of patriarchal regulations and struggle in order to gain personal liberation. The character of Nazneen, who is a shy and sheltered girl but grows into a confident and independent woman, is a representation of two cultures that depict the experiences of immigrants and their lives in *Brick Lane*.

The story of Nazneen in the novel is similar to the real life story of Monica. The story also illuminates the fact of stifled women who cannot reconcile change and tradition and is representative of major themes in the book. The issues that are addressed in this story are cultural identity, the rights of women and immigration. This novel represents the life of immigrants women and their struggles in 20 th century London. This book was applauded most by critics who could identify with the character of Nazneen as the issues that women faced at the time were brought out realistically.

The novel is narrated by Nazneen in her own account, starting with her coming to London at the age of 18 up to the age of 30s. She was at first timid and stayed at home, doing the housework as a dutiful wife. After some time, she developed confidence, longed to be free, made friends with other women and began to take English classes. Her mixed opinion is quelled when she gains independence; she starts doubting all the conventional roles when she doubts her marriage and her repressed needs.

Factors Responsible for NPD

Factors are things or things that are added to or make a difference to some outcome, circumstance etc. The reasons behind NPD are some of the critical factors that include;

Biological and Genetic Factors

Genetic factors indicate that such a study indicates that NPD tends to be familial. It demonstrates that half of the genetic factors are passed on by their parents. It just implies that this genetic predisposition might have a family history in the family of Chanu which has influenced his growth.

"His father has died when he was young."

The line above reveals that the self-esteem of Chanu has been hurt by such an early loss and the absence of parental support. Neurobiology demonstrates that there are certain differences in the regions of human brains which are associated with emotions, decision making, and also social attitudes in persons with NPD. This kind of behavior is a catalyst to social behavior.

In addition to it, hormonal imbalances also lead to stress and aggression that gets attached to narcissistic features. This kind of hormonal imbalance causes NPD. Also, dysfunction of the neurotransmitter system causes NPD. NPD individuals can be high or low in hormonal content. Epigenetic implies that environmental stresses cause epigenetic alterations, which lead to NPD. Developmental causes are stress and abuse as a child, a factor that can alter the developing neurological system leading to NPD.

Chanu grew up in disadvantaged conditions with a mother, was having a hard time trying to live better without his wants and needs being met.

"His mother has tried her best to, but there was little money." (ch.2)

"The war had broken out, and he had evacuated." (ch.2)

These two lines indicate the early life and childhood which Chanu had. His family financial state was poor, and this made him work hard and struggle to get a better living. The presence of NPD factors in him has been augmented by his temperament, dominating nature, and his life experiences.

"Even as a boy, he had been headstrong, stubborn." (ch.2)

The line above indicates that his early life events such as the death of his father leads to NPD which predisposes him more to low self-esteem and attachment problems.

Childhood Experiences

Early childhood experiences are another cause that leads to the occurrence of NPD. The early loss of the father of Chanu when she is very young raises the chances of low self-esteem and attachment problems leading to NPD. Chanu was also increasing up poor with their mother.

"His mother had tried her, but there was little money." (ch.2)

The line above demonstrates the life and economic conditions of Chanu in childhood in the context of such experiences, Chanu was separated with his family, which also became a risk factor in early childhood trauma. It encompasses that he became lonely and forsaken and lacked fatherly guidance in his growth as a kid, which in the future transformed into a NPD case. He grows up a neglected child, who is emotionally shut-off and has nothing, and with a poor self-image. This aspect is a huge consideration in the development into NPD.

Trauma, Abuse and Neglect

Children are wrong due to ill things that are happening to them and this hurts their feelings.

“Chanu’s father died when he was a kid, and his mother struggled hard with no money at all.” (ch.2)

As the line above illustrates, the loss of his father at a very young age and then the lack of enough time, love and attention of his mother due to the hectic schedule of her mother is traumatizing. As Chanu was brought up in poverty, zero financial status, and, therefore, his mother had to fight to give some money to her children and pay little or no attention to her children, children became mentally feeble and inferior as their parents did not care about them. It is also one of the reasons why NPD I people are brought.

“The war has started, and he was sent far away from family.” (ch.2)

The passage just read supposes that, as he is sent away so long a distance at home, it appears so cruel and abandoned, as it also expresses the greatest perilous and severe situation that Chanu was exposed to in his former life, by such a terrible epidemic in the country. It also plays a role in the provocation of the NPD symptoms and such an illness in Chanu.

“Chanu’s mother did her best to work hard, but they were inferior.” (ch.2)

The above line illustrates that this is a form of neglecting Chanu at this age when in this economic status, you are pulling your hair out and you cannot do it because the fundamental needs in life are not met. These, as trauma, neglect and abuses can work against his feeling about himself. This happened with Chanu too and so, he becomes too hard to depend on people and feel well at home. Hence, by disappointing people he was taught to be special and necessary and this makes him happy. This object helps to develop the NPD features in him, and he becomes an NPD person.

Parenting Styles

This implies that parenting is the manner in which children are brought up. The parenting styles influence the personality and character of a person. It also influences the manner in which such kids feel and think about themselves.

As it could be traced in the reading, the father of Chanu had passed away when he was a small child and the mother had a difficult time to cover her basic needs. This depicts that his mother may not have time to listen to him, applaud him or embrace him; because of the busy life they have. Accordingly, he received no childcare when he was growing up, which significantly influenced his character, personality, and mentality. Thus, he predetermined himself that he was superior to others. It is due to the fact that he lacked the love of his parents which he was most in need of as a child thus leading to the NPD traits in him.

Environmental Factors

The environment also has a dramatic influence on the way an individual develops in the environment. The surrounding can influence or modify an individual in terms of character, personality, and mentality. It may be psychologically calm or may not influence the maturity and growth.

“Chanu lived in poverty after his father’s death, and his mother worked hard to earn money.” (Ch. 2)

The above lines reveal that Chanu is needy and poor, turns insecure, lonely, sad and unloved and does not feel good about himself which causes him to be narcissistic. As a child, he experienced a financial crisis at a very young age, something that influenced his mentality, stressing him and damaging him heavily.

“The war started when Chanu was young.” (ch.2)

In the line above, we find that he too experienced the same kind of devastating war-like situation in childhood which caused him to experience the worry, loneliness, and stressfulness

about herself. War is able to mentally and physically torture an individual as he had to go through war at a very early age, and Chanu was a child during that period, so his case was even more tragic.

This is a stressful and devastating environmental scenario that may impact the psychology of the individual. This results in the sense of superiority by Chanu who seeks significance.

Social Factors

A society can dramatically affect a person, who has to live in it. Our lives in the society will impact a great deal on us and how we interact with others will impact on our growth and development.

“Chanu's father has passed away, and at that time, he was separated from his family due to war that broke out” (ch. 2)

These lines show that losing your loved ones at a very young age is a traumatizing experience and being separated with home is another traumatizing experience as it severely affects the psyche of a person and causes serious aftereffects in creating new relationships again. The society is also of paramount importance in defining the personality of Chanu as he was a juvenile who was forced to leave his home to get some money and his segregation with his family also affects his mindset as well.

“The war has broken out, and Chanu has been evacuated.” (ch.2)

The foregoing line portrays that it is also making him hard enough to believe in people because of being separated with his family during such a frightening time. It is as a result of bad background, which is another reason why he feels insecure and inferior and adequate enough that he is not good in the eyes of other members of the society. The intricate situations and the experiences that Chanu passed through during his childhood preconditioned his internalization of esteem and importance in others. This life hardship took its toll and he learned how to treat and associate with people.

Cultural Values

The culture of an individual also influences how he develops, grows, his personality, and character.

“Chanu was from Bangladesh, but he moved to London.” (ch. 2)

As observed in the above line, leaving the homeland as a child, and at a very tender age and settling in new nations and acquiring the culture and traditions of other people enriches one experience and knowledge about how to integrate into a new system. It happened also with Chanu and he had to encounter all these things on his path which influences such qualities in his character and influences his development as well.

“He was determined to succeed in this new country.” (ch.2)

This text shows that as a foreigner in a new country, Chanu feels different from them, which creates in his mind that he is far better than all the native people. He was very enthusiastic and felt proud of his abilities, education, and talent and that he is far better and will be successful in the new country because he has a lot of certificates and degrees as well.

Bangladeshi culture highly values education, which means that Chanu, belonging to such a culture, mainly focuses on his academic and career achievements to define his worth. He has intermingled his success and admiration from others with his culture, which emphasized respect and status. It means that mixing two cultures or adjusting yourself to two different cultures, and such cultural exchange about worth, status, and respect affects Chanu, and this change also encourages narcissistic traits in him.

Individualism

It is a concept of being self-reliant and free. Such a culture is more open to individualism instead of collective control. This means that this culture will influence an individual in the event that he or she desires to grow.

“Chanu moved from Bangladesh to London as a boy.” (ch.2)

The above line tells us that it is within such a British culture that individualism is promoted, and not so within the Bangladeshi culture, but collectivism. So as a young man he went to London to make and mend his life and finances.

“He was determined to succeed in this new country London.” (ch.2)

This sentence shows that Chanu wants to succeed and he is ready to succeed in the new land to which he has moved. He wants to leave some kind of the place to be observed and to feel that others can be special towards him.

On one day, he informed his wife that his wife, Nazneen, is blessed to have such husband like Chanu because of his understanding that he is different, influential and unique among others. This individualism places personal liberty and self-sufficiency above other elements and it shows that other individuals exist to serve them and they lack their liberty. This is what makes NPD and we find this in the character of Chanu because he treats his wife as his inferior person because she has no personal freedom but exists to serve him and to fulfil his needs and desires and she has no feelings of her own. Living in such a society and culture where individualism and insignificance of persons are the central values and where personal identity is a completely other-centered and not self-centered possession is the way to acquire the narcissistic quality of self-importance which is the primary characteristic of the character of Chanu.

Competition and Success

When in London, the main agenda of Chanu is competition and success. He wants to do something and to be the best of those people. He got jealous of the folk in London, and played him up as having made such good study and schooling, which was good and had no merits in London. He ought to be the best and do the best since he wanted to do something better in his life as he had moved to London and become the best version of himself.

“I have a first-class mind.” (ch.2)

This sentence shows that Chanu is stronger and smarter than all the other people in London, which also defines his self-esteem based on his accomplishments in London. In one instance, Chanu was enraged when Nazneen started attending English lessons because he did not want her to be more successful than he was. And he does not love this, it is not a quality that he loves, as a narcissistic trait, it does not make him feel special.

The aspiration to become successful and compete and never wanting to lose is one of the essential characteristic elements of narcissists. The fact that Chanu parted with his family at such a young age to travel to London to earn money also speaks of his competitive instinct.

Psychological Factors

This is attributed to the fact that the way one thinks ultimately affects the thinking and view of a person. These are elements of personality of an individual that deters/empowers our thinking.

“I have a first-class mind.” (ch.2)

This line shows that Chanu is very proud of his personality and intellect and thinks that he is special and superior to other individuals in his environment. As a domineering and controlling husband and father, he holds, exceptionally and highly, that he has capabilities. Thoughts and traits such as these are typical of NPD individuals. When he is assaulted by others he is extremely quick-tempered and heart-saddened. These people cannot endure trivial criticisms towards them. The Fickle shape of criticism/ reactions threaten his ego and personality because

of his low self-esteem. Due to his insecurity, Chanu must be praised and adored by the people and specifically his wife.

Life Experiences

These are the factors that cause NPD and they can have critical outcomes on the thinking of an individual after a short duration. As I have mentioned earlier on, he had not lived a conventional life since he was a small boy since in his life he has been living in Chanu and this has destroyed and destroyed his inner being.

He had already lost his father but he only ran out of money due to poverty. His life entails these situations that render him traumatized. The other desperate situation in his life was that war broke out and he was forced to find refuge in other countries and thus leave his own country. These changes in the life of Chanu are painful, torture and traumatic and change the meaning and vision of his life greatly. He has been poor and has lacked care, attention and love of his mother which has been stressful to him and due to this he has felt unloved of his life, lonely and inferior.

His childhood life up to the age of adult years has been traumatic and rough, which pre-conditioned his desire to be admired and praised by other people, and his personality and character shaped the narcissistic one because of the events he had to experience in his childhood.

Attachment Issues

This can be discussed as one of the factors in NPD that results to narcissistic tendencies among characters like Chanu in his life. As a young boy, Chanu had not been shown love, attention and care of his busy-body mother as she is always busy earning money as they were in a bad condition. It is important in the adult life because the love that children are seeking their parents. The experiences of his childhood that he had at an early age affect his ability to make safe and stable relationships and attachment to others.

A war that erupted later, in the country, further devastated him since he was already torn apart. This was an alienation with family which further hurt his attachment. This was part of the reasons that contributed to infuse the narcissistic character in Chanu and this was what became his mannerism and this worked on his brain and thoughts.

As depicted in the story, Chanu is so fond of his wife Nazneen that he treats Nazneen as a property but not his companion. This is not sexual because he is the controlling, domineering, and jealous husband. He is not safe with his wife and wants to exercise his authority over her rather than making love. Chanu insecurity and jealousy is illustrated by the fact that she attends English classes. Every time, Nazneen was criticized by Chanu and not flattered.

This is a deficiency of emotional heartiness and not close bond. Chanu took Nazneen out of her own nation to another destination; she was segregated in London because she had no attachment or a sharing of a mutual understanding with her partner. It is the way that attachment Chanu has towards his wife, insecure, unhealthy and devoid of emotional intimacy that is a result of his childhood experiences. These features contribute to narcissism, which is found in the personality of Chanu.

Unavailable Parenting

By portraying narcissistic traits in the characters of Brick Lane, and more specifically in the character of Chanu, there is further elucidation on how emotionally unavailable parents add to the features of NPD.

Children require the love, care, attention and time of their parents in order to develop and grow in a healthy way. Being deprived of his father as a child is one of the conditions of being detached. Thereafter, the mother of Chanu was in need of money and labored hard and thus

earned very little, therefore, she did not spend time with her son, making him emotionally unattached to the things of parenting. He lacked the love of his parents and experienced not being loved as a child and this made him feel insecure and inferior. This makes him desire admiration and praise and feels special as a grown up since he did not receive these as a child and this influences his personality and character. These aspects add a lot to his narcissist nature which is highly evident in his character.

Traumatic Events

Disturbing and stressing situations when subjected to a human being may affect the mind, growth, thinking, and development of a person in a negative way. The initial traumatic experience that Chanu had was the loss of a father as a child which by itself is a stressful experience that any child can go through at a very early age.

War resulted in him being evacuated out of his family. He also discovers such a separation to be a terrifying one. The children exposed to war-like situations become insecure, unloved, violent, and dreadful and that too is very distressing and can significantly affect the psychology of an individual. He was also brought up in poverty, and in all the circumstances in need of money even to meet their basic need and his mother struggled so much to raise money; this also turned out to be a stressful experience to him.

Such childhood traumas lead to low self-esteem, uncomfortable relationships, lack of emotional attachment, and high chances of being mentally ill, which causes NPD. He was also narcissistic and dominated and controlling even to his wife and daughters later in life because of his previous traumatic experiences.

Chronic Stress

It is a prolonged and persistent state of stress, tension, and apprehension, which, as a result, leads to negative outcomes and impacts the life of a person. Stress, thoughts and tension seriously negatively affect life development and the mental health of an individual. The death of their father and poverty lead to the long-term stress, anxiety, and depression in the life of Chanu and cause unpleasant circumstances.

He needs money, which his mother did not always manage to acquire, becomes a permanent stressor of their family. Being a child in war circumstances also becomes too emotionally distressing and heart breaking. This can cause terror, horror, fear, loss, death, violence, threat, danger, insecurity, etc. to be stressed to Chanu. The events of his early life had caused him to become chronically stressed. They introduced emotional coldness, withdrawal, insecurity, violence and absence of empathy and ego problems into the life of Chanu that altered his personality affecting his narcissistic nature. These experiences ruined his mental health, as well as affected his personality.

Character and Disposition

The personality and nature of a person may influence the mental health and character of a person. Chanu asserted that he would be successful since he goes to nations abandoning his country. His strong nature and temperament is reflected by his strong aspiration to achieve success at a tender age. He is able to claim with a sense of pride that he is a first-class mind, that is, he is very smart, intelligent and superior. It appears to Chanu that he is special and powerful, and his traits of narcissism of grandiosity dominate his personality. He is incapable of processing even the smallest form of Criticism directed to him and he becomes furious as his Ego is offended or endangered. He became very angry, frustrated and hurt and ended up with the NPD traits, which include controlling behavior and low self esteem.

According to the theory of Heinz Kohut, NPD is caused by the failures in the early self-development when the basic self-object-needs of mirroring, idealization, and twinship are

unmet. This ends up creating people who have weak self esteem and have to rely on others to preserve their value. Chanu demonstrates these qualities in Brick Lane, and the novel shows how NPD not only affects the narcissist but also his family and the immigrant community in general.

Conclusion

Factors refer to things or combination of things that contribute or lead to a specified outcome, situation etc. The critical causes and cause NPD are found in the characters of Brick Lane and in the character of Chanu specifically and have been identified and discussed and elaborated in the discussion and analysis chapter and therefore demonstrates that Brick Lane characters have NPD. Moreover, Impact- to produce an effect, good or powerful or influence of something like a situation or a person on something. With regards to NPD, it is powerful in the personality, character and nature of an individual and this is concluded in the life of a person. The other effect of NPD on the person is that it is hard to build and maintain intimacy in personal relationships as they are unable to empathize with others and they always have to be heard and understood. There are other adverse impacts of NPD on an individual which are also well explained in the character of Chanu and this is the reason why this indicates that Chanu is a victim of NPD.

In this paper, the interdisciplinary theory of literature analysis, as well as Heinz Kohut self-psychology, will be analyzed in terms of its descriptions of NPD in the novel Brick Lane by Monica Ali in the person of Chanu. Through the model of close reading created by David Greenham, the study explored structural, rhetorical, symbolic and intertextual aspects of the text to establish the existence of narcissistic characteristics in Chanu and how it was developed and reinforced under a diasporic and culturally fragmented context.

The study concluded that Chanu has the basic symptoms of NPD, including grandiosity, inflated self-importance, hypersensitivity to criticism and persistent need to be proved. As it is shown, these characters are caused by psychological insecurities, rejection of culture and unrealized ambitions and influence his personal relations, especially with his wife Nazneen and his daughters. The contribution made to the literature and psychology is that the role of Chanu is not a simple literary demonstration of a narcissistic pathology viewed through the lens of immigrant identity-related problems.

Recommendations

1. Literary Studies ought to adopt the methods of psychology: The psychologists need to have more interdisciplinary models in which they incorporate psychological frameworks such as NPD to help in the analysis of character.
2. Fictional Characters Are to be researched as Psychological Constructs: Researchers are to consider literary characters not only as a literary means but also as psychological portraits, which are manifested in the real world in their behaviors and disorders.
3. Additional Literary Research on NPD: The wider research on the NPD and other personality disorders in fiction, with comparative cross-cultural and cross-genre studies, is required.
4. Clinical perspectives Inclusion in Literary Criticism: Clinical psychology modules in critical theory courses can be included in literature departments to increase cross-disciplinary awareness.
5. Mental Health Awareness Education Resources: Reading materials such as the Brick Lane can be integrated into mental health advocacy curriculum to assist readers to identify, converse and destigmatize mental diseases such as NPD by sharing stories.

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