

The Narcissistic Rage in Making of a Psychopath: A Psychological Inquiry of Anita Nair's Cut Like Wound

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Abstract

Crime fictions are always celebrated in literature and among which psychopaths are the major interest of the crowd. Deeply analysing these characters of psychopaths one can find various psychological reasons behind them and this paper is intended to analyse one reason behind the psychopathic behaviour. The researcher has selected the character of Chikka from Anita Nair's Cut like Wound. The objective of this paper is to analyse and understand the narcissism in the psychopath and then to identify the role narcissistic rage has played in the making of the psychopath. The researcher follows a step wise analysis of identifying the characters of a narcissist in the psychopath and then identifying the traces of narcissistic rage in the life of the psychopath which brings out the psychopath in him. The researcher has done a psychological reading of the text to understand these characteristics features of the psychopath.

Keywords: Psychopath, Narcissism, Narcissistic Rage, Crime and Literature

Crimes had been part of the human society from the onset of civilization and they are also a part of the literature for ages. Crime fictions were enjoyed because of its thrilling story line and unexpected plot twists. Among them psychopathic novels and their stories are the most notorious. Psychopaths are the notorious, brutal and cold blooded murderers who have certain mental issues and are addicted to murdering. Many such psychopaths have lived through literature like Hannibal Lector in *Silence of the Lambs*, Amy Dunne in *Gone Girl*, Humbert Humbert in *Lolita*, etc. The pieces of literature that discusses about these characters not only describe about their murders but also throw light into the psychology of the murderer. A detailed analysis of these characters shows different psychological reasons as a cause for their psychopathic behaviours.

Phillipe Pinel, a French physician, is credited with recognizing psychopathy as a specific mental disorder. The individual is seen as a victim of a moral character defect. Pinel in 1801 describes a

condition termed *Manie Sans Délire* or *Manie Raisonnable* where the sufferer shows bouts of extreme violence but with no signs of psychosis.

Narcissism is a common character found in almost everyone in this present generation. Importance to oneself and lack of empathy towards others are growing in the present scenario and hence narcissism and its related researches are highly important and needed. According to Weston, Narcissism is a “cognitive-affective preoccupation with the self” (1990). Clinical descriptions of narcissism emphasize vanity, self-absorption, arrogance, and entitlement as key personality characteristics; narcissistic individuals are overly invested in their self-image, obsessed about how they are viewed by others, and often dismissive of others’ needs and wants to the extent they interfere with one’s own. Sigmund Freud was the first to suggest that narcissists’ self-preoccupation leads them to aggress against others in 1932. The potential reasons for the link between anger, aggression, and narcissism were subsequently suggested by other psychoanalysts, whose clinical observations suggested that narcissistic self-absorption can fuel a vicious cycle of hostility, shame, and reactive aggression.

Narcissistic rage was defined by the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut. Narcissistic rage is defined as a reaction to narcissistic injury, which is perceived as a threat to a narcissist’s self-esteem. Narcissistic injury happens when a narcissist thinks or feels that hidden, true self has been brought out. This may be seen when a narcissist experiences a fall from grace, such that when his hidden behaviours or motivations are brought to light, or when their worth is brought into question.

The objective of this study is to identify the reason behind the psychopathic behaviour of Chikka as described in the text and the researcher intends to identify narcissistic rage as the main cause of this psychopathic behaviour. To identify this, the researcher has 1) To identify the narcissistic characteristic of Chikka as portrayed in the novel. 2) To identify the various forms of narcissistic rage the character undergoes. 3) To analyse how narcissistic rage can affect the character of a person and can turn him into a psychopath.

The researcher in this paper identifies the character of the antagonist, Chikka as a narcissist and analyses the cause of his psychopathic behaviour as a narcissistic rage or as a reaction to the injury of his narcissistic self. The paper on the whole deals with the analysis of the cause of psychopathy as narcissism and narcissistic rage. The antagonist, Chikka, who is a cross-dresser, has a notion that when he is in the costume of a woman, he is the most good looking girl and no other woman can stand near his beauty and this is a major reason for his psychopathic tendencies. The character of Chikka has two faces in the text, the one in the day time as a man and during the night as a woman, Bhuvana. Bhuvana is the alter ego of Chikka and his obsession towards Bhuvana is very ardent throughout the text. Bhuvana can actually be called as the embodiment of Chikka’s narcissistic self.

In this study, the psychological approach is used to reveal the pattern found in the novel characters to determine the narcissism in the novel. The determiner used in this study is based on the principal characteristic of Narcissism: Grandiose sense of self-importance, Superiority or arrogance and Lack of empathy.

The character of Chikka in the novel is also shown to be a person with a grandiose sense of self importance. He in the novel says “She (Bhuvana) is the most important person in my life” (*Cut like Wound*, 4). He feels that he being a woman is what a goddess wanted him to be and hence he respects this goddess and also respects the woman in him. In the novel Chikka though being a cross dresser, he degrades transgender. Chikka’s brother respects transgender as he was once saved from an accident by a transgender but Chikka on the other hand thinks of them as inferior to him even though he also likes to be a woman. He says about transgendered people to his brother, “They are not girls, Anna. They are bloody eunuchs; freaks of nature!” (102). He also criticizes them by saying, “At least I know I am a man. You? What are you?” (84).

Chikka in the novel is shown to be attacking many people physically and also verbally. He doesn't give importance to others feelings. Chikka even after murdering a person doesn't feel guilty of that. He is not concerned about the life of others. When his Akka, the transgender who helps him, questions him about the person he murdered. He replies, "Anyway, he is just a lowlife. No one's going to miss him. So don't waste your emotions on him" (6). All these incidents and traits of character identify Chikka as a narcissist.

The character, Chikka is a narcissist who thinks of himself as superior. Even though he is a cross dresser, he thinks of himself as a woman, a complete woman, who according to him is superior to cross dressers and Transgendered persons. His self is affected and injured when a person finds his true identity or even if someone calls him a transgender. In an incident a man comments on Chikka when he was dressed as Bhuvana. "Nice earrings, but you know something, they don't suit you. You are not pretty enough.... Or woman enough to wear them." (10). This comment hurts the ego of Chikka, who thinks of his alter ego, Bhuvana as the most beautiful woman and superior to all women. Chikka also is affected when a person sees his true self and identifies him as Chikka, when he is dressed as Bhuvana. His ego and his obsessed self is affected and hurt when his true identity as a man is revealed. He actually commits his first murder when a person identifies his true self. He brutally stabs the man and strangles him. Everytime when Chikka goes in search of a sex partner while dressing up as Bhuvana, he finds men, have sex with them but the next morning they are all found dead. Bhuvna seduces men into bed through her looks and charm but one after sex men understand that Bhuvna is not a woman but a man dressed as a woman. Chikka is not able to bear this and he ends up murdering the men who understands that he is not a woman.

All the murders that are described in the novel committed by Chikka are because of this shame and anger. Chikka who faces shame and anger because of the loss of self-esteem and injuries to his self turns into a violent pace and ends up in a displaced aggression. Chikka shows his anger and shame into his victims. This psychopathic character of Chikka is because of the anger and shame caused by the injuries to his self-esteem. Chikka being a narcissist, is not able to digest the fact that his self is been injured and his ego is been affected. This injuries cause a narcissistic rage in him which in turn makes him a psychopath to avenge his anger.

From the researchers finding it is clear that Chikka can be claimed as a narcissistic individual and through the analysis of the text the researcher identified the narcissistic injuries that affected Chikka's self and this in turn paved way for narcissistic rage which is a reaction to narcissistic injury. Upon further analysis the researcher has come to a conclusion that narcissistic rage and its reaction has caused the character to commit murders and hence it can be stated that narcissistic rage of Chikka is the reason behind his psychopathic behaviour.

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