



Analysis of Psychopathological Characters with Reference to Selected Novels of Said Ahmed Mohamed

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Abstract: *This study analysed psychopathological characters from the selected novels authored by Said Ahmed Mohamed namely; Tata za Asumini (1990), Kiza katika Nuru (1988) Babu Alipofufuka (2001) and Dunia Yao (2006). Psychopathology encompasses all that which affects the mind, like anger, stress, depression and schizophrenia. The topic was chosen because psychopathological characters, as portrayed in the selected novel are true reflection of the mental state of members of public. The objectives of this study were; to determine the causation of psychopathology and to discuss the effects of those psychopathological conditions. The theory that guided the study was psychoanalysis theory which was propounded by Sigmund Freud 1896. The framework of this theory includes; the inner conflicts, sub-consciousness, self hate and defensive mechanism. The theory was used to analyse the relevant texts in the four novels. The study was library based and descriptive method was used to present the data. Content analysis was used to expound on the selected texts. The sample and sampling procedures was purposive. The results of the study show that psychopathological condition was triggered by poverty, unemployment, lose of employment, and marital conflicts. The study revealed that psychopathology is directly related to homicide, drunkenness and hopelessness. In addition to that, psychopathological conditions manifest themselves in linguistic features like use self reference and negative words. The study could be useful in literary analysis of characters in literature and linguistic research in general.*

Keywords: Analysis of Characters, Psychopathology, Psychoanalysis

1. Introduction

Psychopathology significantly affects wider population. Psychopathology, as a discipline, focuses on study of mental health (Gelder, 2006). It encompasses of all that affects human mind like anger, stress, depression, anxiety, hopelessness and suicidal tendencies (Kendell, 1975). Mental sickness has been depicted in literature through characterization from 40 – 60 A.D. Despite the negative impacts of psychopathology on population, few studies have been conducted.

Psychopathology derives from two Greek words: 'psyche' meaning 'soul', and 'pathos' meaning 'suffering', 'psychopathology' is understood to mean the origin of mental disorders. Psychopathology is a psychological process and literature is the creation of psychological process (Bieber, 1994). It takes psychological process for the authors to depict imagined human beings who are portrayed as psychological characters, and characters help to understand the field of human inquiry because the character reflects human's life. This study attempted to analyse psychopathological characters as depicted in the four selected literary works of Said Ahmed Mohamed; *Kiza Katika Nuru* (1988),

Babu Alipofufuka (2001), *Dunia Yao* (2006) and *Tata za Asumini* (1990).

There are lots of fictional literature dating from *Victorian* period where literary characters were depicted as victims of depression, stress, extreme anger and with suicidal intentions

According to Weintraub (1981) depression affects quality of speech, rate of speech, long pauses, non – personal references, negative qualifiers, expression of feelings and number of usage of 'i', 'we', and 'me'. The study of Reiber and Vetter (1994) stated that the way psychopathological persons use language to expresses themselves is different from non-depressed persons. This is shared by Pennerbaker and King (1999); Manon & Lemay (2012) and Lazarus and Folkman (1980) as it is stated.

Hostility, threats and criminal activities, according to Gottschalk (1995) are linked to psychopathology. Ragin & Claudia (2016) also added that excess alcoholism is an indicator of psychopathology. The sampled characters in this study engaged on those vices. Research focusing on individual experiences has found association between symptoms of common mental

health disorders such as depression, anxiety and poverty (Weich and Lewis, 1998, Jenkins, 2008), and Gunnell (1995). In this study, poverty, marital problems and unemployment are causations of psychopathology.

This research attempted to analysis the psychological characters on their merit of psychopathology through content analysis with reference to four selected novels of Said Ahmed Mohamed. Few researches have been done on psychopathology through content analysis of literary works. This study attempts to fill the existing gap.

1.1 Research Problem

Studies on literary characters have been done by many researchers with reference to novels authored by S.A. Mohamed. Some researchers have used feminist theory to analyze the female characters in those novels. This study analyzed psychopathological characters in the four selected novels of S.A Mohamed with the guidance of psychoanalysis theory to fill existing research gap.

1.2 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following two research questions:

- a) What are the causations of psychopathological conditions among the characters depicted in the four novels of S. A. Mohamed?
- b) What are the results of the psychopathological conditions among the characters in the four novels of S. A. Mohamed?

2. Literature Review

Psychopathological literary characters have long been depicted in literature. According to Bosky (1997), some of the characters were depicted as schizophrenics, other writers portrayed female characters with extreme conditions of depression and madness, while others were depicted with suicidal intentions. Weintraub (1981) did a study on depression and the results show more use of pronouns in the first person singular. Paul & Drezde (2011) did a research study on social media with the aim of assessing linguistic features by users with mental disorder. Stephanie & Pennebaker (2004) found the use of negative words among depressed persons in their study.

Moghadam & Ramezani (2015), in their study on suicidal notes prior to complete suicide they concluded that contents were pointer of the intention. Powell (2011) supported their study and added that suicidal victims used first person singular, a lot of verbs and past tenses. On anger as an aspect of psychopathology, he linked it to past episodes with depression.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by psychoanalysis theory which is associated with Sigmud Freud. Freud formed the theory between 1890 and 1939 as he practiced neurologic treatment. He is considered as the first person to map human unconscious mind. He believed that unconsciousness is a determining factor of human behavior. He further stated that unconsciousness is the attitudes, feeling, and thoughts which are repressed. According to him, unconsciousness is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty, desires and unresolved conflicts. Freud further stated that human being is controlled by three needs; expectations, needs and anxieties. According to Rutherford (1989), psychoanalysis theory enables us to understand human behavior. This study uses psychoanalysis theory to understand the actions of the sampled characters in the selected novels of S.A Mohamed.

(Real, 2002) expounded the theory by claiming that depression is as a results of failure to achieve desired needs. Horney (1939) stated that Psychoanalysis theory enables us to understand inner conflicts. According to her, literature and psychology are related because literature is the creation of psychological process; therefore psychoanalysis itself is a tool to interpreted literature. McLeod (2014) opined that psychoanalysis theory can help better understand human behavior and it enable one to understand literary texts which are about human behavior. The inner conflicts that manifests among the characters in our study can be understood in the light of this theory.

3. Methodology

This research is a qualitative research using content analysis to analyse data from four novels; *Tata za Asumini* (1990), *Dunia Yao* (2006), *Kiza katika Nuru* (1988) and *Babu Alipofufuka* (2007). The data collection techniques was done library. Descriptive method was used to present the data.

3.1 Target Population

The study targeted twenty two characters drawn from the four novels of Said Ahmed Mohamed. This number was considered adequate for an in-depth qualitative research. The reasons for choosing the target characters includes; their utterances manifests signs of depression and mental stress, their actions, like suicide and attempted suicide show mental sickness, the self talk and self isolation and signs of schizophrenia among the characters.

3.2 Sampling Procedure

The study purposively identified characters with psychological issues based on the following premises; language use, hostility, withdrawal and self isolation. According to Patton (2004), the number of cases selected in purposeful sampling should be small for in-depth examination.

3.3 Data Collection

The study used two key sources; primary and secondary sources. Venderstoep and Johnstone (2009) stated that the first research instrument in qualitative research is the researcher. The researcher read the selected novels and compiled the relevant content texts for analysis. Other resources were obtained in College and National Library, while others were downloaded from search engines.

3.4 Data Analysis

The objectives of the study were to analyse psychopathological characters in the selected novels. The collected data were analyzed through content analysis based on words used by characters.

4. Results and Discussion

This study presented the results and discussion according to the stated objectives. The two objectives were; to ascertain the causes of psychopathological conditions of the characters with reference to the selected novels of S.A Mohamed and to discuss the effects of psychopathological on the selected characters in the said novels.

4.1 Causations of Psychopathology

Poverty

Poverty is a state of lack. Nine characters from the sampled population live in abject poverty. These characters include: Kudura, Mbishi, Mvita (K.N:1988), Ndera, Sakarani, the family of Mr. Ndi (D.Y:2006), Mama Kali, Mr. K (B.A:2001) and Asumini and her family (T.A:1990). This is proved by their poor shelter condition, clothing and limited resources, according to narration of the author. Female characters are depicted to have been hard hit by poverty. The key character in *Tata za Asumini (Asumini)* while being in college reflected the state of her poor background and this disturbed her mentally to the point of attempting suicide. Kali in (*Babu Alipofufuka*) attempted suicide because of the burden of single handedly raising the children left by her late husband.

Job Loss.

The character that loses their employment, according to this study develops mental illness. They are Mr. Ndi, Mvita, Mr. K, Ndera and Sarakani. Mr. Ndi withdrew from the sight and went on hunger strike hoping to die by hunger, Sekarani went berserk and killed his former employer (D.Y:2006) and Mr. K committed suicide (B.A:2001). According to this study, the actions of these characters are understood from Freud's theory of psychoanalysis which focuses on defensive mechanism.

Loneliness

Loneliness is a factor in psychopathology. The results show that women characters were mostly affected. The characters portrayed as lonely includes, Kali (B.A:2001), Kudura (K.N:1988), Asumini's mother (T.A:1990) and Mtima (D.A:2006). According to the researcher, the reasons behind loneliness that turned to affect the mind are widowhood, separation and isolation.

Marital problems

Prolonged conflicts among the spouses are the cause of depression according to this study. The characters that are portrayed as having long marital conflicts are: Kudura and Mr. Juba (K.N:1988), Mr. Ndi and wife, (D.Y:2006) and Mr. K and his wife (B.A:2001). According to this study, the women characters developed psychopathological condition they were neglected by their spouses and some moved from depressive state to madness. (Bi Kikuba, B.A:2001).

4.2 The Effects of Psychopathology

According to this study, some of the negative effects of psychopathology include linguistic impairment, suicide, homicide and other crimes. Characters across the novels manifested negative effects of psychopathology through actions and utterance and the action borders of criminality.

Linguistic Impairment

Language is an indication of personal inner process like thoughts and intentions. This study generally analyzed the linguistic dysfunction from depressed, stressed and schizophrenics. However, frequent use of first person singular and negative emotions dominates the communication of the psychopathological characters. Linguistic impairment were captured through utterances of characters like Asumini (T.A: 1990), Yungi, Ndi, Bori, Sakarani and Ndere (D.Y:2006).

Crimes

Number of psychopathological characters commits crimes. Some of these criminal acts includes suicide which was committed by Asumini (T.A: 1990), Kudura (K.N:1988), Kali (B.A:2001), homicide (Yungi, Mtima and Ndi, D.Y:2006). Four cases of complete suicide, and two attempted suicides are recorded in the study whereas two cases of homicide and eight characters resort to heavy drinking to drown their depression (Mbishi, Mvita, Jitu, Sarakani, Ndera, Kidawa, Bamkubwa and Yungi), rape (Jitu did rape Kilua, his younger sister) as a displacement of anger and Mtima assaulted an old white woman (D.Y:2006).

4.3 Discussion

Discussion of the results of this study link with already researched works. According to Adler (2000), there is a direct relationship between poverty and mental disorder. Lorant (2007) explained that wherever there is a shortage or lack of resources in the family level, the

members are affected psychologically. The study of Atkinson (1986) shows that lack of employment or diminished hope of securing employment triggers depression. These studies concur with the findings of our study. The characters used in the study were victims of poverty, retrenchments and unemployment and this caused psychopathological condition.

According to Kumar (2008), lack of parental love affects the children psychologically. He explained that a child who experiences parental conflicts develops psychopathology. This study focuses on youth who felt unloved by their parents; Kidawa, Bamkubwa (B.A:2001), Mbishi (K.N:1988), Yungi, Bori and Jitu (D.Y:2006). Loneliness, according to this research is a factor in psychopathology. Brennan (1982), explained how loneliness causes hopelessness, stress and diminished happiness. This is brought about by long separation with the partner or death of a spouse. Acharya (2012) did a related study and the findings show the relationship between loneliness and suicide.

This study has established how psychopathology affects language usage. Past research has shown how frequent use of first persons singular is a pointer of depression; Oberlender (2006) explained that language is a window through which one can understand the mental condition. Ragin, (2006) explained that poverty of speech is a manifestation of psychopathology. According to Krull (2014) negative expressions and negative words uttered against oneself or other targets is a sign of mental sickness. He further states that negative word usage mirrors the state of the mind. This study did content analysis of texts made by the leading characters across all the novels.

According to Siegel (1995), crime is an act against oneself, others or against the state. Woodworth and Porter (2002) linked criminal activities to psychopathology. There are some highlighted criminal acts in this study which were committed by the chosen characters like; suicides (Kudura, Asumini and Mr.K. K.N.; T.A:1990 and B.A:2001, respectively. Homicide is committed by Yungi, Ndi, Mtima (D.Y:2001) and assault is done by the following characters; Mr. Ndi, Yungi, Mtima (D.Y:2006) Asumini (T.A: 1990) committed assaults. Boniface & Joiner (1998) explained the links between crime and psychopathology.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study embarked on analysis of psychopathological characters with reference to four novels authored by Said Ahmed Mohamed. The study shows that the psychopathological elements which are depression, stress schizophrenia, anger and suicidal tendencies are linked to poverty, unemployment and marital challenges. Psychopathological conditions have also been known to have impact on linguistic expressions. Lastly, the research established a relationship between psychopathology and criminal activities. From these findings, the research recommends the following that more research on the characterization, especially on

psychopathological characters, either basing on S.A Mohamed's novels or other literary works, literary analysts need to be keen on characters' utterances since word spoken reflects the conditions of the mind and governments to have sound policies on mental sickness since it affects many members of the public.

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