

Analyzing Depression in the Poems of Abdullah al-Baradouni Using MMPI-2

Dr. Mostafa Mahdavi Ara ¹

Assistant Professor in Arabic Language and Literature, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran

Dr. Hossein Shareh

Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran

Received: 17 July 2015

Accepted: 3 May 2016

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Psychoanalytic criticism, as a link between the two disciplines of psychology and literature, strives to assay literary works from its point of view and provide answers to such questions as how a literary work can depict the characteristics and (personality) traits of its creator. Sigmund Freud and adherents to his school of thought believe that literary works and works of art are mental and psychological documentations of artists' characters and, through them, one can deeply analyze a scholar and his psychological status, revealing his mental illnesses.

2. Theoretical Framework

Severe depression is a neurotic phenomenon and a prevalent emotional illness which causes one not to enjoy life. In fact, the depressed person is inflicted with a type of despair which negatively affects his social and personal relations. People suffering from this illness usually feel depressed, unhappy and bored. They are pessimistic and feel hopeless about the future. They might even talk of committing suicide and report physical complaints, sleep disorders, nightmares, feebleness, exhaustion, and infirmity. They feel desolate, isolated and are self-contained. Recently, psychiatrists have been able to identify psychological and personality disorders through questionnaires such as Beck and MMPI-2 tests. A high score in such tests is indicative of the mentioned disorder in the person. Since scholars occasionally show such signs in their works, their works can be analyzed in line with these questionnaires.

The literature regarding such studies dates back to nearly a century ago. For instance, Ghobadi and Houshang (2009) critically investigated the character of Zal in Ferdowsi's Shahname based on Alfred Adler's psychological theory. In their study, Payandeh, Sanati and Farhadpour (2003) mentioned that psychoanalysis and literature have a two-way relationship and touch on one another. Nazeri and Seddighi (2011) performed a psychological analysis of the concepts of "fairy" and "love" in the poems of Khalil Hawi and Hashemi (2009) offered a psychological interpretation of Muhammad Iqbal's poems. Among the studies undertaken on the works of Abdullah al-Baradouni, "The artistic picture

1. Corresponding author. Email: m.mahdavi@hsu.ac.ir

of Abdullah al-Baradouni" by Valid Mashouh can be named where aspects of al-Baradouni's literary creation and his poetic imagery as a blind poet are discussed. "Irony in the poems of Abdullah al-Baradouni" by Musaed bin Sad Zobiani is another work in which the author addresses the humorous language of the poet in expressing issues. The present study is different from the previous ones as the poems of this poet have never been studied from a psychological perspective and, unequivocally, such studies can help researchers better understand the poet's literature.

3. Methodology

The present research aims to study the poems of the blind, contemporary Yemeni poet, Abdullah al-Baradouni, which add up to three volumes, in a descriptive-analytical way, using MMPI-2 test. This test was first introduced by Starke Hathaway and Charles McKinley and can identify disorders such as psycho-social deviations, mental weaknesses, hypochondria, hysteria, paranoia, schizophrenia and etc. In the present study, the six factors of MMPI-2 were identified as: a) feeling of sadness and melancholy and fatigue of life b) despair and hopelessness, c) fear and anxiety d) pessimism about oneself, life and society d) distress and insomnia e) thinking about death and suicide. Through conforming the poems of this poet to these factors, we aim to answer the main research questions: a) based on MMPI-2 test, has Abdullah al-Baradouni been afflicted with clinical depression b) if yes, what elements have led to the outbreak of this phenomenon in the poet?

4. Findings

The findings of the study can be reviewed from both structural and contextual perspectives. Based on the factors of the test, all the symptoms of depression were deducted from al-Baradouni's poems. Terms such as "depression", "sorrow", "sadness", and "ordeal", etc., all of which convey negative meanings, are used with a high frequency in his works. The prosody of the poems is in congruity with the poet's mental state. The phonemes of the terms used in the poems are inspired by the poet's melancholy and sorrow. From a contextual perspective, the majority of the contents of his poems signify the poet's melancholy, exhaustion and hopelessness.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the study were analyzed based on the views of such psychologists as Sadock, Koraz, Maurer, and Maddal, Leahy and Bolat and it was found that the feelings of sorrow and sadness, despair and hopelessness, fear and anxiety, pessimism, thinking about death and insomnia and distress in the poet were higher than the normal threshold defined in MMPI-2 test, indicating a severe depression. Factors such as blindness, destitution and poverty, emotional relationship with mother and her untimely death along with the unwanted birth of the poet have all been major influential factors contributing to his affliction with this psychological disorder.

In the end, it is suggested that future researches analyze Abdullah al-Baradouni's poems from an existentialism perspective, illustrating, in three levels, his relationship with himself, nature and others.

Keywords: Abdullah al-Baradouni, MMPI-2, Depression, Symptoms, Factors.

References (In Persian)

1. Asghari, M. (2014). *Ravanshenasi va amoozesh afrad nabina* [Psychology and training the blind]. Tehran, Iran: Avaye Noor.
2. Bahrevar, M., & Heidari, M. (2011). Ravankavi zehniyyat adabi dar tosif She'b Bawwán [Psychoanalysis of literary mind of Arabs through descriptions of She'b Bawwán]. *Journal of Arabic Language & Literature*, 3(5), 1-34.
3. Dadsetan, P. (2011). *Ravanshenasi marazi tahavvoli: Az koodaki ta bozorgsali* [Abnormal psychology evolution: From childhood to adolescence] (Vol. 1). Tehran, Iran: SAMT.
4. Dichez, D. (2000). *Methods of literary criticism* (M. T. Sedghiani & G. H. Yoosefi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Elmi va Farhangi.
5. Ghobadi, H. A., & Hooshangi, M. (2009). Naghd va barrasi ravankavaneye shakhsiyyate zal az negahe Alfred Adler [A psychoanalytical study of the Zal character: An Adlerian approach]. *Literary Criticism*, 2(7), 91-119.
6. Graham, J. (2009). *Personality test and mental pathology (MMPI-2)* (M. Kafi Masooleh & H. Yaghoobi, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Nasl Farda.
7. Kraz, J. (2002). *Mental disorders* (M. Mansoor & P. Dadsetan, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Roshd.
8. MacKenzie, K. (2003). *Depression, symptoms and signs* (F. Hemmat Khah, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Asr Ketab.
9. Mansoor, M. (2014). *Ravanshenasi Zhenetic: Tahavvol ravani az tavallod ta piri* [Genetic psychology: The psychological change from birth to death]. Tehran, Iran: SAMT.
10. Mehryar, A. H. (1994). *Afsordegi, bardashtha va darmanshenakhti* [Depression, perceptions and cognitive therapy]. Tehran, Iran: Roshd.
11. Mitchell, R. (1990). *Depression* (G. R. Khajepoor Tadavani, Trans.). Tehran, Iran: Mina.
12. Nazeri, H., & Seddighi, K. (2011). Vakavi ravanshenakhti mafahim Pari va Eshgh dar soroodehaye Khalil Hawi [Psychoanalysis of fairy and love in Khalil Hawi's poetry]. *Journal of Arabic Language & Literature*, 3(5), 167-191.
13. Payandeh, H., Sanati, M., & Farhadpour, M. (2003). Rabeteye honar va adabiyyat ba ravankavi [The relation between art and literature, and psychoanalysis]. *Karnameh*, 41, 22-39.

References (In English)

1. Akindipe, T. O., Aina, O. F., & Onakoya, A. O. (2011). Risk of depression and subjective quality of life among attendees of a West African glaucoma clinic. *International Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences*, 1(2), 432-435.
2. Birren, F. (1961). *Color psychology and color therapy*. New York, NY: Martino Fine Books.
3. Bolat, N., Doğangün, B., Yavuz, M., Demir, T., & Kayaalp, L. (2011). Depression and anxiety levels and self-concept characteristics of adolescents with congenital complete visual impairment. *Turkish Journal of Psychiatry*, 22(2), 77-82.

4. Brady, I. (2004). In defense of the sensual: Meaning construction in ethnography and poetics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(4), 622-644.
5. Chavis, G., & Weisberger, L. (2003). *The healing fountain: Poetry therapy for life's journey*. Minnesota, MN: North Star Press of St. Cloud.
6. Colvin, K. (2007). *Dream poetry: Collective intimacy and healing*. Carpinteria, CA: Pacifica Graduate Institute.
7. Freud, S. (1916). *Leonardo da Vinci: A psychosexual study of an infantile reminiscence* (A. A. Brill, Trans.). New York, NY: Moffat, Yard and Company.
8. Freud, S. (1917). *Elusion and dream an interpretation in the light of psychoanalysis of Gradiva* (H. M. Downey, Trans.). New York, NY: Moffat, Yardand Company.
9. Freud, S. (1953). Remembering, repeating and working-through. In J. Strachey (Ed.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud (1901-1905)* (Vol. 8, pp. 145-156). London, England: Hograth.
10. Gorelick, K. (2007). Poetry therapy. In C. Malchiodi (Ed.), *Expressive therapies* (pp. 117-140). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
11. Hashmi, A. (2009). Three poems of Iqbal: A psychological interpretation. *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, 25, 108-121.
12. Kaya, N., & Epps, H. H. (2004). Relationship between color and emotion: A study of college students. *College Student Journal*, 38(3), 396-400.
13. Lange, R., & Rentfrow, J. (2007). Color and personality: Strong's interest inventory and Cattell's 16PF. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 9(3), 1-9.
14. Leahy, R. L., Holland, S. J. F., & McGinn, L. K. (2012). *Treatment plans and interventions for depression and anxiety disorders* (2nd ed.). New York: NY: The Guilford Press.
15. Maurer, D. M., & Darnall, C. R. (2012). Screening for depression. *American Family Physician*, 85(2), 139-144.
16. Pleij, H. (2004). *Colors demonic and divine: Shades of meaning in the middle ages and after* (D. Webb, Trans.). New York: NY: Columbia University Press.
17. Ray, D. (1998). Dreamwork, griefwork, poemwork. In T. Townley (Ed.), *Night errands: How poets use dreams* (pp. 170-180). Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
18. Sadock, B. J., & Sadock, V. A. (2007). *Kaplan and Sadock's synopsis of psychiatry: Behavioral sciences/clinical psychiatry* (10th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
19. Spearing, A. C. (2010). *Medieval dream-poetry*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
20. Wong, H.-B., Machin, D., Tan, S.-B., Wong, T.-Y., & Saw, S.-M. (2009). Visual impairment and its impact on health-related quality of life in adolescents. *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, 147(3), 505-511.

References (In Arabic)

1. Al-Amri, F. A. (2003). *Asar al-torath fi sher Abdullah al-Baradouni* [The influence of heritage on the poetry of Abdullah al-Baradouni] (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Kufa, Kufa, Iraq.
2. Al-Baradouni, A. (2006). *Diwan Abdullah al-Baradouni* [Diwan of Abdullah al-Baradouni]. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-‘awdah.
3. Al-Dhubiyānī, M. S. (2010). *Al-Sokhriyya fi sher Abdullah al-Baradouni* [Irony in Abdullah al-Bardouni's poetry] (Unpublished master's thesis). Umm al-Qura University, Mecca, Saudi Arabia.
4. Al-Mokhtari, Z. (1998). *Al-Madkhal ila nazariyya al-naghd al-nafsi* [An introduction to the theory of psychoanalytic criticism]. Damascus, Syria: Arab Writers Union.
5. Khalaf Allāh, M. (1947). *Min al-vijhat al-nafsiyya fi dirasa al-adab v naghdih* [A study of literature and criticism from a psychological point of view]. Cairo, Egypt: Maṭba‘at Lajnat al-Ta’lif wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr.
6. Moshawah, W. (1996). *Al-Sora al-fanniya fi sher Abdullah al-Bardouni* [The artistic image in poems by Abdullah al-Bardouni]. Damascus, Syria: Arab Writers Union.
7. Qutb, S. (1959). *Al-Naghd al-adabi, osuloh va minhajoh* [Literary criticism: Its origin and methods] (3rd ed.). Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi.