

Psychoanalytic Analysis of Bashar ibn Burd's Poetry with an Emphasis on Christopher Lasch's Theory of Narcissism

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Introduction

Christopher Lasch (1932-1994) was an American historian and social critic, and a professor of history at the University of Rochester. His book "The Culture of Narcissism," published in 1979, explores psychological and cultural changes in American society. The author's analysis combines Freudian psychology and Marxist theory, offering a comprehensive critique of the emergence of narcissism as a dominant cultural trait in America. He begins the book by defining narcissism through the lens of Freudian psychology. Narcissism is described as a condition in which individuals' behavior is driven by repressed self-hatred, seeking validation from others to maintain the fantasy of themselves as powerful individuals. The author believes that the shift from a production-based economy to a consumption-based economy has led to a culture that prioritizes self-gratification and superficiality. He argues that this economic transformation has weakened societal bonds and fostered feelings of isolation and insecurity among individuals. The author criticizes both the political left and right for their roles in perpetuating this narcissistic culture. He blames the progressive left for undermining traditional family structures, which he considers essential for psychological stability. On the other hand, he believes that mere liberalism has destabilized societies and encouraged narcissistic behaviors. Factors such as grandiosity, devaluation of others, omnipotence delusions, self-serving attribution, avoidance of identification with others, and complaining are among the effects of narcissism in an individual from Lasch's perspective. In the following, relying on the poems of Bashar ibn Burd, we will examine these aspects in his verses.

Methodology

"The Culture of Narcissism" is a critical exploration of the psychological dimension of major transformations that have occurred in the structure of cultural authority in society. Therefore, its author attempts to describe human signs and tendencies using new psychological criteria, referring to it as "narcissism." Among writers and poets of various literatures, there have always been authors whose environmental and physical conditions directly influenced their works and poems. One such poet is Bashar ibn Burd. Among

Bashar's most important physical conditions that overshadowed the themes of his poems is his blindness. This genetic defect made him a psychotic poet, which led to the emergence of many complex factors for which he chose numerous compensatory mechanisms. These compensatory mechanisms include satire and threatening others, narcissism, blaming people, complaining, and so on. For this reason, the present study aims to examine Bashar's poems from the perspective of Christopher Lasch's psychological criticism using a descriptive-analytical and library-based method.

Results and Discussion

Christopher Lasch was an American historian, social critic, and theorist, primarily known for his critiques of American culture and, in particular, the rise of narcissism in modern society. One of his most important theories, the theory of the culture of narcissism, was presented in a book of the same name in 1979. Although Christopher Lasch was not directly a literary theorist, his views on the culture of narcissism and his critiques of modern society had profound effects on literary analysis and cultural studies. This narcissism is characterized by traits such as excessive self-focus, an extreme need for external validation, an inability to form deep and lasting relationships, fear of aging and death, and indifference to the future. Bashar ibn Burd was a poet of the Abbasid era whose restless existence and tormented psyche led him to develop his satirical personality. However, many researchers have attributed his satires and his inferiority complex to his blindness. Bashar's physical defect and family circumstances had made him a psychotic personality, and the compensation mechanism, as evident from his poems, was a kind of narcissism and self-superiority in his character, which is now referred to as "narcissism." Therefore, the present study aims to analyze and examine Christopher Lasch's theory of narcissism in the poems under study using a descriptive-analytical method. The research findings indicate that all components of Christopher Lasch's theory, which include grandiosity, devaluation of others, omnipotent fantasies, attributional egotism, avoidance of identification with others, and complaining, are applicable to Bashar's poems and are reflected in various ways in the poet's works.

Conclusion

Christopher Lasch's theory of narcissism encompasses components of grandiosity, devaluation of others, omnipotent delusions, narcissistic attribution, avoidance of identification with others, and complaint. All these components collectively align with Bashar's poetry, such that he constantly highlights the weaknesses and negative points of others, considers himself and his family superior, and elevates himself above other people. He also

continuously seeks to elicit the admiration of others by mentioning his seemingly positive attributes. He considers himself superior to everyone, flaunts his poetic power to all, and claims that his poetry has caused him to remain in a high position, and that everyone remains hidden from his majesty and becomes his enemy.

In line with narcissistic attribution, Bashar engages in character assassination of others, describing some of them as ill-tempered, vile, stingy, greedy, and having ugly appearances and broad snouts. He even attributes other inappropriate remarks to them and sometimes considers them blacks whose blackness makes them resemble bastards. This devaluation of others is largely evident in Bashar's poetry and indicates his narcissism, which has caused him to see everyone at a lower level than himself. Enumerating all these flaws and unfair accusations against others all indicate the poet's inner complexes that have caused his narcissism, and with these descriptions, he has sought to show himself as superior.

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