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REPRESENTATION OF CHAOS, CONTRAST AND CONFLICT IN GIRISH KARNAD'S PLAY
TUGHLAQ

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ABSTRACT

Tughlaq is Indian Kannad language play in 1964 by Girish Karnad. The play deals with 14th century ruler Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq's last phase (1327-1332) of his life in the drama. He was an idealist as well as visionary ruler. The play expresses the patricide, fratricide, the shifting of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, the introduction of copper coins, killings in the kingdom of *Tughlaq*. His illogical actions are results of Unconscious or repressed desires. The unconscious and repressed memories of patricide and fratricide, killings, the feeling of guilt made king restless. The play focuses on the theme of socio-religious conflicts. *Tughlaq* was called as 'mad' during his reign due to his whimsical decisions.

Keyword: the patricide, fratricide, chaos, infidels, intrigues, psychological frustrations, Unconscious or repressed desires, secularism, the prayer.

Introduction

Girish Karnad belongs to Mangalore Konkani family. He took his undergraduate education in Oxford University in England. Then he moves to the United States to work as an assistant professor and residential researcher at Chicago University. Girish Karnad is well known multi-dimensional personality. He has been primarily a man of the theatre. He has displayed an uncanny skill and imagination in manipulating the plot construction. His theatrical success depended on dramatic creations and achievements Karnad today stands supreme dramatist among other playwrights of his age. He is one of the creators of a national theatre for modern India. Karnad earned his reputation by his three brief plays. *Yayati*, *Hayavadana* and *Tughlaq*. These plays helped him gain recognition as a playwright. Socially significant topics weren't appealing to his interest. His topics came from history, folklore, and mythology. He wrote *Yayati* which centre on a tale from the Mahabharata about a youthful monarch who suffers due to age. Karnad's another play namely *Hayavadana* which depicts a different sort of transformation. Karnad moved from mythology to history in *Tughlaq*. In each of the three plays, Karnad crafts a dramaturgical universe with problems pertinent to the tales being addressed. All three of these plays still have been successful.

Tughlaq is an Indian Kannada Language Play written by Girish Karnad in 1964 and later was translated into English by G.K. Dharwar in 1970. It has 13 scenes. Karnad impressed by 14 century Muhammad Bin Tughlaq which is a historical figure. The play deals with history of the time in the play. He was deeply impressed by Tughlaq's character. He is visionary monarchs but degenerated into anarchy. The play is commentary on

Contemporary politics of the 1960s. But the Play is a historical play. The play is a fine blending of fact and fiction in its narrative. Karnad depicted the traditional sources of the life and times of Tughlaq in the play. He thoroughly studied the facts related to Muhammad Tughlaq before writing Tughlaq. He deviated from history where is necessary for him from artistic and technical point of views.

Karnad has discussed various themes in his plays like man's eternal desire to achieve completeness, mixing of caste and religion transfer of responsibility. The play focuses on the theme of socio-religious conflicts. Tughlaq was called as 'mad' during his reign due to his whimsical decisions. Muslim ruler invaded India to spread Islam. They fought against Hindu people and defeated them. They called Hindus as infidels. Native people were thinking of revenge upon Muslims. *Tughlaq* is Karnad's well-known play in which he introduces politics and religion. He is protagonist in the drama and aiming to unite Hindu-Muslim. He is ambitious as well as intriguer in nature. Religion is not a weapon to serve people. Religion preaches moral values and politics depend on the intrigue and deceit. Tughlaq's declaration of five time prayer compulsory, the transfer of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, abolish of Jiziya from the infidels, there is revolt in the populace. The religious leaders rise against him and are imprisoned by craftiness of Tughlaq. Whoever rises against the Sultan were found dead. Shaikh Imam-ud-din comes to Delhi to address the people but none to hear him. He fails to understand the Koran and puts behind the bars in the name of the justice. The Sheikh goes to implore Ain ul mulk of Avadh for peace in the name of religion and to save the blood of Muslims which will be shed in the war between sultan and Ain ul mulk. As Sheikh Say something the battle starts and the Sheikh is killed in the battle. The murder of sheikh leads to intrigue of the courtiers other idealists in the kingdom. The play is fine combination of politics and religion. It aims at showing the idealism of ruler will fail and ruin the idealist. Karnad attempts to bring out the truth that the religious saints cannot wash away filth from society. Aziz, the dhobi masquerading as saint, when exposed pleads with the Sultan, for his life and says when it comes to washing away filth; no saint is match for a dhobi. The idealist politicians bring out more chaos in the country than prosperity and welfare of the people. The people of India still are led away by the saint and religious heads that muddle with politics which is a game of sesaw. During the reign of Tughlaq the Hindus and Muslims did not trust one another. The Muslims called Hindus infidels and Hindus suspected Muslims. Muhammad sultan's efforts failed of uniting Hindu and Muslims bring together as brotherhood. Gandhi's, the idealist attempted to unite Hindu and Muslims. Nehru followed Gandhi's footsteps but he failed. There are lot of bloodshed, riots, doubts and distrusts between Hindu and Muslims in post-independence India.

In *Tughlaq*, Hindu treated as human beings. The old Muslims advised their young to beware from Hindu. The cloud of suspicion and doubt finds between the Muslims and the Hindus. Muhammad wants justice and brotherhood in his kingdom. He longed for peace, equality and progress of the people. He wishes justice in his kingdom at the same time Aziz (a Muslim dhobi disguised as a Brahmin Vishnu Prasad of Shiknar) files suit against the Sultan for confiscating land by the state or sultan himself. It suggests the contrasting situation in the kingdom. Aziz demand compensation for his loss later he was given his loss. Imam-ud-din and Shahab-ud-din are saintly and idealists. Initially they do not want to mix up in the politics. But later ready to envoy to the King of Avadh to pursued from war. It seems contrary in their character.

Characters are well-knit and well-marked in the play. They are neither evil nor good at all. They are mixture of opposites-vices and virtues. There is a fight Good against Evil. Sultan himself is an amalgam of the divine aspiration at the same time the deft intrigue. An older person considers him as irreligious, anti-Islam and a romantic. The young opine that he is truly religious, human and idealist. It is difficult to assess the character of Tughlaq. The Tughlaq represents ambiguous character in the play. He is mixture of the frailties of man and the virtues of a hero who met tragic end. Muhammad is an idealist king and at the same time chaos pervaded in the kingdom. The atmosphere of cruelty, killings and tears is seen in the reign of the Muhammad. In such adverse situation it is very difficult to pray five times in the condition of empty stomach. In scene eleven, People talks outside the fort of Daulatabad is contrary. They talk;

First man: Prayer. Prayer who wants Prayer now?

Second man: Ask them to give us some food.

First man: There is no food. Food's only in the Palace, It's Prayers for us.

Thus, this dialogue among the people about the situation of the kingdom went in adverse level. For the sake of power ruler can do anything. The priority is not the citizen but the power.

Muhammad Tughlaq killed his father and brother to become a king. Tughlaq denies the entire accusation raised against him. Tughlaq also announces the shift of Capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, Later on the replacement of the copper coin instead silver. All these decisions result in great failures as a result of them economy affects rapidly. Tughlaq kills whoever speaks against him or criticises him. Aziz disguises as a Hindu and gets land from the government as he knows that king is trying to promote the idea of communal equality by benefiting Hindus. Tughlaq's stepmother kills Najib for misguiding Tughlaq. The death of Najib makes Tughlaq restless. Id is the strongest part of Tughlaq's personality. He kills hundreds of people after the murder of Najib. Later stepmother admits that she killed Najib. She admits the charge of murder because Tughlaq's killing innocent people. She is punished by Tughlaq. The death of his mother made him disturbed.

Karnad represents character of Muhammad Tughlaq which is very complex. He is well educated king and has knowledge of medicine, philosophy and astronomy. He has ability to solve all the problems of kingdom. He believes in humanity. As a result, he tries to make unity between the Hindu and the Muslims. His actions and his character are contrast. He is moderate king. But his decisions are not compatible with his intelligence. It feels that some other forces working behind his actions. Actually, his actions are influenced by psychological frustrations. He is a complex character. His illogical actions are results of Unconscious or repressed desires. The characters are suggesting psychic apparatus (Freud's id, ego and superego). Tughlaq's stepmother and Sheikh Imamudin are symbols of Tughlaq's superego which criticize his actions. Tughlaq's Id (Najib) always inspires Tughlaq's revengeful, emotional and impractical decisions. Barani is Tughlaq's ego which always advises him to act calmly and rationally. Sheikh Imam-ud-din criticizes Tughlaq's state policy. The killing of Imam is inspired by his ego (Barani) but his id (Najib) inspired this decision. Here Tughlaq's ego fails to mediate between id and superego. He thinks that Imam wrongly accused him of patricide. He feels justice by killing Imam. Tughlaq's stepmother is manifestation of superego that keeps oppose Tughlaq's cruelty.

Tughlaq cannot sleep because of bloodshed, killings and chaos. All these happen in the mind of Tughlaq. In the last Barani leaves Tughlaq and goes to his hometown. His mother killed in riots. Barani has no work after the death of Imam-ud-din, Stepmother and Najib. It is very difficult to allow Barani to leave. Muhammad finds no mental peace. He is unable to understand where is. His Id (Najib) and Superego (Imam-ud-din and Stepmother) killed each other and his ego (Barani) left him. The unconscious and repressed memories of patricide and fratricide, killings, the feeling of guilt made king restless.

Karnad uses various symbols to represent the contradictions of Tughlaq's personality. Prayer, chaos and disguise are leading motifs in the play. The play is considered drama of 'intrigues'. These intrigues reflect the contradictions in his personality. Prayer is used by Tughlaq as well as other opponents. The Sayyids, the Amirs, Shihabuddin and Sardar Ratan Singh conspire to murder Tughlaq at Prayer time. Another symbol is the chess in the play. It is symbol of intelligence. His bending over the chess board implies that Tughlaq manipulates his opponents as pawns. He is spiritually lonely and frustrated within. In the end when Najib, his trustworthy Vizier murdered. He breaks down and prays to God. He says:

"God, God in heaven please help me. Please don't let go of my hand....

I have no one but you.....you.....you.....you".

The above line implies Tughlaq's troubled state mind. He suffers from nervous breakdown. There is a complete disintegration of the personality of the Sultan.

Tughlaq establishes analogy between the 14th century King Tughlaq's reign and the political situation of the Nehruvian era. This unique contemporary relevance perceived as political allegory. Karnad addresses the striking gap between political aspiration and its reality. Tughlaq was a brilliant individual ends his career in bloodshed and chaos. There is a constant conflict between reality and the ideal state of affairs. Tughlaq wishes to see unity

between Hindus and Muslims. He hopes to strengthen secularism in the kingdom. But his aspiration collides with reality as he fails in his vision.

Conclusion

Thus, the play is structured as opposites: the ideal and the real, the divine aspiration and deft intrigue. Tughlaq try to maintain peace, justice, progress and equality. But he couldn't able to wins the hearts of public. He labelled as a shrewd politician, a callous and cruel murderer and intriguer who employs religion for his political power. Sultan clams his state to be free and corruption. But state officials are corrupt.

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