

MACBETH, TUGHLAQ, AND CALIGULA AS TYRANTS

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ABSTRACT

Power politics with no human concern devastates human life. Man has undergone untold sufferings under unguarded leaders who used human lives as mere tools in the game of power politics. When willpower is not guided by wisdom, the power is bestowed only in the terrible hands. Thus the paper dissects three powerful alpha kings namely Macbeth, Tughlaq and Caligula whose abuse of power brought in the elemental changes in them who are susceptible to certain vulnerability.

KEYWORDS: Power, Tyranny, Ambition, Macbeth, Tughlaq, Caligula

INTRODUCTION

Power politics with no human concern devastates human life. Man has undergone untold sufferings under unguarded leaders who used human lives as mere tools in the game of power politics. Like predator they swamped many lives. Their immorality and mania have been recorded in the much frightened human history and psychology. Even today the world witnesses such cruelty in the twenty-first century in the West Asian countries, Libya, Myanmar, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and certain other European countries, where democracy is either an unheard term or a mirage. There is such a boiling struggle for power and the abuse of power results in genocide. The abuse of power seems to create the most unhappiness when a person uses personal whims and foibles to get his personal benefits without any regard to the welfare of fellow beings, or when power is used to go into the lower dimensional planes.

Comparative Study

Comparative study always brings charm to reading and makes critical analysis by applying critical theories to dive deep in the chasm of charismatic study on characters to distinguish them from each other with the fine shred of differences and weave the similarities to bring out an issue that pattern around the world. The commonality will set a stage to discuss on the topic which prevails everywhere and be the source of fiasco and suffering through exorbitant power in the wrong hand. Power corrupts inexorably and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Throughout history power has been corrupted people many times. Idi Amin, Napoleon, Hitler, Saddam Husain, the Emperor of Bokasa and even George Bush have all been corrupted by power. Any person who gains power usually uses it to their advantage. Thus, comparative study provides multi-dimensional dissection of world literature.

The protagonists in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* and Albert Camus' *Caligula* are all tarred with the same brush with different colours and etched out an image of the worst tyrants. Each one was "a man in the moon" before tyranny and evil could cling them; later desperately meets a 'sea-changes' in their voyage and thus each ends up as a "man of straw". All their idealism turn to ashes down the years of their transgression which makes their lands infernos? These tyrants have good taste for power and misuse it and whose soul and mind are dead. This is a study about moral men turned into immoral men in a moral universe. Each one of them shows the possible potentialities for tyranny and evil in them. They suffer a kind of violence in their mind. They have a flaw that leads them to the path of tyranny. Macbeth, a military general, has a vaulting ambition to become a king, Caligula, who is a king already has got the

knowledge of the absurdity of life and inevitability of death, and finds it as his missionary zeal to teach to his people and willingly grips to the rod of a tyrant. Tughlaq, on the other hand, wants the unity among Hindus and Muslims and all his idealisms are based on this have been misconceived by them which pressurizes him to whip his people. But all their willing choices are outwitted by nature.

This study of tyranny shows how the good souls commit evil deeds simply because the evil in them takes upper hand over the good, and thus the individual good is sometimes at war with the general good of humanity which brings ruin of the individual and those associated with him. Evil is not necessarily sought as evil but as good by persons like Macbeth, Tughlaq and Caligula. They do not know their social duty and also how to adjust the individual good in them to social good. Each one has a flaw that is viewed externally as sins; but the causes of human vices are many for example, some person may submit to pleasures, while others endure pain, and a few others lack the strength of purpose or even prudence in the choice of action.

Macbeth as Tyrant

Macbeth is Shakespeare's most profound and mature vision of evil. Roy Walker opines that "Macbeth is by nature predisposed to evil". (K.C Mathur13) Theodore Spenser says "he (Macbeth) grows into evil and develops bad qualities unlike even Iago who does not become increasingly evil. (K.C Mathur13). Macbeth is said to be dehumanized by Shakespeare because in Holinshed the murder has a political motive but in Shakespeare it is purely personal one. The story of Macbeth is the story of crime, which is no motive but vulgar ambition. Macbeth, the cousin of the king, mild, just and beloved, but now too old to lead his army, is introduced as a general of extraordinary prowess, who has covered himself with glory in putting down a rebellion and repelling the invasion of a foreign army. The ambition of Macbeth has been regarded as evil and as a tragic flaw in critical jargon, but to Nietzsche it represents as will to power. Macbeth has in him the making of himself as an existential hero because he makes his own judgment of what he must do and be. Existentialists believe in man's possibility of being himself. Macbeth, the supreme commander, realizes the possibility of being more than what he is now. Macbeth knows that his becoming the king is possible only if Duncan is shuffled off his mortal coils.

Macbeth undoubtedly has vaulting ambition that pricks the sides of his intent. But this ambition and the accompanying thought of murder are stuffed in him neither by the witches nor by his wife. He has ambition for the crown even before his meeting with the witches is evident by the statement of Lady Macbeth.

Nor time nor place

Did then adhere, and yet you would both both. (1.7.51-52)

When Duncan bestows the title of Prince of Cumberland upon young Malcolm, Macbeth thinks of his new barrier on his way and gets into the conflict between ambition and fear. Macbeth's fond hopes die. The French Academic describes the passion for power as "an unreasonable desire to enjoy honours, estates and great places" (Compell208). Macbeth also is led by the fear of rivalry namely Banquo who will be the father of kings.

Macbeth undertakes the murder as a grim and hideous duty. Banquo fears the anger and hatred of Macbeth who got the power and Malcolm and Donalbain flee quickly from Macbeth who has destroyed one who is stronger than them. Ironically the sons are suspected of having done the murder of Duncan. The play is thus motivated by the increasing passion of fear. The wine of life is indeed drawn and fear takes complete possession of the guilty soul. Macbeth isolates himself from humanity. Macbeth has the fear of Banquo's wisdom and his future as the father of kings. Macbeth sees that

he wears 'a fruitless crown' and carries a 'barren scepter'. He has indeed given up peace and immortality to make the race of Banquo's progenies to rule. He will kill his fear by murdering Banquo and his son Fleance, he says,

Strange things I have in head that will to hand

Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.(3.5.139-140)

He meets witches second time and welcomes disorder and confusion. He is plunging deeper and deeper into unreality, the severance from mankind and all moral forms of life is now abysmal deep. He is shown 'Apparitions' glassing the future. They promise his success in terms of natural law, no man 'of woman born' shall hurt him, he shall not be vanquished till Birnam Wood come against him. He thinks of Macduff, who, "denies his person, at our grate bidding" and decides to get him killed, because he thinks Macduff as a potential destroyer of the edifice of his life. Macduff's wife and babes and others associated with him are given "to the edge of the sword". Macbeth becomes what in common parlance is called "tyrannical". He plants a spy in every home and turns Scotland into a grave or a Golgotha. He adds crime after crime and emerges at last as victorious and fearless. As the tyrant, he is fearless in the immediate present, but could peer with fearful eyes into the on-coming future. Macbeth is supped full with horror, when there comes the news of the advance of Birnam Wood. Macbeth advances to defend his castle with the blind belief of witches' equivocal promises. The light is brought to Scotland by the armies of Malcolm. Macbeth confesses himself as a tyrant and wins back the integrity of soul but is killed by Macduff. A clear daylight now disperses the imaginative dark that has eclipsed Scotland.

Tughlaq as Tyrant

Muhammad bin Tughlaq reigned from 1325-51. He is described as an innovative and ambitious ruler, the very trait worked to his disadvantage. Girish Karnad's play *Tughlaq* reveals the tenor of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's despotic rule and the plight of his people. A distinctive feature of this play is that it provides insight into the universal truth concerning the relationship that exists between power and man. Tughlaq is the protagonist who motivates the sequence of actions in the play. Satish Bhattacharyya aptly says, "it is not a mere historical play, it is something more; and more than a study of historical events, the play provides an interpretation of human character in its width and depth" (121). Tughlaq is not only dried up of human emotions, he is emptied of spiritual sentiments also. His ambition for power and money vitiates his noble objectives and afflicts the prayer and the body politics. The citizens gather outside the fort of Daulatabad and vent their anger and displeasure as follows:

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

Its prayers for us.(11.70)

Tughlaq is a usurper and he ascends the throne after getting his father and brother murdered during prayer time and has blood on his hand at such a young age. In this way prayer, which is to be left to the discretion of the individual, is debased since it is dragged into the domain of power politics. Religion defies politics because it preaches morals and expects morality from the people; whereas, politics thrives on craftiness, insidiousness, intrigue and deceit. Tughlaq is not an exception. Even Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, who had every reason to kill his uncle for the murder of his father and the incestuous marriage with his mother, did not kill his uncle at the prayer time. He did not pollute prayer. But Tughlaq desecrates prayer by using it as a means for political ends. Despite his various commendable qualities, Tughlaq turns out to be a tyrant who causes untold sufferings not just to the people surrounding him but also his subjects.

His idea of introducing of copper currency releases a fresh problem to him. All the Hindu's house has become a domestic mint, making counterfeit coins. He announces that the capital is shifted from Delhi to Daulatabad and says

I want Delhi vacated immediately. Every living Soul in Delhi will leave to

Daulatabad Within a fortnight. I was so soft. I can see that now. They will only

understand the whip. (6 .44)

He does not understand the emotional attachment of people of their native soil; this involves not only the shift in the administration machinery but also of the people, lock, stock and barrel. Here also he fails to foresee the consequence. These repeated failures drag Tughlaq to the way of gradual disillusionment and fall from his idealism. He manipulates his people for his own purpose and uses them as mere tools. When Tughlaq observes the growing influence of Imam-Ud-din, who opposes him, turns him as a tool. He cleverly traps Imam-Ud-din and persuades him to be a messenger of peace to Ain-UI-Mulk. It is a fatal trap for Imam who resembles the king in his look is mistaken by Ain-UI-Mulk and kills him. Thus by a diabolic strategy he gets of both his enemies at one stroke. In truth, Tughlaq ultimately becomes every inch a bloodthirsty murderer and is drawn into the whirlpool of violence.

Caligula as Tyrant

Camus's *Caligula* is also a study about tyranny. Caligula is a king turns a predator and treads over other lives for his single purpose. He has total disregard for his people in his fight against the absurd and the inevitability of death. Camus imposed existential philosophy as the cause of Caligula's tyranny. The meaninglessness of human life and inevitability of death are the causes that dragged Caligula to be an ally with tyranny. Caligula meets a 'sea-changes' after the death of Drusilla, his sister with whom he had an illicit affair. The knowledge of the absurd emerges from the intellectual background of "existential philosophy" (Gomez 36). It is not bereavement that he suffers from but of a metamorphosis. Caligula feels that the universe is divested by illusions and lights so that man feels himself as an alien. After the diabolic epiphany Caligula embarks upon a career of oppression and bloodshed. He has become a rebel against life and his rebellion is a metaphysical revolt which results in his desire for impossible thing, as he says, "I suddenly felt a desire for the impossible" (1.119).

He orders that every patrician with any capital must disinherit their children and leave his money to the state. He creates an artificial famine by suddenly closing their stalls; insults poets by arranging a competition; and takes away the wife of a patrician and forces her to work in the public brothel; relegates those who do not get the identity card by making frequent visits to the brothel; and rapes the spouse of another after unashamedly announcing his intentions to her husband, arbitrarily puts to death the father of one patrician and the son of another; compels his own old nurse to drink poison and murders his mistress Caesonia. He assumes himself as god Venus and actually appears before his people and compels them to bow down in adoration.

All the patricians turned against him; but it is not the person whose son or father he has killed are against him; but it is them who have become laughing stocks, whose affected dignity now wages war against him. He knows that he has nothing to defend himself against their wounded dignity.

He exercises the rapturous power of a destroyer; compared with the power of creator is merely child's play. All the devastating blood, hatred, his isolation, ineffable joy of the unpunished murders, the ruthless logic that crushes out human lives is the sources of his happiness and above all his loneliness is what he desires the most. But there is no one who can condemn him since this world is devoid of judgment.

Caligula states to his people, "Famine begins tomorrow. We all know what famine means—a national catastrophe. Well, tomorrow there will be a catastrophe, and I shall end it when I choose" (2.139). It is very hard to sympathize with a ruler that promotes and helps cause a national famine, and this is why Caligula's character turns into an absurd and hated tyrant by the end of the play. However, Caligula's national famine is not the only cause for the people's hatred of him. He is also tyrannical in the way he kills and tortures his victims. His goal was to kill everyone in Rome one at a time, and he often tortures his victims in the process. Caligula says, "Kill him slowly, so that he feels what dying is like," (4.166).

The Philosophy of Abhinivesa

Why does an able emperor like Macbeth, Tughlaq and Caligula fail and suffer? A close and careful study of the plays enable to see a very different factor responsible for their tyranny and tragedy. And this factor is 'abhinivesa' which has been enunciated by Patanjali, an ancient Indian philosopher and psychologist. This great rishi has diagnosed five seminal factors which cause human failure and suffering. Thus Sutras are 'avidya'- 'ignorance', 'raga'- 'affection', 'dvesa'- 'aversion', abhinivesa',- 'vigorous attachment', 'klsah'- 'misery' which cause all the sufferings of a man. Abhinivesa is defined by Patanjali as "Sva-rasa VahiViduso Pi- tathaarudho- abhi-ni-vesa"-here "Siva" means one's own, innate inborn: "rasa" smeans interest , passion, notion, "vahi"- vah means horse and Vahi means one who rides; "viduso' pi" even a wise intelligent person; "tatha" in the manner ie like a common man; "arudho" to ride astride. Then " abhi" means in the direction of : "ni" means downward, below: and " vesa" means to enter. The whole expression can now be interpreted as follows: a man even a wise man, has an innate interest, passion, notion. Gradually this passion or notion enters deep down into the psyche of a person and gets settled there. This passion then assumes the role of a horse and the person then assumes the role of the rider. Now if the person acquires control over this horse, i.e. passion through some well-directed guidance, then there is not any tragedy; and if not, then there is fall and suffering. Macbeth, Tughlaq and Caligula all suffer under Abhinivesa and their passion has out rooted their human quality and tagged themselves as tyrants.

The Psycho-Analytical Concept of Rescue Triangle

Psychological analysis can give concrete reasons for their tyranny with the help of the concept called "Rescue Triangle" borrowed from "Transactional Analysis", a Neo-Freudian School of Psychology organized by Dr. Eric Berne. According to the concept there are three types of characters; the Rescuer, the Persecutor and the Victim. Almost all human beings suffer from various psychological problems without knowing the intensity of their damage to their life. One tends to act any one of these roles at one time; each one may have his or her favorite feeling. The feeling of guilt makes one to play the role of a Rescuer, the angry feeling makes one to play the Persecutor; and the feeling of helplessness makes one to play the victim. The Rescuer feels that he is superior to the victim. He sacrifices his own comforts for the sake of rescuing people which proves to be a failure. He is never thanked for his rescuing; moreover he finds himself exploited and thus showers anger over his victims; this would naturally turn him into a persecutor, but soon after his angry feelings are spent and he starts once again feeling guilty of having persecuted his victims. These qualities can be seen in Macbeth, Tughlaq of Caligula. All of them assume their favorite role as Rescuers and later turn up to the role of persecutor despite their dislike and at the end return to their original roles.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper, thus, makes an interesting sojourn into their mind psychologically and helps to probe into their actual problem in their power politics. Their tyrannical attitude not only affects them but the people around them. Their death at the end shows the limitation of man in holding power. Their death would certainly teach the world that blood will have blood.

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