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Understanding of Marlovian Avatar of Tamburlaine in the Light of Bakhtin's Carnivalism

Shibanur Rahman

Abstract:

In re-visioning and re-visiting history, the play writes across the world glances the historical figures in their own unique and distinctive way, and not as it is revealed in their cultural, social, and psychological boundaries. So for doing so, they add the flamer of their own unique creativity and apply exclusive ways to bring the past appear in their present work of art, and there for, historical character like Tamburlaine, appears totally in Marlovian avatar. But Marlovian view point, and what Marlowe is trying to unveil can be better understood in the beam of Bakhtin's Carnivalism. It is a method or a process, which sub-alter those believe or standard which is generally consider as rules or a norms. It has created a new, or a parallel world which stands in existence beside the real world. Marlowe, through his work has tried to alter the historical truth, for example the events in the second part of Tamburlaine, is totally the product of Marlovian creativity, and has nothing to do with historical fact, which is quite in line with the general understanding of Bakhtin's Carnivalism, probably he did this to attract the modern and his contemporary writers and thinkers. Parallel to this, he has tainted different faith and religion specially Islam. Therefore, this paper has a clear goal to put illumination on the different characteristic of Tamburlaine The Great, so that it can be designated that how this drama from the nib of Marlowe has manifested the social condition as well as the religious scenario of Elizabethan age in the ways of Bakhtin's Carnivalism

Key Words:

Carnivalism, Tamburlaine the Great, English History, Elizabethan Play, Marlowe.

Introduction:

Christopher Marlowe, who is also known as Kit Marlowe was a prolific writer of the age which was later known as the golden age, as along with literature, art, science and technique also got its wing that tried to unravel the entire world. During this prosperous Elizabethan era, different but important event happen, that change the whole scenario of the future of English history which was slowly rising on the bank of English river. One of those important event that took place during 1540/50, was when, Henry VIII initiated Anglo-Catholic as the official religion which moved to radical and deep-seated Protestants in Edward VI career. After all this, Roman Catholic was given the status of state religion. But the people were not at all comfortable with this decision, and there was a chance that it can lead to civil conflict. But At last Queen Elizabeth came for the saviour of her people and gave Protestantism the status of the national religion, to avoid clash, and Queen Elizabeth herself became accountable of English churches, so most of the English people joined Protestant church. This is one of the reasons, why there was a lethal religious conflict during and before Queen Elizabeth, and as a result many prominent personalities of this age including Marlowe and others turned any religion or to be precise they turn to atheism. Parallel to this, in similar stratum the British Reformation predisposed in the ancient Catholic calendar. So the Renaissance which was popularly known as age of enlightenment, there festivals were diverse and very different from what we're use to be done in the Middle age. As it is said that such carnival were hidden of their conventional expression. Even the religious celebration was completely destroyed from the people's life throughout the Renaissance age. But this novel brandish was a kind of nostalgia for the Elizabethan people, as they responded Protestantism as the nationalized and official faith in Carnivalism, and

the people also decided that they will purify religion from all its traditional believe myth and fictitious saga. So it is quite obvious that why in such society people turn their head to challenge such boiling conditions to Carnivalism.

Understanding and background of Carnivalism:

Carnivalism offers liberated ludicrous appearance of ideas, and while doing so, for the time being postpone every dispensation while challenging the social order of society.

In Carnivalism every one is equivalent, as it treats both common as well as people from rich and higher order of society on a equivalent scale. Author from carnival flavour of writing always strive to create a Pease of writing for the masses, which is actually just reverse to the system and culture of the church. There is a concept of hybrid people in Carnivalism, as the Carnival world is always changing and so the people, as they are shifting and altering them self and there hire and lower classes, and these people are known as hybrid people in Carnivalism. These hybrid people carry the traits of both the classes. In Carnivalism there is also a concept of "parody, another common feature of carnival, as a "double voiced discourse" which provides the opportunity for challenging and undermining dominant, authoritative voices"(quoted in Bakhtin 1984-p-324). Whereas the notional issues of Carnivalism are varying due to place an time, there for different interpretation was construed among different people, Devoid of their cultural language or any varying backdrop. The realistic causes may be because of an error in chronology which is understood or misunderstood in history. The sensible and rational reasons are replacing like the Carnival cycle, as it is asserted by Bakhtin, that the sagacity of time and change were greatly deepened and broadened, illustrating into its historical and social phenomena. The recurring disposition is outmoded by the sense of historic time. The bizarre and grotesque pictures with their connection to altering time and their mixed feeling become the source for the creative and ideological appearance of a potent consciousness of history and of historic modification which was there throughout the Renaissance. So it is apparent to observe Carnivalism as propounded by Bakhtin's as the numerous diffusion of many historical expression which were not limited to sixteen or fifteen century and they are continuing. So the present study aspires to bring to light how Carnivalism may get new and refreshing probable historical interpretations.

Historical overview and a brief digest of Tamburlaine The Great:

Christopher Marlowe introduces his presence in the literary arena by introducing [Tamburlaine the Great], the first of his two part of his play, in the Persepolis, of Iran.

The play opens with the event where a Persian emperor, Mycetes, send off his troops to dispose of Tamburlaine, a Scythian shepherd or a itinerant crook. And on the other hand in the same scene, Cosroe plan to overthrow his own brother Mycetes and wants to become the king. The play is mostly plotted in Scythia, where Zenocrate, the daughter of Egyptian crown has been incarcerated by Tamburlaine. Now it is best time to mention the actual and authentic historical fact of Scythians tribe. In this context it is said that on the basis of archaeological finding very less information was gather about the eastern part of Scythia. But is found that "the ancient Persians called all Alans, the Scyths EÜxái". {Quoted in Szemerényi-1980.-P-98}. 'Alani' or 'Alan' is the name, which is a distorted form of the region of Indo-European, which stands for respectable or civilized. Just like their ancestors, the Alans, the Scythians, were an Iranian itinerant idyllic people of antiquity. Many critics and historian in line with Szemerényi believe that, in the beginning, the Alans appeared as a nomadic and roaming belligerent rustic people who were expert warriors, who took part in various battles along with Sasanians, Romans, and Parthians. Actually Alans were the name of the people of Iranian talking East Sarmatian itinerant tribes. Because of the real presence of Scythian people and their tribes, and there clear impressions in our past, it is quite probable that Marlowe's play can

be understood both in the historical as well as in a cross border reading. Coming back to Tamburlaine we find that, Cosroe escorts Tamburlaine and they scrap with Mycetes thinking that he will bestow Cosroe the Persian crown. After Tamburlaine's repudiation of his assurance to Cosroe and after overpowering Mycetes, Tamburlaine consider Bajazeth, the king of the Turks. He overcomes Bajazeth and incarcerate the king and Zabina, Bajazeth wife. After all this, Tamburlaine aims to defeat Damascus. So the first part of Tamburlaine ends with Tamburlaine's and Zenocrate's wedding.

The second part of Tamburlaine opens while Callapine, Bajazeth's son, flees Tamburlaine's dungeon to retaliate for his father's death, but Callapine lost to Tamburlaine in the battle field. After all this Tamburlaine deploys his army to Babylon city, and the Governor of the Babylon city was hung. Over here Tamburlaine acted like a savage king and carried away a mass massacre, and also burnt the Quran, because he thinks that he is superior than the all mighty God. At last he gets sick and he dies.

Talking about Marlowe and his age, we very well know that he represent the golden era of all time, at least in context of literature and drama which was also accompanied by technological and scientific expansion. After Queen Elizabeth adoption and declaration of Protestants as the nationalized faith to avoid conflicts and after she herself became accountable of Britain churches, there was a great social change, as most of the English people tied with Protestant religion or atheism. In parallel to this, the English Reformation inclined in the Old Catholic calendar. Because of this the Renaissance carnivals were dissimilar from what use to be done during the Middle age. As these festivals were dormant of their usual expressions. The religious celebrations were also demolished from the public space, during Renaissance age. There for, the assertive religious belief were altered into the recluse ones. As it is rightly said that, " festivities such as carnival were linked to vulgarity, excessive laughter, and even extreme violence by Protestant religion as they were closely associated with paganism, distraction from players and the neglecting of religious duties". {Quoted in Laroque-1991-p-41}. This novel gesture of seeing the things of our past was a kind of reminiscence in the Elizabethan age. As, the people responded to Protestant as the public belief in Carnivalism. They made their mind to decontaminate religion of all of traditional believe which was rising abnormally. In this kind of culture it is quite noticeable that why people move towards to challenge such roasting circumstances to Carnivalism.

The expression of Carnivalism in Tamburlaine the Great, Part I by Christopher Marlowe:

In the process of emphasizing the Carnivalistic system and traditions of ruse or inversion, it looks to be that Carnival dramatists or playwrights exert, scrounge or exploited the manifestation of some renowned figures possessing cultural strength such as Tamburlaine. In other words the Carnival dramatist presents quite different picture of history and the cultural backdrop of that time and in Tamburlaine the grate, Tamburlaine is carnivalistically absolutely different with real Tamburlaine who is popular in history. Being lack of their belligerency, in both Christopher Marlowe's own creation Tamburlaine, and real historical figure of Tamburlaine. But Tamburlaine by Christopher Marlowe, is based on Elizabethan culture and there peoples observation toward orientalism and Islam, through which Marlowe brings up the best chasm to draw his contemporary people who shun all kinds of religion. "In creating Tamburlaine, Marlowe was striving to come up with a textual figure who, instead of coming across as a character built around the prevailing mood of European distress or the Turkish threat, would strike the audience as a paragon of a robust Western force of resistance against the Turks". {Quoted in Wolff-1964-P48}. It is so surprising as well as so amusing that in writing the play Tamburlaine, dread of Turks has been liberated in the name of grate warrior or the saviour who salvages European region from different enemies especially Turks. So, it can be said that these things can be taken as an event, or presentation of sign of Carnivalism. Hence, the

sharp and elevated Marlowe's Tamburlaine gains the approbation of his Elizabethan viewers when he plunders the Turks. Actually for the Elizabethan audience Tamburlaine's action elevates him to the stature of a hero. It can also be said that Christopher Marlowe's dreamy hero Tamburlaine is a kind of a disclosure of European reverie of a cantankerous and aggressive figure whom they can be saved by his cruelty. Christopher Marlowe demonstrated to his own time audience a image of the East they wanted to have, a man filled with deceit, nastiness, and false principle, an Orient society that was being shattered by its sovereigns.

In fact Marlowe tried to serve the audience of Elizabethan society, the way they wanted, that is the reason why Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine the grate has exposed as, anti-Orient, anti-Iranian anti-belief and even goes on to demonstrate atheism. Marlowe over here tried to walk through safely by bringing Islam and not Christianity, because Christianity was at that time also a populous English belief, and Islam on the other hand was faith of minority community. So he made Islam as a symbol for attracting his contemporary people to his own drama. As, over here religion and most importantly Orient belief, Islam were degraded and tainted in similar vein, and in act 3, captured Bajazeth remarks that,

“By Mahomet my kinsman's sepulchre,
And by the holy Alcoran I swear,
He shall be made a chaste and lustless eunuch” {III.iii-1-7}.

When we try to compare Bajazeth aphorism about Prophet Mohammad, the messenger of god, before the attack made by Tamburlaine to his government, to what Bajazeth supposed,

His hybrid and mixed individuality divulge that he is misidentified after detaining. Bajazeth, the kingdom of Turks, both signifying Elizabethan outlook toward Muslim Turks in the past. Bajazeth has no religious belief, and had a fused character portraying a dispossessed Carnival figure. On the other hand, Zenocrate conveys her love and liking to Tamburlaine and ultimately both of them get married. Although Agydas warns Zenocrate and mocks her:

“Let not a man so vile and barbarous,
That holds you from your father in despite,
and keeps you from the honours of a queen,
Being supposed his worthless concubine,” {III-ii-1-5}

But still the marriage took place. But the point to be noted is the choice of word by Marlowe, “worthless concubine”. Over here the word [concubine] has great association with Islamic history, and because of the degradation, it is supposed that it expresses the delineation of Islamic regulations as well as the Carnivalistic rules. The very word [concubine] has also been used in the third act of the first part of Tamburlaine, which again shows that Christopher Marlowe's first part of Tamburlaine presents the characteristics of Islamic more than the second part of Tamburlaine. It is a coincidence that Marlowe also shared his living era with eminent personality like Shah Abbas's Safavids, whose dynasty was reigning in Iran, at the same time when Marlowe was sharpening his literary nails. According to the book [The Three English Brothers] the Safavids assert to be heir to the Shahs of earliest Persia, whose title had been “shadow of God on earth”. On the other hand Christopher Marlowe also brings Tamburlaine up with such line like “I am term'd the scourge and wrath of God”, which is quite similar to Safavids “shadow of God on earth”, symbolising contemptuous force that is the token of Carnivalism. In the play, Zabina's presence, present the fake but Muslim identity, who's prayer does not have the characteristic of Muslim pray, rather it is more of adoption of Elizabethan observation toward Muslims, as most of the European feels that Muslim people worship the Prophet Muhammad. But in actuality Prophet Muhammad was the messenger of God, and had the duty of delivering God messages in its original sense, without adding or

subtracting anything out of it. Parallel to this with her, Zenocrate's Islamic faith grows shallow. It seems to be that Zenocrate's finds Tamburlaine God, as she remarks,

“My royal lord is slain or conquered,
Yet should he not persuade me otherwise
But that he lives and will be conqueror” {III-iii-1-4}.

If we see all this in the light of history, we can find that, Zenocrate's thoughts and view portrays Elizabethan propensity to Tamburlaine who protected them against Turk's assaults and ultimately protected them. The prickly and higher Tamburlaine gains the respect of his spectators when he plunders the Turks. As we know that it is a Christian practise to portray Prophet Muhammad as in the Christian system, so there is a corresponding organization, which accentuate the reverberation between [the friend of God, and son of God.]

In spite the notion of Marlowe's Tamburlaine, it is said that " idolatry or paganism was not [and is not] in the Qur'ân or in Muslims' practice. Nor is it a ceremony in the Islamic world. However, some educated medieval and Elizabethan writers did not pre-empt the perception of paganism in Islam. It did not exist among the learned English”

{Quoted in Smith-P-02-1977}. Critics like Wolff also praised Christopher Marlowe and his love of reading, as it is clearly evident that he was highly knowledgeable specially about the oriental past, because in the composition of the two part of Tamburlaine Marlowe's knowledge of oriental history, facts and various event has clearly been consumed. Zenocrate's waning believe on the principle of Islam, carrying her personality which is hybrid in nature and completely misidentified, is a clear cut symbol of Bakhtinian Carnivalism, and it is the brief difference in the Bajazeth's and Zabina's scornful comments after they have been control by Tamburlaine:

“Bajazeth. Ah, villains, dare you touch my sacred arms?
O Mahomet! O sleepy Mahomet!”
Zabina. O cursed Mahomet, that mak'st us thus the slaves to Scythians rude and barbarous!”
{III-Iii-1-4}

So it can be said that after conquering , Tamburlaine has formed a second carnivalistic world around his own self, which later reflected in the works of writers like Marlowe, because Tamburlaine slowly and gradually draw the folks under the similar web of Carnivalism. As the people like Tamburlaine gets in to this second world, they lose their unique self in order to be saved. So they are generally liberated by the fusion. This is the reason why the characters of such kind of plays generally portray their anti-religious propensities. They are actually contented by Marlowe and especially Elizabethan people. There for The religious amalgamism and multi traditions gives reason and scope for Bajazeth comments:

“Ye holy priests of heavenly Mahomet, That, sacrificing, slice and cut your flesh, Staining his altars with your purple blood” {IV.ii.-1-3}.

And so, these are the reason so many characters in Tamburlaine retract against Islam, and as a result these characters comes out to be a hybrid and unfaithful worshiper, and specially Bajazeth becomes the super spreader for the distribution of these doubts among other character in the play, and finally the play reach to its culmination with the suicide of Bajazeth:

“My empty stomach, full of idle heat, draws bloody humours from my feeble parts,
Preserving life by hastening cruel death” {IV.-iv-1-3}.

The carnival nature in the play shoots up clearly when Tamburlaine asked Bajazeth:

“Why fall you not to? Are you so daintily brought up, you cannot eat your own flesh?” on which Bajazeth responded in fury: “legions of devils shall tear thee in pieces” {IV-iv-1-3}.

These particular lines in context of carnivalism elucidate the feast and the obliteration and annihilation of flesh that is the sign of Carnivalism. Marlowe is popularly known for his Enovation in his selection of themes. Generally Religious cynicism persist throughout his play, rather it would not be wrong to say that sceptic attire of religious shade is the face of Marlovian play. Tamburlaine the Great not only challenge Muslim believe, but also Christian faith, as in the opening part of Tamburlaine the Great, the Scythian shepherd becomes king of Persia, surmounts different Eastern countries, riding on his luck and charm goes on to married the Egyptian sultan's daughter Zenocrate. In part second Tamburlaine continues his flight of conquests, but he loses his beloved wife Zenocrate, then he slays his gutless son and at last Tamburlaine succumbs to death. On one hand where Tamburlaine as a play present religious categorization, but on the other hand, Carnival instead confronts border and categorization into folk harmony because the system in Carnival connects with the confusing of disparities or smudging of ethical differences. The infringement of residual order, the violation and polluting of that was established earlier. It is why Zenocrate mourn over the dead bodies of the kings. Although she admits Tamburlaine's smugness and arrogance still she entreats to Mahomet and Jove to pardon him. Jove as the god has been mentioned in medieval time. Marlowe is always in his thought and action has tried to degrade Islam and over here also he has done the same. Without understanding the basic tenet on which Islam is based upon, Marlowe tried to personify God in Mohammad, which is a devilish action in itself in accordance to Islam, in this way Marlowe disgrace Gods messenger Mohammed, and Islam over all. And this approach of Christopher Marlowe presents Carnivalism, because like Marlowe even Carnivalism, mocks Islam. Carnivalism always tries to bring to light, the multi-cultural hybrid individuality of some grate historical and Islamic figures. For example the whole burial of Prophet Mohammed is thought to be under Carnival influence, as it is quoted:

“By sacred Mahomet, the friend of God,
Whose holy Alcoran remains with us,
Whose glorious body, when he left the world, Clos'd in a coffin mounted up the air,
And hung on stately Mecca's temple-roof,
I swear to keep this truce inviolable!” {I-i-1-6}
The vary phrase, " Clos'd in a coffin of (Mohammad) mounted up the air"

Brings the question that, why the coffin of Prophet Mohammed, or why Prophet Mohammed was given the Christian coffin, and the answer that bounce back is that it was the depiction of hybrid identity of Carnival, miss reading completely the fact that Prophet Mohammed was for all time and for all community. In the final section of Tamburlaine the grate, Tamburlaine burns the sacred Muslim book Quran, Such historical understanding liberates why Tamburlaine consider in the Turkish Alcoran, and so his attack on Islam or the symbol of Islamic culture is consider as an Elizabethan assault on the Muslim theology. In addition Tamburlaine commands his armed forces to gather the copies of Quran from the Islamic place of worship, as he says:

“Now, Orcanes, where's the Turkish Alcoran, and all the heaps of superstitious books Found in the temples of that Mahomet Whom I have thought a god?” They shall be burnt” {V-i-1-4}.

Tamburlaine's flaming of the Quran portrays Carnivalistique, ridicule of Islam and God's messenger, this action of Tamburlaine also presents that why Elizabethan people detests religion, and similarly on the other hand Tamburlaine's flaming of the Quran also depict the victory of Christian power, and he does not stop there, but rather he went on to burn those people who were there in the mosque. Tamburlaine screams to god's messenger, to come down and save his men.

This very incident is a reverberation of the event of crucifixions of Christ. As when he was getting crucified, people around him were shouting in the same anger and pride, the way Tamburlaine was screaming. After Tamburlaine has slaughtered the innocent Muslim people, again he screeched and said that Mohammad has not stopped [me] by his powers. This again takes us to the same understanding of European people who consider in worshipping Mohammad rather than the all mighty God who is not detectable by human senses. In addition to this, it also depicts other European belief in the presence of more than one God, it is just similar to Christian faith in son and father, the saint spirit. Such notion is compelling and has been discussed in length through Carnivalism, since there emerges a new, second religion with characteristics of Islam and Christianity. And in the next scene Tamburlaine has invalidated Prophet Mohammed and his holy prophecies, as he says: "in vain... men worship Mahomet: My sword hath sent millions of Turks to hell" {V-i-1-2}. But see the thing with a critical eye, we will find that the action of Tamburlaine in the play is a kind of a product which has emerged out of a creative liberty of Marlowe. As we have noticed that throughout the length of both the parts of Tamburlaine, Tamburlaine has completely believed himself that he is superior to all the divine powers of the cosmos, or it can also be said that, it was Marlowe, who was the real enemy of all religion, and so the same colour is visible on Tamburlaine. Marlowe also states the unfriendliness of Tamburlaine which, later represents his interior divergence of religious identity, which was nowhere placed in Tamburlaine's brain in the opening Acts. It liberates Tamburlaine's hybrid individuality which is one of the signs of Bakhtin's Carnival and his uncertainty toward religious belief. If we talk about other characters of Tamburlaine, then it is only two characters, who are having the same Islamic religious belief throughout the play, and that was Captain and Callapine: "God himself and holy Mahomet

Should come in person to resist your power, yet might your mighty host encounter all,
And pull proud Tamburlaine upon his knees" {V-ii-16}.

They ask for Mohammad's support to defy against the hybrid Tamerlane. It is just because they have not entwined in his second cosmos of Carnivalism. Therefore, they save their unique individuality. Christopher Marlowe's derisive of sacraments are not limited to Islamic characteristics, instead he ridicules the Elizabethan belief, that is Christianity, and at this point, at the culmination of the play when Tamburlaine talks with his sons and says that:

"Come, boys, and with your fingers search my wound,
And in my blood wash all your hands at once, while I sit smiling to behold the sight.
Now, my boys, what think ye of a wound?" {III.-ii.-1-4}

So it is clear over here that Marlowe is trying to mock Christ, as it was Christ who requested Thomas to place his bloody hands on top of the cross, this is the reason why Frederick guarantees him to obliterate all damn troops, so it can be said that, in this sense, Christopher Marlowe has expounded Bakhtin's Carnivalism. Over here it is also important to mention that Bakhtin's Carnivalism has also been shown and inferred when he says that:

"Fear'st to die, or with a curtle-axe to hew thy flesh, and make a gaping wound?"

This question which directly acquaints farewell to flesh which is also having a meaning of Carnival. At last Tamburlaine wounds his arm, which is also a close symbol of Carnivalism, as Tamburlaine was in a great grief of the death of Zenocrate's. Finally Tamburlaine leaves his life on his wife and beloved Zenocrate's sarcophagus which had the bearing of Christian sacrament. Devoid of everything of Marlowe's belligerent struggle to create the more similar character of the warrior [Tamburlaine] with that of past famed figure, it is not conceivably distinguish that Christopher Marlowe's play is traditionally a travesty of real Tamburlaine. If we flip the pages of the same history, we will find that, when Timur [Tamburlaine] started his illustrious journey of conquest in [1360],

Persian political geography was a hotchpotch with no government at the centre, or any kind of kingdom in power. The one and only thing that the dynasties of Mongolian, Turk, Iranian, and Arab source and the itinerant powers that regulated the dominion of the former Mongolian reign had in common was the existing Persian civilization and culture. Together with the compatibility and understanding, it is professed that Christopher Marlowe has intervene in the history to produce the outdated world through Marlowe. The sphere where his contemporary people obtain to live in.

Conclusion:

To conclude I can say that, the given paper was an effort to throw the light on Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great from the theoretical lens of Bakhtin's Carnivalism. This paper also attempted to bring in the light Marlowe's and Elizabethan ridiculing views to religions, and the condition and atmosphere of Elizabethan age was quite conducive for the production of play like Tamburlaine. As a matter of fact, Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great, made utopia for the age, where there was no religion and faith, he has created the literary work, the particular play for Elizabethan mass. Marlowe's play was a kind of alleged reason to praise and admire the real Tamburlaine in the historical context, in order to patent Elizabethan desire to mission the bloody rescuer like Tamburlaine to protect them from their present adversaries.

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BIO-NOTE

Shibanur Rahman is working as an assistant professor for last eight years, currently Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Karim City College, Jharkhand. He is also pursuing PhD. The author has also published two research papers in international journals, and he has also presented papers in several national and international seminars.

E-mail Id:- Shibanr04@gmail.com

