The Shadow Symbols Revisited in *Tughlaq* and *The Shadow of the Tiger*

**Introduction**

Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq* is based on the historical character of Muhammad Tughlaq, one of the most controversial rulers of the period, who ruled India in the 14th century. The play begins around 1327 and spans the next five years of Muhammad Tughlaq’s reign. This phase of Tughlaq’s reign is etched with his “idealistic” measures, for which he is much misunderstood and ultimately branded as “mad Muhammad”. In the words of Ananta Murthy: “No play in Kannada is comparable to Tughlaq in its depth and range. It is a classic in Kannada literature” (X).

Karnad first read about Tughlaq in one of the books of Ishwari Prasad, an Indian historian. He did extensive work on rulers such as Muhammad bin Tughluq, Humayun, and Aurangzeb. Karnad was fascinated by the character of emperor Tughlaq. In his interview with Tutun Mukherjee, Karnad says,

History was used as a positive concept to analyze life and society by the Muslim historians. So, I thought, why not give history a try as a tool to interpret our life and times? I started some research; read some history. As I have described in my Introduction to the Three Plays (OUP), when I read about Mohammed bin Tughlaq, I was fascinated. How marvellous this was, I thought. Tughlaq was a brilliant individual yet is regarded as one of the biggest failures. He tried to introduce policies that seem today too far-sighted to the point of genius, but which earned him the
nickname “Mohammed the mad” then. He ended his career in bloodshed and chaos (35).

While Karnad takes the readers down the lane of history, Kambara, on the other hand, leads through the lane of myth and folklore in his play *The Shadow of the Tiger* which deals with illusion and reality, and like *Tughlaq* deals with the search for truth.

Both the plays present how people are forced to be silent and accept the dictates of the ruler and his minions who enforce the same through wicked means. The ruler attempts to control people and direct them as per his whims. Another point of similarity in both the plays is the way the tragedy of a ruining society is symbolically depicted. *Tughlaq* gives a close-up of the destruction of the people and society when the emperor tries to shift his capital from Delhi to Daultabad. While *The Shadow of the Tiger*, deals with personification of evil and the road to destruction in a purely mythical and symbolic fashion. Kambara he has tried to personify the idea of evil in the form of a tiger, but the depiction of the tiger is in shadow and is not seen in the entirety of the play, but whose spectre of destruction shrouds the village and is the cause of all strife and suffering.

**Tughlaq: Plot in Brief**

In Girish Karnad’s play, Tughlaq is a man who craves for equality, progress and peace. He wants justice and brotherhood in his kingdom without any partiality between the might or the weak, religion or creed. Tughlaq is an idealist who believes in Hindu-Muslim unity. Therefore during his reign he wants everybody to be treated equally in the eyes of law and to prove this he takes many decisions like the
exemption of the Jiziya tax on the Hindus, shifting the capital to Daultabad etc. These foolhardy decisions cause much distress among the people and forms the fore front of the play.

Tughlaq’s idealism is caught in a farce as other evil forces exploit this towards their own ends. Aziz, a Muslim washerman disguises himself as Vishnu Prasad, a Brahmin, and files a case against the Sultan that his land is confiscated by the state. He demands compensation for the loss of his land. His suit is considered seriously and the Kazi-I-Munalik declares the Brahmin’s claim as just. The ‘Brahmin’ gets his land back and is paid 500 dinars. Tughlaq through this episode wanted to prove that he would not show any discrimination between the Muslims and the Hindus. The Sultan and Kazi are satisfied with their decision as they are not aware that the person who benefited was not a Hindu, but a Muslim and pat themselves on the back as a deed well done. But the old Muslims do not like this decision and the Hindus smell a trap.

The Sultan announces that he is taking a new step to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. He wants to transfer the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Tughlaq’s justifies the change of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad but fails to convince his subjects. He does not take into account the emotional attachment of people to their native soil when he proposes a change of capital involving not only the shift in the administrative machinery but also of the people. Muhammad is proud of his decision and tells his step-mother that he has solved one of the most famous problems in chess which even noted chess-players could not solve. But his step mother who loves him is more worried about his lack of sleep as the Sultan does not sleep at night. Muhammad answers that he is worried about his subjects and this worry does not allow him to go to sleep. “I pray to the Almighty to save me from sleep. All day long I have to worry
about tomorrow but it’s only when the night falls that I can step beyond all that” (Karnad, 10).

When the Sultan realizes a political and religious danger to his crown from the most revered saint, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, he plans to humiliate the Sheikh. He invites Sheikh Imam-ud-din to preach his people. Muhammad knows that the Sheikh dislikes him and if given a chance he will talk against him. Muhammad announces a meeting and invites people to attend the meeting but nobody turns up. Actually Muhammad had sent his soldiers and threatened the people that there will be consequences for those who attend the meeting.

In the meantime Muhammad’s problems are mounting. Sheikh Imam-ud-din is turning the people against him in Kanpur. His childhood friend Ain-ul-Mulk has revolted against him and marching towards Delhi with thirty-thousand soldiers whereas Muhammad has hardly six thousand soldiers. When Najib informs Muhammad that the Sheikh closely resembles him, Muhammad, a crafty politician, uses this as a ruse to solve this problem. When Ain-ul-Mulk comes to the battlefield, the Sheikh is sent to take the message of peace to Ain-ul-Mulk on behalf of the Sultan. The Sheikh is dressed in royal dress, standing on an elephant and looking almost like the Sultan. He goes there as the royal envoy to make peace. But before he can do so the trumpet is blown which signals an attack. At once soldiers surround him and attack Ain-ul-Mulk and his army. They in turn take the Sheikh to be the Sultan and shoot arrows at him, which kill him. After the battle, the Sultan pardons Ain-ul-Mulk and sends him back as Governor of Avadh, at the same time expressing his grief at this misunderstanding and the sad demise of the Sheikh.
A revolt is growing against the Sultan. The Sheikhs, the Amirs and the Syeds are preparing themselves to overthrow the Sultan. Ratan Sing, Sihab-ud-din and others meet secretly and plan to rebel against him. As soon as the rebels rise to attack the Sultan, twenty Hindu soldiers hidden behind the curtain attack the rebels and a massacre takes place.

As the order of shifting the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad is given the people move on to Daulatabad. Thousands die on the way and many people suffer various diseases. Cries of lamentation resound in the atmosphere. There are rogues like Aziz and Aazam who deceive people and thrive on the suffering of the people. They also make a lot of money in the process. In the meantime another impractical decision is taken by the Sultan by introducing copper currency in the state. He had read about the currency of China, where the paper-notes are treated as currency and therefore he declares the value of copper currency equal to silver currency. But people take undue advantage of the Sultan’s policy and they demand silver currency in exchange of copper currency, which results into total disaster of economy in the state, with the Sultan’s garden heaped with copper coins as garbage. People call him ‘mad Muhammad’.

All these incidents make the Sultan lonely and tortured. His most trusted friend Najib is poisoned by his step-mother. He orders her arrest and orders that she should be stoned to death.

Barani, the historian, informs the Sultan that Ghiyas Uddin Abbasid, the Khalif of Baghdad is coming to Daulatabad. In reality it is Aziz disguised as Ghiyas Uddin Abbasid with Aazam as his follower. When Aziz reaches Daulatabad as Ghiyas Uddin, he is given a royal welcome and public prayers are resumed from that
moment. However, there is a public outcry as people are starving and they want food and not prayers. Large scale riots begin in Daulatabad and thousands of people are killed.

In the meantime Aazam is bored of deceiving the people and he wants to stop but Aziz does not agree and tries to get Aazam killed. Meanwhile the Sultan comes to know about the crimes committed by Aziz and summons him to court to account for his crimes. However Aziz being a crafty man manipulates the Sultan by claiming to be a true disciple of his Majesty. The Sultan is impressed by Aziz’s craftiness and decides to send him to Deccan as a powerful officer.

At the end of the play a tired and exhausted Sultan falls asleep on the throne. When it is time for public prayer a servant tries to awaken him, but soon gives up the effort. The play ends as Muhammad suddenly opens his eyes and looks around dazed and frightened as though he cannot comprehend where he is and wonders if he has gone mad.

**The Shadow of the Tiger: Plot in Brief**

The play opens with the roar of a tiger at night. It is believed that a seven-striped tiger has come to the village. The Gowda of the village calls the hunters and orders them to hunt and kill the tiger. But the tiger continues to raise havoc in the village by killing cows in sheds, chasing and devouring the little children of the village and menacing the people of the village. Gowda decides to hunt the tiger himself and with great pop and fanfare readies to go with bows, arrows and nets. But Gowdthi, Gowda's wife hesitates to send him for hunting and asks him not to go that night. She expresses her fear by narrating her dream in which the Gowda gets killed in
a tragic incident. Iripya, one of the village elders also remains behind as the deity Karrevva has not given her consent for hunting. Gowda’s son Ramagonda requests to join him for the hunt but Gowda refuses and asks him to stay back and take care of his mother.

During the hunt the Gowda gets separated from the huntsmen and they come back to the village without him. Gowda returns in the middle of the night with a body on his shoulder. He quietly comes home after throwing the body in the village well. The next day he announces in the village that as he has thrown the body of the tiger in the well and as it was a very evil tiger none of the villagers should go near it.

However, after this incident, the situation in the village changes drastically. Gowda’s behaviour changes and the villagers notice many things which are different about him. In actuality when the Gowda went to the forest to hunt the tiger, the seven-striped tiger demon killed Gowda and the demon took the shape of Gowda himself. The demon came to the village in the form of Gowda and from then on, the situation in the village deteriorates further.

The idol of the village goddess is found split into half and various misfortunes befall the village one after another. The Gowda sends wood cutters to cut the holy Parambi tree in which the village Goddess resides. When the villagers protest, the goddess herself appears in the form of a young girl and falls for the wiles of the woodcutter who bribes her with a new wooden horse if she allows them to cut the tree. The young girl agrees and the villagers are helpless. Kariyajja, the son of the goddess, too, dies with the cutting of the tree.

The same evening a ghost is spied near the well. Ramagonda goes to the well to find out the truth. When he reaches the well he meets a ghost who claims to be his
father, the Gowda, who was killed by the tiger and thrown into the well. Ramagonda does not believe him. But still the ghost tries to convince him and shares that the life of the demon is in a parrot, which is in a cage, in a banyan tree in Elukolla in the east. He begs Ramagonda to go there and get some water containing a charm, which on sprinkling on the ghost, his soul will find peace. Ramagonda is very confused and an old lady, the incarnation of the goddess herself comes to him and unveils the 'vision of the reality' to Ramagonda. She confirms that the 'demonic influence in the life of the villagers is represented through the Gowda himself, who is now under the influence of the devil. Ramagonda is confused as to what the truth is and seeks answers from his mother but in vain. He is lost and confused and laments on his confusion.

His mother shares with him that she is with child and greatly fears the baby she carries in her womb is a demon. She knows that something is not right but says that as a mother she has no choice but to take care of the child in her womb. She asks Ramagonda to get tiger milk for the child as she feels that is the only nourishment that will help him. Ramagonda does not know what to do but goes into the forest to do her bidding. When he reaches the forest the tiger appears and offers him milk like a cow. The tiger tries to attack him but he attacks the tiger who then runs away.

Ramagonda again meets the ghost who tries to convince him and tells him that the tiger who gave him milk was actually the demon who wanted to kill Ramagonda like his father. The ghost again begs his son for redemption. But Ramagonda is very confused and does not know whom to believe anymore. While he was thus lamenting a Yakshini comes to him and gives him powers to fight with the demon. She first gives him a mirror which will show him the truth, a winding horse that will fly him
anywhere and take him to the parrot which contains the life of the demon and lastly a horn which can pierce the demon. But she also cautions that if evil touches these gifts they will become powerless. And as the powers are now a part of his soul he will also lose his soul in the process.

Ramagonda uses the mirror which shows him the truth about the Gowda who actually is a demon in disguise. Ramagonda at last accepts the truth and goes to his mother to share this truth with her. But his mother shares a different truth and says that in actuality the tree is her body and the cage is her womb and the parrot is the child in her womb. She asks Ramagonda to kill her by stabbing her in the womb. Ramagonda does not believe his mother and is very upset. By this time the Demon Gowda also comes and the Gowdthi takes all the gifts of power from a dazed Ramagonda. She collapses and the demon Gowda comes and touches the weapons. The end of the play shows Ramagonda collapsing and the Gowdthi consoling the demon child in her womb.

**Use of Symbols and Myth in both the plays**

It is pertinent to note that though both the plays are similar in the broad issues that are addressed, they differ in treatment as Karnad’s play *Tughlaq* is a historical play and the situations and characters are taken from history, so there is little scope for improvisation. While Kambara’s *The Shadow of the Tiger* is a truly mythical play and the writer has given himself a wide scope to delve into myth in its varied hues. *The Shadow of the Tiger* as the title depicts is replete with myth, dreams, ghosts, irrational fears and high octane drama. Kambara’s play is richly textured and steeped in mysticism giving it an aura of otherworldliness which is seen across the play.
Just as Kambara has used myth to create a high octane drama while maintaining the realistic mode, Karnad has employed symbolism to derive the same impact. By using this technique and giving over-emphasis on verbal expression both the writers leave little scope for suggestiveness. Even the way of thinking and the actions of the characters and the dramatic modes of symbols and myths used in the plays are explained literally to assist understanding the theme in a realistic way. Both the writers have made use of these tools for greater emotional and associative significance within the play. Ramamurti aptly remarks:

Tughlaq is a genuine history play in English and that it is an answer to criticism which deplores the absence of Indian play in English, which go back to history (and Myths) to establish modern man’s relationship to history, to interpret contemporary problems, to work out ideas or theses through historical material and which establish the modern Indian relation to history (14).

*Tughlaq* does not make use of myths and folklore as such, it retells history to represent universal thoughts and emotions. For example, the prayer has been used as a leitmotif in the play that signifies the conspiracy, "an instrument of murder" (Reddy 154). The chess signifies the intriging nature of Tughlaq. Python signifies his barbarity and the vultures are signifiers of his noble ideas, which have been frustrated but which continue to torture him.

**Prayer as a leitmotif**

In *Tughlaq* prayer is a ploy for many nefarious deeds, like Tughlaq’s father and brother were killed during the time of prayer. History has it that Muhammad Tughlaq had killed his father and brother in order to become the Sultan of Delhi. The charge of murder may or may not be true, for history draws heavily on conjectures.
However, the playwright only casts a shadow of doubt of parricide on Tughlaq. Admitting that it was a pre-planned murder, the question arises how the elephant went amok exactly when prayers were offered, and dashed against the wooden pandal resulting in its collapse and the instant death of the reigning Sultan? There is room for doubt in that allegation. (K.K. John 127-128).

The Amirs, Sheikhs and some courtiers, led by Ratansing and Shihab-ud-din conspire to kill the Sultan at the time of prayer. U.R. Anantha Moorthy mentions,

The use of prayer for murder is reminiscent of what Tughlaq himself did to kill his father. That prayer, which is most dear to Tughlaq is symbolic of the fact that his life is corrupted at its very source (Moorthy, ix).

Thus, prayer which is a symbol of piousness, source of faith and generator of life becomes a myth, as most of the deaths portrayed in the play occur during the time of prayer.

According to Moorthy the single most powerful symbol that connects the various scenes in the play is that of prayer, which he calls the 'the leitmotiv of the play' (Ibid, 4). And the same thing has been mentioned by Satish Kumar: “Prayer has been used as a leit–motive in Tughlaq” (23). Tughlaq is a devout Muslim who makes it obligatory for the Muslim citizens to pray five times a day. He wants his state to be like a temple, a source of faith. Yet he violates its sanctity by killing his father and brother during prayer time; and after the assassination is attempted on him, he bans it. Prayer thus becomes an ironic symbol of the manipulation of religion and religious rituals. Sheik Shihab-ud-din's horrified response to Ratansing's suggestion that they assassinate Tughlaq during prayer and the response it elicits are significant in this context:
Sheikh: You can't pollute the time of prayer. It's a sacred time. We can't stain it with the blood of a Mussulman.

Amir II: Come, we can always make up later. Do penance for it.

Sheikh: But prayer isn't penance. Remember we are here to save Islam, not to insult it

Shihab-Ud-Din: ... I'm sure the Lord will not mind an interrupted prayer

(Karnad, 36-37).

The word prayer has lost its relevance in the play and is exploited not only as an instrument of murder but also used as a tool by the Sultan who is fanatical about prayer. Early in the play, Tughlaq is shown to emphasise the importance of prayer, he forces his people to pray five times a day and has public readings of the Koran arranged.

Young Man: …Tell me, how often did you pray before he came to the throne?

Third Man: That isn’t the point.

Young Man: That’s precisely the point. Not even once a week, I bet. Now you pray five times a day because that’s the law and if you break it, you’ll have the officers on your neck. Can you mention one earlier Sultan in whose time people read the Koran in the streets like now? Just one? (Ibid, 1-2).

Though Tughlaq has made it compulsory for every Muslim to pray five times a day yet, at the same time, a substantial part of his subject suspect that he had arranged for the assassination of his father and brother during a procession at the prayer time.
Third Man: All right, don't trust my word. But do you think a man like Sheikh Imam-ud-din would lie? Well, he said in clear loud words that it was murder.

And he said it publicly - I was there!

Old Man (eagerly): You've seen the Sheikh?

Third Man: Why, of course. Only a week ago. In Kanpur. What a man! What a voice! The audience was spell-bound. And he said the Sultan's guilty of killing his father and brother, he said. He said so many other things too - about Islam and what's happening to it. It was the most inspiring speech I've ever heard. The audience went wild and burnt down half of Kanpur. You think he would talk like that if he wasn't sure? *Ibid,* 5).

When the nobles, led by Shihab-ud-din, attempt to kill Tughlaq during prayer, he preempts their move by having them apprehended by the Hindu soldiers. At the end of that assassination attempt, he feels that “prayers too are ridden with disease, and must be exiled” *Ibid,* 44); so he prohibits prayer in his kingdom: “There will be no more praying in the kingdom, Najib. Anyone caught praying will be severely punished” *Ibid,* 44). But when his idealistic plans collapse around him and he is tottering on the verge of insanity, Tughlaq tries to reinstate prayer in his kingdom by publicly welcoming Ghiyas-ud-din Abbasid to conduct prayers in his realm. Ironically, by then, the real Ghiyas-ud-din has been murdered and supplanted by the impostor Aziz; Tughlaq’s desperate bid to reinstate prayer is frustrated by Aziz’s machinations. The play concludes with Tughlaq dozing through the Muezzin’s call to prayer, at the end of which he wakes up with a start and hardly knows himself: “He looks around dazed and frightened, as though he can’t comprehend where he is” *Ibid,* 86).
Throughout the play Karnad has emphasized on the prayer motif to show the wavering mind of Tughlaq who uses prayer as per his whims and fancies. In the words of P. Bayapa Reddy:

At the micro level, prayer symbolizes the religious idealism of Tughlaq. At the macro level, it connects man’s unconscious need for divine protection and guidance in an hour of anguish. In the beginning, prayer is made compulsory but later it is revived. It is reduced to a mockery when the Sultan’s life is threatened at the time of prayer (155).

Rulers and politicians use religion as a medium to befool the common man as a tool. They pollute religion by misusing it for fulfilling their dirty political motives. But religion cannot be used to serve the end of those who are in power because it preaches morals and expects morality from the people. It stands for virtue, truth, righteousness and moral conduct while politics thrives on intrigue, craftiness, dishonesty and deceit. The case of Tughlaq is no exception. What Karnad shows in Tughlaq is that the idealist and his idealism do not go hand in hand with a politician and his politics. The idealist is only a misnomer and he has to face challenges, which he tries to curb down in his own crafty manner. But the idealist Tughlaq fails in producing any lasting result. What he gains, as he tells, is: “Not words but the sword – that’s all I have to keep my faith in my mission” and “power, strength to shape my thoughts, strength to act, strength to recognize myself”(Karnad, 66). All his idealism is shattered in the game of politics and thrown to the winds.

Prayer and religion are vitiated for power and money. Prayer is used to achieve an end and not an end in itself. The word ‘prayer’ is repeated several times
and it reverberates throughout the play. As pointed out by Mahale: “the people in India are led away by the saints and religious heads who muddle politics which is a game of see – saw” (135). Karnad dexterously shows how prayer affects the ruler and the masses. The powerful, the prosperous and the rulers can pray in peace. The poor who are exploited and with empty stomachs cannot even think of prayer. Their prayer is only to earn bread by the sweat of their brow. For Tughlaq it is a masquerade to hide his guilty conscience and for the hungry it is a luxury. In the atmosphere of atrocity, cruelty, killing, wailing and tears which India had during the reign of Muhammad, it was very difficult for the people to pray.

**Sleep as a symbol of peace**

‘Sleep’ on one level represents the need for rest in the life of human beings. At the macro level it becomes symbolic of peace, which eludes humans often. Sleep becomes the much needed and ever-eluding peace that the Sultan is hankering after and which perpetually slips away from him. In Scene Two Muhammad is worried that he doesn’t have the time to sleep and so he wishes away sleep. He confides to his stepmother:

> I pray to the Almighty to save me from sleep. All day long I have to worry about tomorrow but it’s only when the night falls that I can step beyond all that *(Ibid, 10)*.

This sleep comes to the Sultan only towards the end of the play when he realizes that he has a companion in his madness and that is none other than the Omnipotent God himself. “For once I am not alone, I have a companion to share my madness now—the omnipotent God!” *(Ibid, 85)*. Sleep descends only when Muhammad realizes that his madness cannot be understood, and that he is essentially
alone. Tughlaq seems to be resigned to the fact that he will remain a grossly misunderstood man as there is a greater and unexplained madness, that of God himself. Sleep does come to him towards the end. However, whether peace also accompanies sleep is highly questionable and illusionary.

**Python as a symbol of barbarity**

Karnad has symbolically compared the long and dark passage of the fort to the coils of an enormous hungry python. Just like the python kills its prey by twisting itself round and crushing it, similarly any living creature entering the fort is crushed and swallowed. It symbolizes Tughlaq’s cunning and crooked tricks with which he traps those who rebel against him. The description of the fort by the guard turns it into a fantastic image of the rule of Muhammad. The guard says that the road coming to the fort appears like a “thin snake” (*Ibid*, 51) and the fort is like a “rising anthill” (*Ibid*, 51). The old guard agrees,

Yes, it is a long passage, a winding tunnel, coiled like an enormous hollow python inside the belly of the fort. And they shall be far happier when that python breaks out and swallows everything in sight – every man, woman, child and beast (*Ibid*, 52).

Here Muhammad is identified with a snake or a python and his fort is the anthill- both are inimical to the life of the common people. The python symbolizes increasing fierceness, brutality, blood thirstiness and inhuman nature of Tughlaq. The python is symbolic of complete degeneration of the personality of Tughlaq.
**Vultures as a symbol of trouble**

The vulture is another symbolic description of Tughlaq’s frustration. Just like how the vultures thrust their beaks into dead flesh, in the same fashion Muhammad feels the rebels tearing into his flesh and not giving him peace. Mohammad refers to this in dejection when he says, “Don’t you see- This patient, racked with fever and crazed by the fear of the enveloping vultures, can’t be separated from me?” (*Ibid*, 56).

**Daulatabad as a symbol of unity**

In the mad musings of Tughlaq, Daulatabad is a symbol of Hindu-Muslim Unity. Tughlaq also greatly fears invasion and believes that Daulatabad will be a safer haven then Delhi. This is shared by Tughlaq in his speech to the people.

“I invite you all to accompany me to Daulatabad. This is only an invitation and not an order. Only those who have faith in me may come with me. With their help I shall build an empire which will be the envy of the world” (*Ibid*, 4).

But later his invitation takes the form of a stern order of a megalomaniac dictator:

“I want Delhi vacated immediately. Every living soul in Delhi will leave for Daulatabad within a fortnight… They’ll only understand the whip. Everyone must leave. Not a light should be seen in the windows of Delhi. Not a wisp of smoke rise from its chimneys. Nothing but an empty graveyard of Delhi will satisfy me now” (*Ibid*, 44).
According to H.H.Anniah Gowda, Tughlaq was “intelligent, religious, cruel and hard hearted and took sadistic delight in seeing no lights in the empty city of Delhi on the night of its evacuation when he shifted the capital to Daulatabad” (3).

But many people do not like to move the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. The Old man, in Scene I is the first person to have shown the courage to question this decision. His protest finds ground in the words of the Third Man – “This is tyranny! Sheer tyranny” (Ibid, 4).

This move turns out to be Muhammad’s downfall and throws light on the mistrust that is emerging amongst the Hindus and Muslims in Tughlaq’s rule. Daultabad is a cruel mythical depiction of the collapse of the life of people and symbolizes the rash and miscalculated decisions of Tughlaq.

**Rose garden, a symbol of Utopia**

The rose is a symbol of Muhammad’s aesthetic and poetic nature and the rose garden is a symbol of the Utopia that he wants his kingdom to be. This very garden becomes the symbol of the withering away and killing of the poet in him by political manoeuvres. And the Rose Garden becomes a symbol of the frustration of his idealistic aspirations. It reflects the unbridgeable gap between man’s expectations and achievements. The rose garden is reduced to a symbol of the corruption rampant in Tughlaq’s kingdom. Muhammad had created the Rose Garden as a concrete and visible image of the Utopia that he wanted his country to be but it eventually becomes a dumping ground for the useless copper coins. Thus the utopia turns into a wasteland.
It is also a symbol of Tughlaq’s complete alienation from his people in total contrast to his desire to be one with them. Aazam explains the Sultan’s alienation to Aziz:

You know there are heaps of counterfeit coins in the garden outside my window?.... On the night we came here, I was so nervous I couldn’t sleep. So I was standing by the window, looking at those heaps. They looked like giant anthills in the moonlight. Suddenly I saw a shadow moving among them. I stared. It was a man wandering alone in the garden. He went to a heap, stood there for half an hour still as a rock. Then he dug into the heaps with his fists, raised his fists and let the coins trickle out. It was frightening. And you know who it was? Your Sultan. He does that every night—every single night—it’s like witchcraft— (*Ibid*, 75).

The rose-garden which becomes a rubbish dump is a perfect objective correlative of Tughlaq’s idealistic aspirations meeting with defeat. It becomes an image of the absurd, the unbridgeable gulf between man’s expectations of orderliness and the chaos and irrationality which confronts him in the universe. As rightly commented by Sarat Babu: “Tughlaq’s idealism clubbed with his Machiavellian craftiness causes a split in his personality and led to his precipitous fall” (131).

**Chess as a symbol of intrigue**

Karnad, through the game of chess, has symbolized Tughlaq’s highly manipulative skill in dealing with his political rivals and opponents. He has shown that just like pawns used in chess, Tughlaq, too, considers his critics and enemies merely as pawns which can be used at his will. For Tughlaq who is a skilful chess
player, the game of chess is not a pastime but a means to solve complicated problems. Muhammad says,

I have just solved the most famous problem in chess. Even al-Adli and as-Sarakhi said it was insoluble. And it’s so simple- (Karnad, 9).

In the play there are various incidents where Tughlaq uses chess ploys of politics. For example he uses Sheikh Imam-ud-din as his pawn to solve the problem created by Ain-ul-Mulk. When Ain-ul-Mulk, a friend of Tughlaq, revolts against him and is marching towards Delhi, the Sheikh is also inciting rebellion against Tughlaq in Kanpur. Tughlaq hatches a plan to solve these two issues neatly by using Sheikh Imam-ud-din’s resemblance to himself as a leverage. He invites the Sheikh to Delhi and cunningly persuades him by saying that if the war takes place only Muslims will die and he is the only one who can stop the war. He invites him to be his envoy of peace:

Muhammad: Because I want peace. I am willing to make peace but how can I do it? I don’t even know why he has turned against me. He won’t even see my official envoys. But he will see you. He respects you as every Muslim in India does. He will trust your word. That’s why I’m asking you –will you please go as my envoy and dissuade him from this folly? Please Sheikh Sahib, I’m not asking you only for my sake but for all the Muslims who will die at the hands of Muslims if there is a war (Karnad 23).

Sheikh Imam-ud-din accepts the suggestion as he loves Islam and he knows he has no choice. He is trapped and killed in battle.

Sheikh Imam-ud-din: I don’t trust your motives.
Muhammad: What do my motives matter? You can't deny that this war will mean a slaughter of Muslims at the hands of fellow-Muslims. Isn't that enough for the great Sheikh Imam-ud-din? You have attacked me for inaction. You can't turn away now when you are offered a chance. You can't!

Sheikh Imam-ud-din: I know I can't.

Muhammad: So you agree?

Sheikh Imam-ud-din: Do you leave me an alternative?

Muhammad (slowly): I'll never be able to thank you enough for this (Karnad, 23).

Thus Tughlaq craftily overthrows the Sheikh, and Ani-ul-Mulk is pardoned and made the governor of Avadh. Through the symbolism of chess Karnad shows how the whole kingdom is as complicated and full of challenges like a game of chess. Karnad through the symbolism of chess creates a mythical situation where the Sheikh is misunderstood to be Tughlaq and killed.

In the same fashion Gowda also kills Kariyajja indirectly in a well-directed chess move by cutting down the Parambi tree. This is alluded to by Prabhu in conversation with Balya, Basya and Iripya when they are discussing the death of Karvajja:

“How can you say there was no reason? He died not wanting to have the Parambi tree cut. He died saying there was a sickle casting a shadow on our umbilical cord. How else could he die? For drinking sour butter milk or being bitten by a housefly? Like the rest? If you were to say that Gowda was the cause of all this, I’d agree with you” (Kambara, 554).
Thus both the messengers of God, die a similar, cruel and sad death at the hands of their rulers through a well-played chess move. P. Bayapa Reddy remarks:

At the macro level, the game of chess is an ordinary game, which is popular in India. It also symbolizes a political game in which the most intelligent and clever politician is check mated by an ordinary washer man. Through this symbolist technique, the playwright has succeeded in creating the right political atmosphere (155).

**Exploitation**

Through the portrayal of the criminals like Aziz and Aazam, Karnad symbolizes the unprincipled and opportunistic exploitation of people. They represent those class of criminals who exploit the liberal ideas and policies and the welfare activities of the government. They lack humanity, and are opportunists who aim to utilize every chance to earn money. The examples of these escapades of Aziz are many; one of them being when he disguises himself as a Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad and wins the case against the Sultan himself. To Aziz politics is a profitable profession. Aziz remarks to Aazam: “My dear fellow, that’s where our future is politics! It’s a beautiful world-wealth, success, position, power- and yet it’s full of brainless people, people with not an idea in their head” (Karnad, 50). He murders Ghiyas-ud-din Abbasid and in the guise of the saint, appears before the sultan to bless him and purify Daulatabad.

Aziz appears to eclipse Muhammad’s intelligence with his presence of mind and witty dialogues. When Aziz realizes that he can deceive Muhammad no more, he reveals his identity at once. When Muhammad questions his identity, Aziz retorts, “I
am a Dhobi from Shiknar. My first name was Aziz. There have been so many since then” (Karnad, 80). At Muhammad’s warning that he should not overreach himself, he says:

“I don’t. But since your majesty came to throne, I have been your most devout servant. I have studied every order, followed every instruction, considered every measure of your majesty with great attention” (Karnad, 80).

Keeping in view his past, Aziz’s views are highly ironic and comic.

Muhammad’s every ideal including his plan to introduce new currency stands ridiculed right under his very nose. As Aziz comments, “Soon after your majesty introduced the new copper currency, I succumbed to its temptation. There was enough money in that business, but too much competition, soon it became unprofitable” (Karnad, 81). Finally when Muhammad abuses him calling him a “dhobi” (washer man) (Karnad, 81), Aziz reacts very smartly, “What if I am a dhobi, Your Majesty? When it comes to washing our filth no saint is a match for Dhobi” (Karnad, 82). Ironically, the king is impressed by Aziz, “This man is a genius” (Karnad, 83).

U.R Anantha Murthy puts it thus, “He is aware of the irony of his life when Aziz, the only character in the play who has skilfully used all the schemes of Tughlaq for his own designs, kills Ghiyas-ud –din and comes in his guise as a holy messenger of peace to purify land and revive the banned prayer. The irony is deeply tragic. In the end Tughlaq and his kingdom are one in their chaos, and he knows it” (6).

Similarly, Aazam who is a simpleton, represents the coward and the foolish in Muhammad. Despite taking adventurous and bold decisions Muhammad appears as a
scared man. He bows before his subordinates and beseeches them to pray for his success. Aazam resembles Muhammad in his frank confessions when he admits that he is a common pickpocket and not of sharp intellect. He, like Muhammad, looks like a helpless person. Being a coward at heart many a times he disapproves of Aziz’s behaviour but doesn’t leave his company. Finally when Aziz kills Ghiyasdin he starts crying and laments, “God, God why did I not stop him? Why didn’t I let him go? (Karnad, 62), and “I will die of fright here” (Ibid, 75).

Through Aziz and Aazam, Karnad has tried to show the two faces of Tughlaq, one crafty and other fearful which symbolically personifies the split personality of Tughlaq. Karnad has made these character creations of Aziz and Aazam in a traditional mythic style to portray the negative and the weak aspect of Tughlaq.

**Alienation from society**

Tughlaq’s tragedy emanates from the fact that he fails to establish meaningful connection even with people around him. In fact, at times he manipulates people, which results in his alienation.

Muhammad is alienated not only from his friends and people, but from himself, too. He is an extremely lonely man. He finds it impossible to share his dreams and ideals with anyone. Even his stepmother fails to understand him; and this makes Tughlaq wonder whether he is doing the right thing.

Not only is Tughlaq alienated from the society in which he lives, he is also estranged at the interpersonal level from the individuals around him. His interpersonal alienation manifests itself in two ways. First of all he is shown to manipulate people for his own purposes, treating them as objects and not persons. Secondly he is unable
to establish meaningful communication with others and is seen to be play-acting continually (Gomez, 115).

His alienation from his people and society reaches completion when he bans prayer from his kingdom and asserts: “Anyone caught praying will be severely punished. Henceforth let the moment of prayer walk my streets in silence and leave without a trace” (Karnad, 18).

Here was a supremely intelligent King driven to disintegration when he fails to face the unidealistic realities of power and politics. A man with unshakable faith in himself and his mission, trying to out-reach his own vision, unfortunately with his bare hands, and wanting to carry along with him the unvisionary and petty people around him, growing relentlessly into an impatient and ferocious animal (Paul 41).

Like Tughlaq, Gowda, too, in The Shadow of the Tiger is alienated from the society, but the Gowda wants to maintain this aura of aloofness and fear as he does not want to get close to the people of the village. He is a demon in the guise of the Gowda who has come to the village with the motive of its destruction and building of his own dynasty through the Gowdthi’s womb. His alienation is self-inflicted and a ploy to protect his false identity. In the beginning, the Gowda is aware of his duty towards his subjects, like when his wife tries to stop him from going to hunt the tiger, he says, “What will people say if the head of the village stays back?” (Kambara 535). But when he returns as the demon Gowda he is least bothered with the problems faced by the village as shown when Ramagonda says. “Kuruba Gunavvya’s baby is not breathing. She is taken to Kariyajja” (Kambara, 544), to which Gowdthi asks whether the Gowda will go too, and the Gowda responds: “Why should I go?” and tells Ramagonda, “Check if the main door is shut. If not, close it and come in” (Kambara,
544). Gowdthi is very surprised at this callous side of the Gowda which was never noticed before.

**Elements of myth in *The Shadow of the Tiger* and *Tughlaq***

Kambara’s *The Shadow of the Tiger* is replete with mythical elements, in *Tughlaq* the mythical elements are used to give more depth and to help understand the deeper meaning in the play. Kambara has used myth to create fear and suspicion in the play, through varied use of myth and folklore he has tried to create an aura of mystery and intrigue in the play. For e.g. when Gowda comes back after supposedly slaying the tiger, he declares nobody to go near the well where he had thrown the body of the tiger. To ensure the sanctity of this decree he creates fear by his words,

Saying that no one should look into the well. Who knows? He is demon above all. Who knows what magic he will use to catch them? The children especially, of the man who killed him, should on no account, peep into the well. Direct your son not to go near the well (Kambara, 544).

The change that comes on the village after the Demon Gowda enters the village is also depicted by the narrator in a very symbolic way,

*Narrator:* …..A thick fog lay
In the light that was there, we looked in the mirror
Everything had changed around
Boys had become men,
Bulls turned to bullocks
There were lines drawn across. Between minds,
Between houses, walls had arisen,
Our shadows intrigued us
Are these our shadows?
Is this our village?
Are we ourselves? (Ibid, 545).

With these questions Kambara pinpoints the unrest that is being faced by the people. The feeling of alienation is very strongly defined here.

There is also the myth of eating of the tiger’s heart which is alluded to in the beginning of the play by Gowda when he tries to relieve the fear of Gowdthi by saying, “Ha, ha, ha! You are scared. Wait I shall hunt the tiger and bring it back. You can eat its heart and your fear will vanish. Then we shall ask the old man what the dream meant” (Ibid, 535).

This is again repeated by Gowdthi when she tells Ramagonda she is carrying a tiger in her womb:

“Gowda went hunting and said he would bring me the heart of the tiger. I consumed it in my mind and became pregnant. It is already raving inside. It is famished. I want to grow, give me food, it shouts. Where can I get it from? I gave my blood. It won’t touch it. You see, it is the foetus of tiger” (Ibid 565).

Another myth frequently mentioned in The Shadow of the Tiger is the combination of parrot, banyan tree and a winding horse. This is mentioned by the woodcutter who come to cut the sacred tree to convince the Mother Goddess who appears in the form of an eight year old girl to let them cut her tree:
“We shall cut the tree now. From it we shall make you a winding horse. You are a princess. You will sit on it and fly in the sky! As you fly, you’ll see fields, trees, bushes, rivers and hills. There a parrot will come flying to you!” (Ibid, 552).

The parrot is then connected to the demon and the tiger by the woodcutter,

“He can become a ghost or a demon! Or a god or even a parrot if he wants to. He can become a tiger” (Ibid, 553). This also shows the metamorphosis of the demon. This combination is again mentioned by the Ghost of Gowda to his son Ramagonda, “There is a banyan tree in Elukolla in the east. In its hollow, there is a palace of darkness. In it there is a parrot in a cage. The demon’s life is in the parrot” (Ibid, 559-60).

It is referred to for the third time by the Yakshini who gives Ramagonda these gifts as powerful tools to vanquish the demon Gowda, “This is a winding horse that will fly beyond the speed of mind to wherever you want, where the bird of the enemy’s life is hidden” (Ibid, 574). And lastly by Gowdthi when she explains the ultimate truth to Ramagonda:

“Shall I show you the ultimate truth? See, there is a banyan tree in the forest. I am a banyan tree. There is a cage in the tree. (Points to her stomach). This is the cage. There is a parrot in the cage. In its stomach there is a tiger. Inside the tiger there is a demon” (Ibid 583).

Another myth is about the connection of Parambi tree, the mother goddess Karravyya and Kariajja. The villagers worship Paramabi tree as the mother goddess resides there, but she only shows herself when the tree is being destroyed and gives
her permission for its destruction knowing that it will also kill Kariajja. This myth shows how during the time of destruction even the gods appear to give their tacit permission knowing the effect of their actions.

**Interweaving of Folk in *Tughlaq* and *The Shadow of the Tiger***

Both the plays employ a very ingenious way of using the folk device of masks which is a typical feature of ‘Yakshagana’ to project role-playing as a kind of mask. In *Tughlaq* as well as in other plays, Karnad makes use of this traditional theatrical device. Mask and disguise are his favourite tools for communicating varying emotions and viewpoints to his audience. In his other plays he uses masks from the absurd tradition. Here he uses disguise in place of that. Aziz and Azam take on various disguises to fool the sultan, the nobles and the common people, their aim is to profit from the foolishness of others and they wear various masks (disguises) and exploit the people. Aziz first comes into the play as a Brahmin to fool the Sultan, later on he takes the guise of the holy man Giyaz ud din and fools the Sultan once again. For *Tughlaq*, too, role play and disguise are alternatives to mask, the Sultan has to play many roles in his life, that of a visionary, a tyrant, a forgiver, a self-realising person, and also a devotee.

Kambara, too, symbolically uses mask as a device behind which the tiger hides when he takes the form of the Gowda and terrorizes the village in the form of a human instead of an animal. The whole play shows how the demon Gowda who is the tiger in disguise is planning to destroy the village and at the same time creates his own legacy. Another element of use of mask could be ascribed to Gowdati who is carrying a child in her womb which is conceived by the demon Gowda. Through this episode, Kambara symbolically portrays the womb as a mask carrying the future of
destruction. Another symbolic folk element is the use of the word shadow in the title itself. Shadow is the symbol of the dark side, it symbolizes fear and evil which is replete in the play. This preoccupation with disguise in both the plays - in major and minor characters – may be related to the prevailing atmosphere of political intrigues being alluded to in the plays.

An interesting element in both the plays is the use of identical faces of good and evil. The resemblance between the Sultan and Imam-ud-din has been very cleverly used by Karnad to project an alter ego of the Sultan. The Sheikh who is a good and holy man looks similar to Tughlaq who is the evil side of the mask. This is alluded to by the old man in the beginning of the play itself.

Old man: They say he looks like the Sultan
Third man: No – not very much. People exaggerate, you know. But he has a certain resemblance – some gestures, you know, some mannerisms (Karnad, 5).

In the same fashion Ramagonda in the The Shadow of the Tiger is the good son of the Gowda but is shown to be mistaken for the Demon gowda various times. This is another interesting use of mask which leads to creation of interesting episodes in both the plays. This is expressed in the frustration of Ramagonda when he talks to the ghost of his father,

Until now I thought there were two, my father and his ghost. But now I find that I have a ghost too like you. If I stand before the mirror, my father’s shadow appears instead of me. If I stay home, my shadow roams around the village and abuses young girls (Kambara 573).
Ramagonda first discovers that he has a ghost when he talks to Shari who is suspicious of his behaviour and ask him if he recognizes her. She says, “Yesterday you came home on your own I called you inside but you stared at me as if you didn’t know me and ran away looking at me as you ran” (Kambara, 569). To this Ramagonda responds, “That means I have a ghost too” (Kambara, 569). Thus in both the plays, masks have been used to mislead and create confusion through switching of roles.

In both the plays there is ample use of shape shifting. Makrand R. Paranjape defines shape shifting as:

The term cultural anthropologists and folklorists use to describe the transformation that are so common in the myths and folklore of most cultures... Like when a plant becomes an animal or when a woman becomes a bird, or when a statue becomes a man, or when a dead person becomes alive, or when a person becomes someone else by changing shape or form in any way (12-13).

Both Karnad and Kambara draw heavily from the rich tradition of shape-shifting as prevalent in the folklore in their plays and make use of tools such as shape-shifting, which are attached with myths. One of the examples of shape-shifting in Tughlaq is the attempt to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. In his attempt to change the capital Muhammad is trying to turn Daulatabad into Delhi. The attempt fails, representing the failure of Muhammad’s policies.

In The Shadow of the Tiger, Kambara has shown how the demon is first in the form of a tiger who later kills the Gowda and shape shifts to become the Gowda and creates anarchy and unrest in the village.
Kambara has also used the folk element of the tree and the goddess who resides in the tree which is a folklore since time immemorial especially in villages. When the demon gowda gets the tree cut, it symbolically breaks the faith of the people which is underlined by the sudden death of Karvajja who is the caretaker of the goddess.

**Techniques used in the plays**

*Tughlaq* is deliberately written in the convention of the Company Natak. In Company Natak all scenes are divided and alternated between deep scenes and shallow scenes. The shallow scene is usually a street scene, while the deep scene needs to be changed depending on the act like a garden or a palace. Whenever the deep scenes are being changed, the shallow scene is on. The audience enjoys comedy in the shallow scene and when the curtain opens the audience sees the elaborate deep scene set on the stage. Karnad has minutely studied the presentation of play on the stage and he wrote *Tughlaq* to satisfy the needs of the theatre presentation.

Kambara's play, too, needs to be absorbed through the stage performances which take it to a different type of experience. The plays of Kambara are not known for their literary value, the story line is not as important as its performances, and the words and language used to create an aura of drama and excitement to keep the audience glued to their seats. Kambara exploits the dramatic element through the use of words which has more importance over the substance or the macro level content of the play. Kambara’s play is profound and filled with myth and symbolism which are true to the folkloric style of adaptation especially in the Indian context of theatre and he remains true to the roots of folklore and local myths while maintaining the modern realities.
In both *Tughlaq* and *The Shadow of the Tiger* whatever the audience needs to know about Tughlaq or the Gowda is learnt from others’ impression of him. It is their impressions shared through conversations that influences the audience, this has been done in the interest of dramatic effectiveness. For example,

Old man (*eagerly*): You’ve seen the Sheikh?

Third Man: Why, of course. Only a week ago. In Kanpur. What a man! What a voice! The audience was spellbound. And he said the Sultan’s guilty of killing his father and brother, he said. He said so many other things too – about Islam and what’s happening to it. It was the most inspiring speech I’ve ever heard. The audience went wild and burnt down half of Kanpur. You think he would talk like that if he wasn’t sure? (Karnad, 5).

Both the dramatists introduce tension and conflict which are essential for the plot in the very beginning and all the events and actions of the characters intensify conflict until the play reaches the climax. In *The Shadow of the Tiger*, the tense battle between the Gowda and the tiger is described by the old woman:

Close your lovely eyes, darling. A murder is likely to take place now.  
Don’t watch, for your eyes already grimy, will become murkier still.  
There, there, got him, got him! The claws of a tiger, the turbaned head.  
Oh, it’s fallen, fallen (Kambara, 541).

In *The Shadow of the Tiger*, on the arrival of the demon Gowda, Kambara creates a strong feeling of ill omen which is spreading across the village. The first death in the village is talked about between Iripya and Basya:

Iripya: Our village has fallen on bad times
Basya: May be it has. I have never seen ajja’s charm not working

Irpiya: Why? What happened?

Basya: No matter how irrevocably breath was lost, it would come back with ajja’s charm. Yesterday he tried his charm three times on Gullavva’s child but life did not return (Ibid, 545).

A lot of action in both the plays is described through conversations between the common folk, rather than being enacted on stage. Like when the common folk talk about the death of the old Sultan during the prayer.

Young Man: The elephant suddenly went wild. The crowds must have frightened it. It just ran and dashed against the wooden pandal. And the pandal collapsed (Karnad, 4).

Even in The Shadow of the Tiger which starts on a very high octane note, the destruction wrought by the tiger is shared by the narrator at the start of the play:

Narrator: That night, a seven-striped tiger came to the village and was heard roaring. Gowda listened and laughed heartily, called the hunters, ordered them to hunt and kill. But it was different, this tiger. Eating cows in sheds, chasing and devouring the little mites of the village, menacing. In the end, it was Gowda himself for the hunt, all set. The bows and arrows and nets in readiness. The sound of the horn, the clarion, and the metal plank filling the skies, Gowda all set for the hunt (Kambara, 58).

Karnad sometimes uses the character of Sutradhara to help the audience understand the play. In Tughlaq, he uses the announcer, who also acts as a narrator or commentator. Kambara, too, makes use of the narrator in the same fashion, and the narrator announces the various important points of the play in The Shadow of the
Tiger. Kambara has written beautiful verses in the beginning of each scene sung by the chorus and sets the mood for the play.

In Tughlaq, Karnad has used the Company Natak convention of the comic pairs, Aziz and Azam just as Kambara had used Aawali and Jawali in Siri Sampaige. In Tughlaq the pair of Aziz and Azam runs parallel to the main plot and is employed for the purpose of burlesque. In other words it is introduced in the way of ridicule in order to provide comic relief in a play which is very serious and full of doom and gloom. This methodology was employed by Kambara in Siri Sampaige.

Another noticeable feature in both the plays is the use of chorus or song in order to suspend the flow of dramatic action and provide multiplicity of themes and carry the tone and mood of the play forward.

Beginning of both the plays

Both the plays start with the speech from the ruler. This sets the note for the subsequent tragedy of the play. It is the foretelling of the tragedy going to be enacted on stage.

In Tughlaq, Mohammad gives his speech to justify his stance on equal justice where he emphasises Hindu-Muslim unity. He announces that everybody should be treated equally in his reign in the eyes of law:

“My beloved people, you have heard the judgment of the Kazi and seen for yourselves how justice works in my kingdom without any consideration of might or weakness, religion or creed. May this moment burn bright and light up our path towards greater justice,
equality, progress and peace—not just peace but a more purposeful life” (Karnad, 3).

Then the Sultan goes on to announce that he is taking a new step to bring above Hindu-Muslim unity. He wants to transfer the capital in his empire from Delhi to Daulatabad. Rationalizing his decision, he comments,

Delhi is too near the border and as you well know its peace is never free from the fear of invaders. But for me the most important factor is that Daulatabad is a city of the Hindus and as the capital it will symbolize the bond between Muslims and Hindus which I wish to develop and strengthen in my kingdom. I invite you all to accompany me to Daulatabad. This is only an invitation and not an order. Only those who have faith in me may come with me. With their help I shall build an empire which will be the envy of the world (Karnad 3-4).

In The Shadow of the Tiger, the Gowda warns the people of the village of the danger that will befall on the people:

“Beware, listen well, people of the village the villain from the City is coming, riding a black horse, he can count in a moment, the leaves on the tree, he can live by devouring brains, he is the master of the earth and sky and God. He desires to gambol. Extending his kingdom. A Gluttonous Crane, he awaits to loot the village. Let the women stay indoors. Let them know there is rebuke and punishment for even peeping out. Let the men hide their weapons. Let no one smile and arouse suspicion. Let there be pretence to cover the deceit in the eyes. From any corner that he arrives at the village, bring him to the place, we are the one to settle accounts, not you” (Kambara, 533).
These lines give the audience a feeling that something momentous is going to unfold and creates the right dramatic pitch to keep the audience on its toes.

**Element of intrigue in both the plays**

Both the plays are a great tragedy of intrigue. In *Tughlaq* there are three types of intrigues. First, the intrigues of the Sultan against his nobles and even against the royal family i.e. Tughlaq comes to the throne by scheming and successfully killing his father and brother. When the Sheikh Imam-ud-din calls the Sultan a disgrace to the throne for this act, the Sultan kills the Sheikh by sending him as the messenger of peace to Ain-ul-Mulk. Second is the intrigues of trusted courtiers and nobles against the Sultan, who hatch a number of intrigues against each other. For example, the stepmother who is displeased with Najib and ultimately gets him poisoned for which the Sultan arrests and punishes her in a cruel manner. Then there is Sihab-ud-din, a trusted friend and courtier but misguided by his adopted brother, Ratansing and is killed. Lastly is the intrigues of the nobles who conspire against each other, like Ratansing who is vindictive and works as a spy. He wants to have revenge upon his adopted brother Sheikh Sihab-ud-din, as Sihab-ud-din’s father has killed Ratansing’s father and since then Ratansing has been planning his revenge and he does take his revenge through treachery.

In *The Shadow of the Tiger* the omniscient intrigue is the Gowda himself. When he leaves to hunt the tiger he goes amidst a lot of fanfare but when he returns he does so quietly like a thief. This description of his return itself reeks of intrigue:

- Gowda returned after everyone else.
- He was tired.
- He had come carrying something on his back.
The hunted tiger, we said, perhaps.
Or perhaps not, we felt.
For into the disused well outside the village
He threw it and came.
Not a call of a horn
Nor band and music!
It wasn't as if the tiger was hunted
Nor as if it hadn't been.
He's got in like a thief
And we accepted him as such (Kambara, 542).

Even when the Gowda sets out to hunt the tiger, the Gowdthi, Gowda's wife hesitates to send him for hunting. She narrates the tragic incident in which Gowda was sacrificed in her dream. "At least for today can't you send the huntsmen out?" (Kambara, 535), she pleads. Iripya, the village man also claims that the deity Karrevva has not given her consent for hunting. This builds the tension as to what tragedy these ill omens will unfold and keeps the audience captivated. This intrigue is continued throughout the play through various episodes especially when there is a marked change in the Gowda’s behaviour after the episode with the tiger which is noted by all and described by the Narrator:

“It was six months since it happened. Even as days passed by, great shocks awaited us. Perhaps believing that we’d die if they came all at once, they came one by one, back to front in a line, kicked us on the chest and went leaving foot prints inside. Gowda couldn’t recognize us. He called us by different names. He didn’t remember them all. We didn’t like the names he gave us. Whenever he called, we looked at
him with fear. He, too, would look with suspicion and get furious”
(Kambara, 546).

The audience is gradually made to realize that the Gowda is actually the slain tiger who has replaced the Gowda after killing him. And later Gowda ghost comes to his son Ramagonda and confirms this:

“But that was not a tiger. It was a demon. He cheated me so that I could get separated from my people, he killed me and threw my flesh and blood in this well. He took my form and went to the village, I am here, a ghost. And there he is ruling, what more can I say to you, my son” (Ibid, 559).

Also there is the intrigue of the milk of the tiger. When Ramagonda is asked by Gowdati to get the milk of the tiger for her unborn child, Ramagonda goes to the forest and the tiger comes to him and willingly gives him milk like a cow. This is a very intriguing and suspense filled episode. Also when the Gowdati describes her unborn child in her womb and the impact that it will have it raises a lot of intriguing questions in the mind of the audience:

“Gowda went hunting and said he would bring me the heart of the tiger. I consumed it in my mind and became pregnant. It is already raving inside. It is famished. I want to grow, give me food, it shouts. Where can I get it from? I gave my blood. It won’t touch it. You see, it is the foetus of tiger. It asks for tiger’s milk…. You are a boulder pounding my womb. I know you will just die there if you don’t get tiger’s milk. It is better you die. You will come out at least after death. Come, I urinate blood all over you and bury you” (Ibid, 565).
The third intrigue is about the goddess herself who first manifests herself as a young girl child, when the wood cutters come to cut the Parambi tree.

Woodcutter 1: Hey, you girl, come here. What is your name?

Girl: Mother

Woodcutter 1: Why did you come here

Girl: Kariyajja called me…..

Woodcutter 4: Mother, how old are you?

Girl: Eight. I haven’t grown up yet (Ibid, 551-52).

The goddess then appears in front of Ramagonda as an old woman and she tells him the truth about his father.

Ramagonda: Yes, old woman, who are you?.

Old Woman: Mother

Ramagonda: Who’s Mother?

Old Woman: Yours. And of the village. Oh God! When people came to cut down the Parambi tree, I had come. You were there too.

Ramagonda: It was a girl that came then.

Old Woman: A lot of time has passed since then. I was a girl then. Now I am an old woman (Ibid, 562).

The fourth intrigue is the connection between the tiger, the parrot and the winding horse which is mentioned various times during the play. This intrigue is raised by Gowdthi when she tries to explain to Ramagonda that something is very wrong,
What is the relationship between you and me? You and the tiger? Parambi Karrevva and the winding horse? The well in ruins and my foetus? What is the relationship between the parrot and the demon (Kambara, 566).

**Power Play in both plays**

Another distinctive feature of both these play is its exploration of man’s search for power. Tughlaq had ascended the throne after getting his father and brothers assassinated, just like the demon Gowda in *The Shadow of the Tiger* who has killed the real Gowda and taken his place as the Gowda in the village. For both, the deaths are justified as these deaths brought about by their own hand has not gone waste, and it has given them power to control the people. As Tughlaq says, “power, strength to shape my thoughts, strength to act, strength to recognize myself” (Karnad, 66). What, however, Tughlaq does not say and what is true for both these protagonists is that these very deaths laid the foundation of the ultimate rot that their kingdom is eventually reduced to. Tughlaq feels that he killed for an ideal while Gowda has killed to get power for his demon rule. And as the play unfolds the violence that was started by them spreads its tentacles to claim their whole kingdom.

In *Tughlaq* the Sultan motivates the action of the play. Every sequence, every act originates from his desire for authority and the total power:

“His interest and aspirations revolve within the emitting circle of power, the rest of his human impulses dry up, the needs of his being become distorted; his erudition and intellect turn out to be instruments for use in the politics of power, its stratagems and counter stratagems.
He says, “No one can go far on his knees. I have a long way to go. I can’t afford to crawl. I have to gallop” (Dass, 94).

Tughlaq and Gowda both spread fear among the people and use excessive power against anyone who opposes them. The Sultan’s struggle begins with his assumption of power as the Sultan of Delhi. His enemies want to swoop down on his throne. The chieftains of Delhi, the Amirs, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, and Ain-ul-Mulk are the powerful personalities who have started a war against the young Sultan. What Tughlaq does to them is in his self-defence. He has to preserve himself, his ideals, his visions, his dreams and for that his own survival is important. Geeta Kumar aptly comments:

A discriminating study of power politics in Tughlaq would make it amply clear that to survive in the game of snakes and ladders, the merely competent like Shihab-ud-din, the upright saint like Sheikh Imam-ud-din and later the slightly independent stepmother have to be weeded out ruthlessly (93).

In The Shadow of the Tiger, Gowda too is the central figure of the play but his physical role is lesser than his metaphysical role where all conversations and reactions are directly due to his actions. He too acts in his own self-defence firstly when he goes to kill the tiger and later when the tiger becomes the Gowda. The Gowda is trying to maintain his power and acts in self-defence when he destroys the heart of the village by cutting the tree which houses the village deity. Gowda for his own survival and to preserve the future of his generation is ready to destroy the village.
In this regard, it is necessary to shed light on the four dimensions a ruler relies on to remain in power for a longer time. This will help the readers understand the transition of both these rulers during the course of the play.

The four dimensions are the need, care, power and fear. These dimensions show the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. The first dimension, need, is about dependence and the seeker’s need for what is wished for, like the need of the body for the soul, the earth for the water and the patient for the doctor. The second one is care which involves leniency, beneficence and guidance, like the goat herd with his herd and the father with his son. The third one is power which imposes fear on others like the sea which has water but is dangerously deep, like the sun and fire which give warmth but can burn. The fourth one is fear which involves cautiousness and keeping distance.

Gowda, during the course of the play, has established his relationship with his subjects on the basis of those four dimensions. In the beginning of the play he shows his understanding of the need of the villagers to be protected from the man eating tiger and immediately collects the villagers and goes to the forest to kill the tiger. This shows his care for the villagers.

On the other hand in Tughlaq the people’s need for the Sultan, the first dimension, has made them submissive, carrying out all his orders. He controls all the resources of the Kingdom and distributes them to his close associates to make the circle around him durable. He attempts to weaken his subjects through need and poverty and creates disputes and conflict among them. For example, when a group of people approach him for assistance, he agrees on the condition that they first join a
fighting contest and the winner will get the gold pieces. He imposes various rules on his people so that they always remain in need of his assistance.

Care, the second dimension, does not exist in *Tughlaq* during the reign of the Sultan, and in *The Shadow of the Tiger* when the tiger takes the form of Gowda. This lack of care increases the gap between the rulers and the subjects. If it existed, the other three dimensions of need, fear and power would have disappeared.

The other two dimensions of power and fear exist strongly in both the plays. Both Gowda and Tughlaq believe that their subjects will remain meek and under their control as long as these two dimensions exist. Both actively try to poster these two dimensions among their subjects which is manifested through many incidents in the course of both the plays. For example the Gowda tries to cut down the holy tree knowing that it houses the mother deity of the village to prove his power on the villagers. Tughlaq, too, brutally murders any person who comes in his way and tries to suppress his people to satisfy his greed for power which makes him kill even god fearing people like Sheikh Imam-ud-din.

Both Tughlaq and Gowda are very suspicious of their subjects, they believe that everybody is conspiring against them and this suspicion makes them act in a cruel and vindictive manner. The concept of loyalty and faith is lacking in both Tughlaq and Gowda as they are more interested in gaining power. Power is at the centre and both use religion for their power politics and gain. When the villagers fear the Gowda, and seek solace under the Parambi Tree, the demon Gowda thinks that the villagers are conspiring against him and decides to take action against the villagers. This feeling of fear and suspicion is shared by the Narrator:
“…Now we have but one shelter, Goddess Karimayi’s tree. We were wounded somewhere. Over the cut, the shadow of parambi would fall and cover it, if we came out of the shade, the terror of the cut would devour us” (Kambara, 547).

But Gowda didn’t approve of this either: “We were scheming together, he said. We were lying in wait under the Parambi tree he said. He nipped the sprouting compassion” (Ibid, 547). This suspicion led to the order by the Gowda to cut the Parambi tree,

Woodcutter 1: Is this the Parambi Tree?

Ramagonda: Yes, why?

Woodcutter: Gowda has sent us to cut it down (Kambara, 549).

Tuqhlaq and Gowda have become swollen with pride and do not realize that power alone is not an active means to keep the kingdom or the country stable. “Absolute power, is dangerous to those ruled and to the ruler, who is likely to become insolently swollen with pride” (Nyquist, 85).

A ruler has to win the heart of his subjects by extending acts of justice, care and love. But in the above plays, the two rulers lack justice, respect and care for their subjects. The moment the two rulers begin to suspect their subjects, imbalance and violence begin to emerge. With thoughts of doubts in their mind, both Gowda and Tuqhlaq begin to crush their subjects the moment they sense danger approaching them. The fact that Gowda was ready to cut down the holy tree holding the village goddess testifies this.
As alluded to by Ratansing, Tughlaq enjoys the feeling of guilt when he kills or murders a man: “I have never seen an honest scoundrel like your Sultan. He murders a man calmly and then actually enjoys the feeling of guilt” (Karnad 28). Tughlaq has a very cruel and vindictive style which is richly portrayed in the play. When Tughlaq stabs Shihab-Ud-Din and orders to behead the Amirs, he says: “stuff their bodies with straw and hang them up in the palace-yard.” (Ibid, 43). When Barani spreads a silken cloth on Shihab-Ud-Din’s corpse, the Sultan says villainously: “Don’t cover him. I want my people to see his wounds” (Ibid, 45). Muhammad has already killed his father and brother while they were praying. But when his step-mother accepts that she has killed Najib, Tughlaq finds fault with her action. At the same time, he justifies his murders: “I killed them - Yes - but I killed them for an ideal” (Ibid, 65).

In both the plays there is a strong element of fear, both among the subjects who fear the rulers as also the rulers themselves who fear the loss of their power. This element of fear in the Sultan and Gowda makes them destructive and cruel as they are in a position of power to crush this fear by preying on their subjects but the subjects are shown as helpless lambs who can see the destruction unfolding in front of their eyes but can do nothing except fear the future.

In The Shadow of the Tiger a conversation between Basya and Iripya shows this helplessness of the people.

Basya: …. I saw meteors falling on our village. Oh Mother, what terrible times, I said to myself and looked. It seemed as if someone had caught hold of the sky and shaken it and all the stars had broken loose and fallen over us. Iripya, what could this mean.
Iripya: What else? The village will be drowned and destroyed.

Basya: Why do you think so?

Iripya: I don’t know why (Kambara, 546).

**Language in both the plays**

Karnad’s use of language and dialogue is quite effective in *Tughlaq*. Reddy comments: He has chosen English to reflect the idiom of the language of character. A Karnad sentence often performs two or three functions at once. It sheds light on the character spoken about and it furthers the plot. It almost functions ironically in conveying to audience a meaning different from that conveyed to the character (151). Tughlaq does not want to crawl but he would like to gallop and this is reflected in his assertive language. He is aware of his loneliness and all the time he thinks of his god and his subjects:

Muhammad: But I am alone in my life. My kingdom has millions – Muslims, Hindus, Jains. Yes, there is dirt and sickness in my kingdom. But why should I call on god to clean the dirt deposited by man?

(Karnad 20).

There are examples of verbal irony in the text. The ironical language of Karnad makes the play more interesting. This verbal irony becomes a source of comedy in *Tughlaq* when Aziz asks Aazam if he has heard the royal performance the other day. To this Aziz retorts: “Which one? There are so many” (*Ibid*, 7). Answering Shihabudin’s compliment to Muhammad that he is just and impartial, Ratansing says, “Yes indeed, who can deny that? He is impartial. Of course Hindus as well as Muslims are dying with absolute impartiality” (*Ibid* 28). Sometimes the sarcastic
comments of the characters about the policies of Muhammad become comic, too. An apt example would be when heavy taxes were levied on the people, a character says, “Look at what is happening in Delhi. Just look at it. You cannot take sleep without tax for it. You can’t even cheat without having to pay” (Ibid, 17). Muhammad also satirically says: “They couldn’t bear the weight of their crown. They couldn’t leave it aside. So they died senile in their youth or were murdered” (Ibid, 11).

*Tughlaq* is also notable for its poetic value. The language used by Muhammad is very poetic. He has read literature in various languages and the richness of his learning is reflected in the dialogues.

Muhammad: I still remember the days when I read the Greeks – Sukrat who took poison so he could give the world the drink of gods, Aflatoon who condemned poets and wrote in comparably beautiful poetry himself - and I can still feel the thrill with which I found a new world, a world I had not found in the Arabs or even the Koran. They tore me into shreds. And to be whole now, I shall have to kill the part of me which sang to them And my Kingdom too is what I am torn into pieces by vision whose validity I can’t deny. You are asking me to make myself complete by killing the Greek in me and you propose to unify my people by denying the visions which led Zarathustra or the Buddha (Ibid 21).

The Sultan uses language which appeals directly to the mind and intellect of the audience:

Muhammad: My kingdom rejoices at the arrival of your gracious presence. We have waited for years for this joyful moment. Your Holiness, and our sins have become shadows that entwine round our feet. They have become our
dumbness and deprived us of prayer. They have become the fiery sun and burnt up our crops. Now the moment has come for me and my people to rejoice. Only you can save me now, your Holiness, only the dust of your feet on my head can save me now (Ibid, 71-72).

Karnad poignantly describes the devastation of the people with strong, graphic language. For e.g., an old man who was the only survivor and his family died on their way to the new capital describes a horrific truth:

My old father had lived in Delhi all his life. He died of a broken heart.
Then my son Ismail. He was six years old—would have been ten now!
The fine dust that hung in the air, fine as silk, it covered him like a silken shroud. After him, his mother (Ibid, 29).

Karnad has presented vivid pictures of the calamities of the helpless people, a man says: “the roads are lined with skeletons. A man starved to death right in front of his eyes. In Doab, people are eating barks off the trees, he says. Yes, and women have to make do with skins of dead horses” (Ibid, 29).

Karnad uses different dialects for different characters depending on their social standing and status. For example, the characters of Aziz and Aazam are characters of the common class and the language used by them is of the lower strata.

In The Shadow of the Tiger, Kambara established himself as a skilful wordsmith. Brilliantly traversing between illusion and reality, he creates an ambience with his magnificent wordplay, lifting the reading experience to a higher level. And in that context, the play lifts itself above regional proximity to a larger global relevance. When Ramagonda, the Chief’s son, is faced with the truth of the demon Gowda, his
confusion about what is reality and what is in front of his eyes make him to lament, 'Now everything appears to be split into two. I am seeing two of myself. How can I put both truths to test?...What is truth? Which is false?' (Kambara, 559).

Even the language used by Gowdthi when she expresses her fear of the tiger cub in her womb which she fears and loves to an equal extent is very poignant, “You are a boulder pounding my womb. I know you will just die there if you don’t get tiger’s milk. It is better you die. You will come out at least after death. Come, I urinate blood all over you and bury you” (Ibid, 565).

Title of the Plays

Karnad in his play has portrayed Tughlaq as a man of opposites, the ideal and the real; the divine aspiration and the deft intrigue. Though Karnad used all available resources while writing Tughlaq, he deviated from history whenever necessary for artistic and technical purposes. Karnad has done his best to create an atmosphere of mutual distress, frustrated idealism, orthodox and convention ridden faith, communal intolerance, religious bigotry, treachery and sedition, rampant corruption, soaring prices, natural calamities like plague and famine. He has mercilessly thrown a spotlight on the Sultan’s unmitigated blood thirstiness and his final disillusionment.

According to Satish Kumar, “Tughlaq’s hasty, idealistic but sometimes thoughtless actions precipitated his downfall” (28). The whole play is a satire on an intelligent, sensitive, and idealistic man, the Sultan. When faced with the rigours of politics he becomes a changed man and ultimately is a disillusionment not only to his subjects but to himself. Thus Karnad has rightly named the play on the main protagonist who was the creator and writer of his own destiny.
Kambara’s *The Shadow of the Tiger* is a play whose main attraction is the shadows behind which it tries to portray the disenchantment of man and the growth of a future which is selfish and self-destructive. The Gowda is shown only in the beginning of the play, but the tiger is in shadow, it is only mentioned but never shown. When the tiger becomes the demon Gowda, again the Gowda is not physically present he is in shadow, he is mentioned in fear or disgust by the villagers, a vision of fear for his wife, a mirror image for his son Ramagonda. But always in shadow. This shadow is what Kambara tries to say is behind every man and when the shadow obscures the man as it does the Gowda then one can only expect destruction in its wake. Kambara has aptly described this in the words of Gowdthi to Ramagonda: “This is a house of mirrors. Everyone here will acquire two shadows. I have a shadow of a tiger and I have one of my own” (Kambara, 565). Here she alludes to her husband the demon Gowda and herself. She continues saying: “Look, you also have two. One is standing. The other one is crawling” (Ibid, 565). Here she refers to Ramagonda and the unborn child in her womb. She is talking of the present and giving an idea of what the future holds now in the form of a demon tiger overshadowing both of them. Thus the name is very aptly used by Kambara to give a feeling of something dark, fearful and having no existential value.

Therefore both the plays have very appropriate titles and revolve around the concept projected by the title.

**Action in both the plays**

Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq* is based on the historical figure of Tughlaq who reigned Delhi for more than two decades. The play is full of actions. On one hand Tughlaq is involved in securing the throne and on the other hand Aziz is involved in
deceiving the people. Both are deceptive and commit intrigue to achieve their objective. Aziz disguises and deceives the people whereas Tughlaq observes cunning ways to destroy his enemies. When the play begins the characters are talking about the Sultan, who is a controversial character. Some people talk in favour of him whereas some people blame him. The murder shown on the stage, the bloodshed reported and how the people died in their journey to Daulatabad from Delhi, lead the audience to suspect the wisdom of the Sultan.

The action in the play is also described in descriptive words especially of the battle where the Sheikh gets killed which is not enacted on stage but told by Ratansing:

Ratansing: So we marched towards Ain-ul-Mulk's army, led by the gorgeous Sheikh on the royal elephant. The elephant halted about a hundred yards away from the enemy. The Sheikh stood up on it and tried to say something when a trumpeter on our side sounded the charge! The battle was on-yes, my dear Shihab, Ain-ul-Mulk didn't start the battle. We did!
Shihab-ud-din: And the Sultan?
Ratansing: I couldn't understand what was happening. Neither did the Sheikh, obviously. His face was twisted with fear but he was shouting at the top of his voice asking us to stop. He didn't stand a chance. Arrows poured into him and within minutes he looked a gory human porcupine (Karnad, 29).

In The Shadow of the Tiger, too, expressive words beautifully describe the action contained. The three old women describe the action of the tiger hunt. There words increase the tempo of the excitement and the expectation that something bad is going to happen.
Old Woman 2: Sh… did you hear the noise?

Old Woman 1: Just dry leaves crackling.

Old Woman 2: The hooves of horses?

Old Woman 1: Must be the tiger!

Old Woman 2: Yes it is the tiger’s.

Old Woman 1: He is on a horse, surrounded by hunters…..

…..Old Woman 1: No one will make a sound. The forest must be lying dead too. Not a sound.

Old Woman 2: hold on. Watch how both lie in wait!

Old Woman 1: Who will die of the two.

Old Woman 2: The one who must, will even though I don’t say a thing

(Kambara, 539-540).

Similarly, when Ramagonda goes on a foolhardy mission to get tiger’s milk on the insistence of his mother and is successful, again the old women are used to describe the action:

Old Woman 1: Good God! He is blocking the tiger’s path!

Old Woman 2: How brave! What dignity!

Old Woman 1: what insolence! What vanity!

Old Woman 2: The tiger has tucked its tail between its legs. It is circling around like a tamed tiger.

Old Woman 1: He shows the sickle and asks for milk. Look at his courage!

Old Woman 2: He has stared milking. He pulls the udders and milks what daring!
Old Woman 1: Why does the tiger look at him like that?

Old Woman 2: He cuffs the udder. May be that’s why.

Old Woman 1: Not really. There is some sort of a volcano in its mind, there is machination in its eye. It is just waiting for him to forget himself.

Old Woman 2: there! The tiger has escaped from his hold and turned around.

Alas! The tiger has sprung at him! Oh! I can’t bear to look. I can’t.

Old Woman 1: There, there. Look over there, Ramagonda has cut the tiger on the back with the sickle. Blood has splattered!

Both: The tiger has run off scared! The tiger has run off scared! (Kambara, 571-572)

As can be seen the action as described in words by Kambara add to the excitement and tempo of the play.

**Violence in both the plays**

Both the plays are packed with intrigues, manoeuvres, machinations, butchery, terrible murders and horror. There is a long chain of dishonesty, treachery, betrayal and violence. In *Tughlaq*, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, Ain-ul-Mulk, Sihab-ud-din, the Sultan’s stepmother, Najib, the Sultan’s father and brother are the major characters who die during the play on and off the stage. The scene of the death of Shiekh Imam-ud-din and the Holy Man Ghiyas-ud-din Abbasid is especially brutal. In *Tughlaq* there is fratricide, patricide and matricide. “His kingdom transfers into a kitchen of death and he becomes the lord of skin” (S.T. Kharat 42).

When the protest of the oppressed reaches its climax, it is the murder scene of Shihab-ud-din which shows that, as Muhammad tries more and more to quench the
flame of protest with violence it becomes more powerful. This is portrayed in the words of the dying Shihab-ud-din:

Get on your killing, Muhammad…you want to solve all problems in the flash of a dagger, don’t you? But you can’t stop this uprising now… Where will hide my corpse? How will you gag my voice? Kill me- but you won’t stop this- this will go on- (Karnad, 43)

Thus one revolt follows the other. And the process of domination leading to the process of revolt begets intrigue in the play and one intrigue follows the other. Thus, in Tughlaq, evil dominates in the form of violence, murder, treachery and impersonation. The result is a lot of bloodshed and murder with the final outcome being the riot and utter chaos that leads to the crumbling down of the empire of Sultan Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq.

In Kambará’s The Shadow of the Tiger the violence is felt through the verbal dialogue and not as much through action. In the beginning of the play, Gowda talks about the tiger wreaking havoc in the village: “It has started eating cattle every day. It has even devoured babies from the village. It has come to such a pass that no one can leave home” (Kambara, 534). Kambará has also expressed the violence of feeling that Gowdthi in her helplessness feels when she cries out:

Gowda went hunting and said he would bring me the heart of the tiger. I consumed it in my mind and became pregnant. It is already raving inside. It is famished. I want to grow, give me food, it shouts. Where can I get it from? I gave my blood. It won’t touch it. You see, it is the foetus of tiger. It ask for tiger’s milk. You are a boulder pounding my womb. I know you will just die there if you don’t get
tiger’s milk. It is better you die. You will come out at least after death. Come, I urinate blood all over you and bury you (Ibid, 565).

Even the death of the Gowda as described by Gowda’s ghost to Ramagonda near the well is full of violence and pathos.

But that was not a tiger. It was a demon. He cheated me so that I could get separated from my people, he killed me and threw my flesh and blood in this well. He took my form and went to the village, I am here, a ghost. And there he is ruling, what more can I say to you, my son (Ibid, 559).

Through Gowdthi Kambara express the fear of violence that a woman living with her husband who is tiger in the shape of demon faces:

Whenever I sleep, I feel as if the whiskers of a tiger pierce my face.
Particularly last night. A tiger had come and sat firmly on my belly. I screamed, shouted. Nobody came. I don’t know when it sank its teeth into my body. The poison has gone in (Ibid, 564).

The conversation between demon Gowda and Gowdthi as depicted by Kambara is very crude and cruel in its implication:

Gowdthi: Damn you sinner! What do you want?
Gowda: I want a flower. A red flower. I want the red flower blooming in your womb.
Gowdthi: I shall die if it is plucked
Gowda: That’s why I want the flower (Ibid, 577).
In the end when Gowdthi pleads with Ramagonda to kill her, the violence of her speech and her request to her son for committing this violent act is given in very strong words:

Don’t stand talking when you should be stabbing. There is no one in the cave. Just the two of us. Don’t show any pity because I am your mother. Stab quickly (Ibid, 583).

Through these words Gowdthi wants to destroy herself in the hope of executing the evil that she is holding within her womb and prevent the end of the world.

Violence in both the plays is prominent though in Karnad’s *Tughlaq* the violence is both verbal and in action, whereas in Kambara’s *The Shadow of the Tiger* violence is felt by and large through conversations and feelings rather than through direct action. Yet both the plays have a strong aura of fear and trauma running across the plot.

**Role of women in both plays**

In both the plays the Step-mother of Tughlaq and the wife of Gowda, Gowdati are the only important female characters in the play. In *Tughlaq* the step mother is worried about the health and welfare of Tughlaq. She is worried about his late nights. She dislikes many of Tughlaq’s advisors and requests Barani to promise her not to leave the Sultan – ever – whatever he does.

Step mother: … I am worried about him. You know what he is like. He is such an intelligent boy and he works so hard for the people. He doesn’t even go to bed these days. (Pause.) But he is so impulsive-and when he gets into one of his moods I don’t know what he’ll do next.
(Pause.) You are a sober man, Barani, level-headed and honest, and he needs friends like you. I just wanted to ask you .... Oh, God! It all sounds so stupid.

Barani: I fully understand Your Highness's feelings.

Step-mother: It is not that. It is just that I don't like so many of his advisers and friends. (Suddenly.) Please promise me not to leave him ever whatever he does.

Barani (overwhelmed to the point of tears): May God help me to retain such confidence un tarnished. I won't leave His Majesty, Your Highness, I promise you. I love him too much to do that.

Step-mother: Look at him now. He won't show it, but Ain-Ui-Mulk has hurt him. And this Sheikh Imam-ud-din-I don't know what he's going to do (Karnad, 16-17).

She comes to the conclusion that Najib is responsible for the killings in the state. She manages the murder of Najib and for that Tughlaq gives orders for her being sent to prison and stoned to death. As aptly pointed out by Mani:

With regard to his relationship with his mother, Tughlaq is already estranged from her, as she believes him guilty of patricide and fratricide. More significantly in scene ten the betrayal of his stepmother takes place to whom he has been very close. He condemns her to death by stoning in public when she confesses to having his close adviser Najib murdered (145).

In The Shadow of the Tiger, Gowdthi is shown as a strong woman who cares for her husband the Gowda. She initially warns him against going to the forest to kill
the tiger as she fears an ill-omen: “I had a bad dream last night” (Kambara, 535) but when the Gowda convinces her, she sends him with her blessings. Gowdthi is shown to be a woman who believes in myth and ill omen and this is alluded to time and again. When Gowda leaves to hunt the tiger she is worried: “The lights of the aarathi went out. He left before I could call out to tell him not to leave. What can I do?” (Ibid, 538). And to ease her fear she says: “My heart is uneasy. Nothing seems to set it at rest. If he comes home safe after the hunting, I shall have silver eyes made for Karrevva” (Ibid, 538). This shows her love for her husband. She shows her helplessness as a woman when she tells Ramagonda:

Whenever I sleep, I feel as if the whiskers of a tiger pierce my face.
Particularly last night. A tiger had come and sat firmly on my belly. I screamed, shouted. Nobody came. I don’t know when it sank its teeth into my body. The poison has gone in (Ibid, 564).

But unlike the stepmother who is killed by Tughlaq because she had got Najib killed. The Gowdthi has more value to the demon Gowda as she has the future of his clan in her womb. She is aware of this evil plan of Gowda and begs Ramagonda to kill her before the demon succeeds. She warns Ramagonda that:

If the demon comes out he can create thousands of children. For every drop of his blood that falls on the ground, there are millions of demons born….If you want to save the village you should stab this demon. Do you have the courage to stab? (Ibid, 583).

In this why she begs Ramagonda to stab her in her womb. But Ramagonda cannot kill his mother and instead he is destroyed himself.
Thus both the female characters in the plays had prominent roles and had a say though limited in the matter of rule and welfare.

**Conclusion**

Thus a very enlightening comparative study of both the plays is possible keeping in view the elements of myth, folk, plot, similarity in characters, situations, power politics etc. Both the plays are unique in their own way, perfect for stage enactment, yet forge complete possibility of comparisons through various comparable elements described here even with differences in plot and situation. Thus both the playwrights have created powerful plays with a strong message.
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