

# *Pride and Megalomania*

## *Thematic Study in Marlowe's*

## **TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT**

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### Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to study Marlowe's play **Tamburlaine the Great** mainly the theme of Pride and Megalomania that forms a dominant theme among other themes.

Pride according to **Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary: [1987: 1138]** is:

*a sense of dignity and self-respect that a person has..... a feeling of being superior to others which makes a person boast and ignore other person's feelings and advice; used showing disapproval.*

Pride also indicates being out of touch with reality and over estimating one's own capabilities especially for those in position of power. However, pride in its positive meaning refers to a satisfied sense of attachment towards one's own choices and actions, or towards a whole group of people or community. It also could refer to the high opinion of one's nation which is called "*national pride*".

Pride also is regarded as one of the Seven Deadly Sins in Christianity that exposes its fellow to heavenly retribution if he/she does not repent. It was commonly used in the European medieval morality drama.

In the ancient Greek tragedy pride was also used synonymous with the Greek term "*hubris*" which means; [**Gray: 2008: 138**]:

*"The self-indulgent confidence that causes a tragic hero to ignore the decrees, laws and warnings of the gods, and therefore defy them to bring about his or her downfall".*

Megalomania, on the other hand, is derived from the Greek words '*megalos*' which means larger or greater and '*mania*' which means madness or frenzy. According to the **English Language Dictionary [1987: 904]** megalomania "*is the belief that you are*

*more powerful and important than you really are. Megalomania is sometimes a mental illness."*

Thus it is taken as a psychopathological order characterized by delusional fantasies of power or omnipotence.

The paper's task, then, is to tackle the theme of pride and megalomania. It is, thus, a thematic study in one of the most remarkable plays of the English Renaissance period.

The play is also a magnificent piece of rhetoric that one cannot help but to be greatly attached to it. The paper refers to many quotations taken from the play due to their dramatic significance. They show how brilliantly and successfully Marlowe introduces his themes through these sublime lines of free verse. They also manifest Marlowe's –the teen- aged student at Cambridge University – poetic and dramatic talent to compose such great drama enriched with rhetoric and a great deal of historical and mythological knowledge.

The paper is divided into the following main chapters:

**Chapter One** includes brief account on Marlowe's time and drama, the source of the play and a plot summary.

**Chapter Two** analyses Tamburlaine's character as a symbol of cruelty and brutality.

**Chapter Three** is devoted to the analysis of the theme of pride and megalomania that is embodied in Tamburlaine's character.

**Chapter Four** includes brief analysis of two minor themes in the play, the theme of love and the theme of pacifism in the tremendous turmoil of hatred and war.

The paper comes to conclusion that the theme of pride and megalomania preoccupies the main part in the content of the drama. It confirms the fact that pride and megalomania are dangerous and destructive evils to both the individual and society.

The paper also concludes that **Tamburlaine the Great** is more a morality play than a tragedy.

## خلاصة البحث

يتعرض البحث بالدراسة والتحليل لفكرة الكبرياء والغرور وجنون العظمة في واحدة من روائع المسرح الانجليزي في عصر النهضة، ألا وهي مسرحية الشاعر والكاتب المسرحي (كريستوفر مارلو) (١٥٦٤ - ١٥٩٣) تيمور لنك العظيم التي كتبها عام ١٥٨٧ وهو لا يزال طالباً بجامعة كامبريدج.

والكرياء والغرور هو إحساس مفرط بالاعتزاز بالنفس إلى الحد الذي يشعر فيه المرء بأنه اسمى وأعلى من الآخرين فيتجاهل مشاعرهم وأحاسيسهم مبدياً استهجانه للنصائح والإرشاد.

والغرور يعني فيما يعني أيضاً بعد المرء عن إدراك حقيقته وواقعه ومغالياته في التباكي بقدراته خاصة من هو في موقع السلطة والنفوذ.

وقد يكون للكرياء معناها الايجابي عندما تظل في مستوى شعور المرء بالرضى عما يختاره أو يقدمه لنفسه أو مجتمعه، ويأتي في إطار هذا المعنى الاعتزاز والاعتداد بأمته وهو ما يقال له "الكرياء الوطنية".

والكبر والغرور في الثقافة المسيحية هي إحدى الكبائر السبع التي تودي ب أصحابها إلى السقوط في الهاوية، وكثيراً ما يشار إليها في المسرحية الأخلاقية للعصور الوسطى.

كما وجدت هذه الفكرة بشكل واسع في المسرحية التراجيدية عند قدماء الإغريق عندما تحل الثقة العميم بالنفس والزهو والخيال لدى بطل المسرحية فيتجاهل الأعراف والقوانين وتحذيرات الآلهة ويتحداها، فيقع في شر أعماله وتحل به كارثة.

أما جنون العظمة فتعني اعتقاد المرء بأنه أقوى وأهم من حقيقته وواقعه، فيتحول هذا الاعتقاد إلى مرض عقلي ونفسي يسيطر على المرء فيكون أسير أوهام خادعة يعتقد بعدها أنه يمتلك قوة مطلقة.

كما يوضح البحث في الكتابة المسرحية لدى (مارلو) في تقديم فكرة الكبر والغرور وجنون العظمة.. كما تبرز هنا إمكانيات الكاتب اللغوية والبلاغية والمعلومات التاريخية والأساطيرية التي يمتلكها.

ويوزع البحث في أربعة أجزاء:

الجزء الأول: يقدم سرد موجز عن عصر الكاتب وأعماله المسرحية، وكذلك المصدر التاريخي الذي استقى منه مادته المسرحية، وخلاصة للحبكة المسرحية.

الجزء الثاني: يتعلق بتحليل شخصية تيمورلنك كمثال للبطش والقسوة والطاغوت.

الجزء الثالث: يكرس لتحليل دراسة فكرة الكبر والغرور وجنون العظمة المجسدة في شخصية تيمورلنك.

الجزء الرابع: يتضمن تحليلًا موجزًا لفكتريين ثانويتين، ولكن لهما أهمية درامية في المسرحية، هما فكرة الحب ومفهوم السلامة في خضم الأجواء الصاخبة للكراهية وال الحرب.

وتصل الدراسة أخيراً إلى خلاصة توکد هيمنة فكرة الغرور وجنون العظمة على عالم المسرحية كونها تحتل حيزاً واسعاً في مضمونها. كما توکد حقيقة أن هذه المواجهات تشكل خطراً حقيقياً على الفرد والمجتمع.

كما تصل الدراسة إلى أن مسرحية تيمورلنك العظيم التي أريد لها أن تكون مأساوية (تراجيدية) فهي في حقيقة الأمر مسرحية أخلاقية أكثر منها مسرحية مأساوية.

## Introduction

### Marlowe's Time and Drama

The year 1564 was of remarkable significance in the history of English drama. It was the year in which two of its leading figures were borne: Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593) and William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616).

At the age of fifteen Marlowe attended The King's School in Canterbury, and in 1580 he attended Cambridge University where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1584 and his Master of Arts degree in 1587.

Six years before Marlowe was born, Queen Elizabeth the first had ascended the throne of England and Scotland.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I witnessed the real renaissance of British Empire. It was the age of great achievements in different fields of knowledge and literature. It was the age of the huge growth of the empire and the expansion of its powers and the enlargement of its colonies.

It was the age where the British navy defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588. It was an age of power and glory to the English nation. Facing the threats of the Spanish Empire, and in such atmosphere of war the queen said in her "Speech on the approach of the Armada, 1588"(Concise Dictionary of Quotations: [1961/86: 128]

*I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm.*

The prideful queen, here, expresses the national pride of her people. It was an age of excessive pride and aspiration. Politics and religion seemed to be inseparable issues in the Elizabethan England. The queen struggled hard to establish a national Anglican

church on the basis of Protestantism. Michael J. Kelly sates in his essay ***Christopher Marlowe and the Golden Age of England [2008: 4]*** that the "*Englishmen began to celebrate being English and developed a great pride in their new English religion (Anglicanism), opposition on to the Pope, their victories over foreign militaries and anew popular perception that English Law was fully 'native'. Drama now directly and significantly aided in the creation of English identity.*" Marlowe's drama shows that **[Stevie Simkin: 2000: 45]** "*politics and religion were interacted in Elizabethan England, for Marlowe's texts are scarred with the traces of religious and political conflict.*

However, Elizabethan reign witnessed dreadful scenes of cruel retributions which stood as an apparent aspect of the time (Simkin: 36 – 37) "*poisoners would usually be sentenced to be boiled to death in water or lead- ... Heretics were usually burned at the stake,- ... Witches were drowned or burned, thieves would be hanged or have their hands chopped off;... Execution was a common and very visible part of Elizabethan life. The heads of traitors were routinely mounted on the archway of London Bridge, and would have been seen by many as they went about their business, since the bridge was the only means to cross the Thames except by boat.*

Such violent and brutal acts and scenes are also common in Marlowe's drama especially in his **Tamburlaine the Great** where towns and their inhabitants are totally exterminated.

Nevertheless, it was the age of the young aspired generation of intelligentsia such as the poet and adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh (1552– 1618) and the poet, critic and courtier Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586).

By 1587 the gifted and talented Marlowe became one of London playwrights called the "University Wits". The emergence of this group of dramatists marked a significant shift in the development of English drama.

Writing about Marlowe and his contemporary dramatists Kelly [2008: 1] suggests that "*Their work is historically important*

*because it illustrates, in addition to the development of English theatre, the dramatic political and social events of the time through the public medium of the playhouse. Specifically, the development of the theatre helps explain key features of the English Renaissance such as the creation of English self- identity, adoption of humanistic ideal, ...".*

Marlowe's historical impact on English drama puts him at the forefront of the Elizabethan poets to use blank verse very successfully in drama and to recognize its value as a medium of serious drama.

Surely he was not the first poet to use blank verse in English, but he was a pioneer to pave the way for the following playwrights to use it.

Marlowe's first successful step as a playwright was the first part of *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587) followed some months later with the second part of the same play. [Ian Ousby: 1988: 971] " *It was this play, more than any other, that determined the literary status of Elizabethan drama and drew into the public theatre the best writers of the age.*"

Marlowe's second and famous play *Doctor Faustus* (1588) is both a tragedy and a morality play. It deals with the theme of towering ambition to knowledge and power. The play and its central figure represent the aspiring spirit of the Renaissance man and period. Marlowe's third play *The Jew of Malta* (1589) is concerned with the theme of lust for wealth represented in the character of Barabas. It is about his revenge against the authorities of the city of Malta, and the avarice of the Jewish in a Christian society. This play (Simkin: 24) "helped to consolidate Marlowe as the great London playwright of the time".

Marlowe produced his fourth play *Edward the Second* (1592) to be considered among the best historical tragedies written before Shakespeare's English historical plays. It is also considered stylistically the most mature of Marlowe's works and the best constructed. In this play Marlowe [Waldo: 1976: 17] " developed a

*new tragic convention, centering on the idea of a profound conflict in the soul of the hero".*

Marlowe wrote two other plays probably in collaboration with his fellow playwright Thomas Nash (1567 – 1601).

The first is *Dido Queen of Carthage* (1586) while he was at Cambridge University, and *The Massacre of Paris*(1593) a dramatization of the slaughter of the French Protestants on 24 of August 1572 and its aftermath.

Marlowe spent the last months before his murder writing his narrative poem *Hero and Leander*, unfinished work corrected and completed by the poet and playwright George Chapman (1560 - 1634). This poem together with Marlowe's **The Passionate Shepherd to His Lovewere** published in 1598.

Marlowe also introduced himself to the literary scene of his time as a translator of some classics. He translated the sequence of poems *Amores*(1585) written by the Roman poet Ovid (43B.C.- 17AD.). He also translated *Bello Civilis*(Civilwar) known as **Pharsalia** (date unknown) written by the Latin poet Lucan (AD.39-65). The work deals with the war between the two great Roman leaders Caesar and Pompey. The significance of this translation is based on the fact that the work could be applied to the political circumstances in Marlowe's time and the intrigues in the court of queen Elizabeth the First.

Marlowe's six-year life in the theatre was obviously very short, but it was immensely productive. Marlowe might be regarded as the father of English dramatic poetry, as Chaucer is considered the father of English narrative poetry. Marlowe's drama remains a prominent example to express the aspiring mind of the Renaissance man of his time.

## Chapter One:

### The Play: Historical Source and Plot Summary

#### The Source of the Play

The play is based on the real history of TimurLang (Timur the lame) a Turk – Mongol ruler who lived between 1336 and 1405. The play as the **Encyclopedia Britanica** suggests based mainly on the earlier *Silva de Varia Lencion*(1540) **The Forest or Collection of History** written by the early sixteenth – century Spanish scholar and humanist Pedro Mexia (1497-1551). In his detailed "introduction" to his edition of the play *Tamburlaine the Great*(1930) Ellis – Fermor of Bedford College, University of London (P.26) states that it is easy to see in this play "*the germ of the story which reached Marlowe mainly through Perondinus, Pedro Mexia, Primaudaye and Bizarus (though it suffered many changes by the way.)*"

Stevie Simkin(90-91) refers to Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman *Christopher Marlowe: The Plays and their Sources* (1994:74) that the notion of Tamburlaine as a scourge of God is based on Pedro Mexia's book as one of the chief sources "*although Marlowe's actual text is likely to have been at two removes from Mexia's work, having been through a French translation (by Claude Gruget in 1552) before being translated and abridged by Sir Thomas Fortescue as The Forest or Collection of Histories (1571)*".

The various stories of the history of Timur speak about his ambition to restore the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan. As a means of legitimating his conquests Timur relied on Islamic symbols referring to himself as the sword of Islam; and to achieve his military goals or his domestic political aims, he frequently used either the Islamic religion or the law and traditions of the Mongol Empire.

He even created a myth and image of himself as a 'supernatural personal power' ordained by God. Simkin[66] finds

that "Marlowe's sources are accurate too in the way they represent Timur's perceived relation to good fortune, or divine intervention, although historical records seem to depict him as skillful manipulator, using religion carefully and diplomatically in the cause of his quest for power, and not as the god-baiter of Marlowe's plays."

During his lifetime, Timur emerged as the most powerful ruler in the Muslim world after defeating the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria, the emerging Ottoman Empire and the declining of Sultanate of Delhi.

Timur was of both war and state. He was considered extraordinary intelligent and a man of military genius. He was educated under the guidance of distinguished scholars of his time. He was acquainted with Mongolian, Persian and Turkish languages.

Timur spent about thirty five years (half of his life time) in various wars and expeditions. He invaded eastern Persia in 1383 and in 1387 he captured almost all Persia. He treated the inhabitants of Isfahan kindly but when they revolted against his tax collectors and soldiers he massacred them. It has been suggested that Timur viewed himself as an executor of divine will. He attacked the Delhi Sultanate in 1398 and massacred its people.

Timur started war against Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt in 1399. Then he invaded Syria, sacked Aleppo and captured Damascus.

In 1400 Timur invaded Christian Armenia and Georgia. He invaded Baghdad in 1401 and massacred thousands of its people. He invaded Anatolia and defeated Bayezid, Sultan of Ottoman Empire in the battle of Ankara in 1402. Bayezid was taken captive; historical accounts differ in how he was treated. Some accounts say that he was kindly received; others say that he was humiliated. A tale is told that Bayezid was encaged and toured through towns and villages and subsequently died of grief and depression.

Timur's achievements as a conqueror have both fascinated and horrified European states. Some of them regarded him as an ally because he defeated the Ottoman Empire. Other states viewed

him as a threat because of his rapid expansion and brutality. Some European leaders sent embassies to Samarkand, the capital of Timur's Empire to make alliances with him. They even try to convince him to convert to Christianity to avoid his wars.

Some historical accounts reported that Ibn Khaldoun (1332-1406) the Islamic intellect and scholar praised Timur for having unified much of the Muslim world when other leaders of the time failed to do that.

Timur Lang has now been officially recognized as a national hero of the new independent Uzbekistan. His monument in Tashkent now occupies the same place where Marx's statue once stood.

*"I am not a man of blood; and God is my witness that in all my wars I have never been the aggressor, and that my enemies have always been the authors of their own calamity".*

Timur, after the conquest of Aleppo, 1399.

Gibbon's ***Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*** (1776/1788)

## The Play's Plot Summary

The two-part play opens at the Persian Court with clear reference to the disagreement between the weak and ineffectual Mycetes, king of Persia, and his treacherous brother Cosroe. The king decides to send Theridamas, one of his courtiers as a delegate to Tamburlaine, in an attempt for a truce with him.

Tamburlaine is seen for the first time wooing his captive Zenocrate, daughter of the Sultan of Egypt. She and her attendant Agydas try vainly to persuade Tamburlaine to restore their freedom, showing readiness to pay ransom.

Tamburlaine shows more sentiment love towards Zenocrate and that she is dearer to him and more precious than their wealth and treasures or even the crown of Persia.

On the other side when Theridas arrives as a delegate of Mycetes, the king of Persia, Tamburlaine succeeds to win him to his side. This incident shows Tamburlaine's character as a convincing man of state. Aman of a sword and of an attractive charisma:[One: I: 2: 156-158]

*His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods;  
His fiery eyes are fix'd up on the earth,  
As if he now devis'd some stratagem,*

Cosroe also plans to win Tamburlaine to his side to dethrone his brother and to be the king of Persia; justifying his ambition that his brother, Mycetes, is weak to rule the Persian kingdom. Cosroe succeeds to win the throne of Persia but for a while when Tamburlaine gets rid of him and announces himself king of Persia .

The Turkish emperor, Bajazeth, realizes Tamburlaine's growing power, plans to sign a truce of peace with him, otherwise he is ready to levy a huge army against him.

In Tamburlaine's seat Zenocrates tries to convince Agydas that her love to Tamburlaine is something certain. She is not ready to lose him whatsoever, and that [One: III.2: 50]"*His talk much sweeter than the Muses' song*".

Frightening to be tortured by Tamburlaine Agyds kills himself [One: III: 2: 105]"*And let Agydas die.*"

Tamburlaine refuses to sign a truce of peace with Bajazeth willing to face him in the battlefield. Tamburlaine defeats Bajazeth and takes him and his wife Zabina as captives; rejecting their offer of ransom. It is power rather than wealth that motivates Tamburlaine. He humiliates Bajazeth, imprisoned him in a cage and he even uses him as a footstool.

Meanwhile the Sultan of Egypt rages over the loss of his daughter, Zenocrate, he threatens to destroy Tamburlaine.

Tamburlaine approaches Damascus awaits outside its walls for its surrender. Zenocrate desperately entreats him to be merciful

to her country and people, but he ignores her entreaties. He retorts that nothing in the world will stop him.

The Sultan of Egypt, with him the king of Arabia, decide to march towards Damascus to raise the siege and to defeat Tamburlaine. Once again Zenocrate pleads to him to raise the siege, but in an arrogant prideful manner he replies [**One: IV: 4 : 80-81**]:

*Zenocrate, were Egypt Jove's own land,  
Yet would I with my sword make Jove stoop.*

The Governor of Damascus sends four virgins to plead with the brutal tyarant to raise the siege, hoping that his heart may relent. Tamburlaine condemns the virgins to be killed and their dead bodies to be hoisted on Damascus walls:[**One: V: 1: 120- 122**]

*Away with them, I say, and shew them Death.  
I will not spare these proud Egyptians,  
Nor change my martial observations.*

At last Damascus falls at the hands of Tamburlaine. Zenocrate laments the destruction of her own city and countrymen[**One: V: 1: 321 – 323**]:

*Wretched Zenocrate, that lives to see  
Damascus' walls dy'd with Egyptian blood,  
Thy father's subjects and thy country men;*

Bajazeth and his wife Zabina suffer the stress of captivity, humiliation and servitude. In afit of despair Bajazeth dashes his head against the iron bars of the cage and killshimself. Zabina finds her husband dead and in a fit of madness she also kills herself.

The Sultan of Egypt and the king of Arabia are defeated. The latter is mortally wounded and in few minutes of exchanging warm feelings with Zenocrate as her "first-betrothed love"he dies in her arms uttering his last words[**One: V: 432- 434**]:

*Since death denies me further course of joy,  
Depriv'd of care, my heart with comfort dies,  
Since thy desired hand shall close mine eyes.*

**Part One** of the play ends with Tamburlaine restores Egypt to the Sultan as attributing king, giving him more land and power to extend his authority. He then announces Zenocrate as his wife and appoints her queen of Persia. He announces[One: V:1:531]" *truce with all the world*". He also orders an honorable funeral for the dead bodies of the king of Arabia, the king of Turky and Zabinahis wife.

**Part Two** of the play opens with Orcanes, king of Natolia discussing with other rulers the matter of war. They come to an agreement that they have to sign a truce with Sigismund the Christian king of Hungary. This truce, they believe, will give good chance to face the barbarous troops of Tamburlaine. This truce is made, but sooner violated when Sigismund is persuaded by other Christian kings to break it.

In Tamburlaine's camp Callapine, son of Bajazeth, is captive. He persuades his jailor, Almed, to release him and in return he promises to appoint him a king.

Tamburlaine makes his first appearance in Part Two along with his wife, Zenocrte, and their three sons. About twenty years have passed since the end of Part One. Grown up sons they are, Tamburlaine informs his wife they have to be prepared to be emperors. But first they have to learn the arts of war to be great and brutal conquerors as their father.

A sense of pacifism emerges clear among the terrible sounds of weapons, wars, sieges and massacres when Zenocrate shows no interest in the world of wars and danger. She asks her husband, Tamburlaine, to incline to peace and to leave the world of terror and violence. However, it comes clear from his answer that he will never be anything but a warrior and a conqueror.

The other glimpse of pacifism comes from his eldest son Calyphas who expresses no interest in the world of war and violence preferring to be close to his mother. The other two sons, Amyras and Celebinus, are ready to follow their father's path of bloodshed and violence.

In a battle between Sigismund and the other Christian kings in one side and Orcanes and his Muslim allies on the other side, Sigismund is mortally wounded. Before his death he confesses his great sin of treachery against Christ by breaking the truce with Orcanes:[II:3:2-3]

*And God hath thundered vengeance from on high,  
For my accurs'd and hateful perjury.*

We see Zenorrate this time in her death bed surrounded by Tamburlaine, their three sons, physicians and others. Tamburlaine becomes sure that his wife is dying, the last lines he utters before she dies:[ II: 4: 94-95]

*Zenocrate had been the argument  
Of every epigram or elegy.*

Tamburlaine, in a fit of severe anger after Zenocrate's death, orders his men to burn down the whole town.

On the other side Callapine is crowned emperor of Turkey. He promises to take revenge of his father's hideous death. In the battlefield Calyphas refuses to join his brothers and prefers to stay in his tent. He is condemned by his father as a traitor to his name and majesty and described as an:[IV: 1:93]

*Image of sloth, and picture of a slave.*

In a furious rage Tamburlaine stabs his son to death in front of the captive kings of Natolia, Jerusalem and Soria.

Achieving this magnificent victory, Tamburlaine claims himself "*the scourge of highest Jove*". In an excessive manner of arrogance Tamburlaine humiliates the defeated kings and uses them instead of horses to pull his chariot.

Furthermore, he orders for the Turkish concubines to his presence, where he divides them as harlots among his common soldiers. He does not pay any attention to their desperate entreaties to save their honour and their chastity.

Tamburlaine, then, leaves for Babylon and besieges it. He captures its Governor, hangs him to its wall and orders his men to shoot him to death. He also orders for the citizens of Babylon- men, women and children – to be bound and thrown into a nearby lake:[V: 1: 170]*"Leave not a Babylonian in the town"*

Tamburlaine's pride and arrogance reach the uttermost in a frenzied fit of megalomania and an act of atheism when he asks for the Holy Qur'an to be burned.

Few minutes after this infidel act, Tamburlaine is suddenly stricken with mysterious sickness: [V: 1: 217]*"But stay, I feel myself distempered suddenly"*.

From now on Tamburlaine's health comes to decline. He, then, asks for a map to see the extent of his empire and what is left for his sons to conquer.

The play ends with Amyrascoronation and Tamburlaine's death, uttering his last words:[V: iii: 249]*For Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die.*

## Chapter Two:

### Tamburlaine the Symbol of Cruelty and Brutality

From the outset of the play Marlowe introduces the character of Tamburlaine as a frightful, skilful highwayman. Mycetes, the king of Persia, describes him as: [One: I : 31-32].

*That, like a fox in midst of harvest –time,  
Doth prey upon my flocks of passengers;*

Meander, one of the lords in the Court of Persia, also describes Tamburlaine as [Ibid: 36] "that sturdy Scythian thief" who robs the Persian travellers.

Marlowe, thus, puts the audience in front of a foxy bandit and a shrewd intelligent character. Indeed a man of a shepherd parentage, yet the one who aspires to be a horrible conqueror and a great emperor. Tamburlaine confesses that he is "*a shepherd by... parentage*" but he is proud of that matrix saying that [One: I: 2: 198] even "*Jove sometime masked in a shepherd's weed*".

Tamburlaine has a great will and a towering ambition. He aspires to acquire the Persian crown and the whole continent of Asia, motivated by his birth prophecy: [One: I: 1: 41-43].

*Hoping (misled by dreaming prophecies)  
To reign in Asia, and with barbarous arms  
To make himself the monarch of the East:*

Tamburlaine affiliates himself to the Olympic gods in a manner of great pride. He is not only a god-like man but also the threat of terror: [One: I: 2: 38-40]

*And means to be a terror to the world,  
Measuring the limits of his empery,  
By east and west, as Phoebus<sup>1</sup> doth his course.*

Tamburlaine is described as a devil and a monster challenging the will of heaven: [One: II: 6: 1-4].

*What means this devilish shepherd, to aspire  
With such giantly presumption,  
To cast up hills against the face of heaven,  
And dare the force of angry Jupiter<sup>2</sup>?*

Tamburlaine who identifies himself with the classical gods is always seen by his enemies as a cruel tyranny and a threat of death: [One: III: 2: 72-74].

*Upon his brows was portray'd ugly death,  
And in his eyes the fury of his heart,  
That shine as comets, menacing revenge,*

According to the Sultan of Egypt, Tamburlaine is not a human being but [One: IV: i: 18]:

*As monstrous as Gorgon<sup>3</sup>, prince of hell.*

The Sultan looks down upon him since he belongs to a rustic and pastoral family. Tamburlaine is an ignorant villain who does not have the eligibility to be a king, but a bandit and murderer, he is [One: IV: 1: 65-68]:

<sup>1</sup>- *Phoebus is Apollo in Greek mythology who embodies youthful but mature male beauty and moral excellence. Apollo is the god of plague but also of healing. He is also the god of light and sometimes identified with the sun.*

<sup>2</sup>- *Jupiter (Jove) the chief of the Roman gods in classical mythology.*

<sup>3</sup>- *Gorgons in Greek myth female monsters. Their heads are covered with serpents instead of hair and they have glaring eyes. Medusa one of the sisters, and the only mortal has a fearful head that any one looks at it is turned to stone.*

*Merciless villain, peasant ignorant  
Of lawful arms or martial discipline!  
Pillage and murder are his usual trades:  
The slave usurps the glorious name of war.*

Tamburlaine affiliates himself to the great Olympic gods of the classical mythology but the Sultan of Egypt underestimates him ironically as the beasts of the mythology. He is [**One : IV: 3 :3-4,7**] "the savage Calydonian boar" Or Cephalus, with lusty Theban youths, "and" Amonster of five hundred thousand heads".

While Tamburlaine describes himself boastfully as "the scourge of God" and the executioner of His retribution on earth, once again in scornful manner the Sultan finds Tamburlaine [**One:IV:3:9**] "The scum of men, the hate and scourge of God"

In the scene of stabbing his son to death in front of the captive kings of Natolia, Jerusalem, Terbizon and Soria, Tamburlaine shows how monstrous devil he is, and how the captive kings are different from him. In this savage act he intends to show his strength and supremacy. Orcanes response is in the very point: [**Two: IV: 1: 140-141**]

*Thou show 'st the difference' twixt ourselves and thee,  
In this thy barbarous damned tyranny.*

The king of Jerusalem describes Tamburlaine in a reaction to his devilish act as 'damned monster' and 'afriend of hell': [**Ibid: 171 – 173**]

*O damned monster! nay, a fiend of hell  
Whose cruelties are not so harsh as thine,  
Nor yet impos'd with such a bitter hate!*

Patricia Demerse(**1971: 42**) finds in the "Towering over his sons, he is both a supper – warrior and an irreplaceable force"

The devilish nature of Tamburlaine is also apparent in the words of the Governor of Damascus before his horrible killing: [Two: V: 1: 110 – 111]

*Vile monster, born of some infernal hag,*

*And sent from hell to tyrannise on earth,*

The monstrous nature of Tamburlaine is asserted furthermore in the words of the king of Amasia who describes him: [Two: V: 2: 13-14]

*The monster that hath drunk a sea of blood,*

*And yet gapes still for more to quench his thirst,*

### Tamburlaine the Supernatural Leader

Tamburlaine's followers situate him highly above mankind. Flattery, as the psychopathologists state is often a means to one's megalomania.

Tamburlaine, who is immensely obsessed by his extraordinary faculties and superstitious illusions, finds in such flattery of his followers the thing that supports his delusions.

Usumcasane flatters Tamburlaine saying that: [One: II: 5: 56, 57]

*To be a king, is half to be a god.*

Theridamas goes further in his flattery in a manner of atheism that:

*A god is not so glorious as a king:*

Usually evil entourage works as a devil to guide man in power to commit deadly sins and horrible crimes. Tamburlaine is already has the natural liability to accept flattery.

Excessive praise and flattery increase Tamburlaine's megalomania. Theridamas is now appointed a king of Argier, he addresses Tamburlaine: [Two: I:4: 113 – 116]

*My lord, the great and mighty Tamburlaine,  
Arch – monarch of the world I offer here  
My crown, myself, and all the power I have,  
In all affection at thy kingly feet.*

In fact Theridamas humiliates himself to flatter Tamburlaine and this consequently satisfies his desires.

Usumcasane, the king of Morocco, also flatters Tamburlaine describing him as: [Two: I: 4: 129]:

*Magnificent and peerless Tamburlaine,*

According to Thechelles, the king of Fez, Tamburlaine is [Ibid: 138] the:

*... mighty Tamburlaine, our earthly god,*

*Whose looks make this inferior world to quake,*

Such flattery certainly will increase Tamburlaine's sense of pride and megalomania, and the result comes right away from him: [Ibid: 166-167]

*That Jove shall send his winged messenger<sup>4</sup>*

*To bid me sheathe my sword and leave the field;*

Tamburlaine here puts himself above mankind to affiliate himself to the Olympic gods. He is even above Jove himself who requests him to put down his weapons.

Theridamas goes further in his atheism to describe Tamburlaine as [Two: III: 4: 45 – 46]:

*" ...a man greater than Mohamet,*

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<sup>4</sup>- This is Hermes in Greek myth, son of Zeus and Maia. He is the god of roads and boundaries; he is also the messenger or herald of the gods. In the Roman myth he is Mercury.

Surely Tamburlaine will be greatly excited when he hears from his followers that he is more dreadful than death: [**Two: III: 5: 60 – 61**]

*My lord, your presence makes them pale and wan:*

*Poor souls, they look as if their deaths were near.*

A well-qualified leader, with excellent military abilities motivated by superstitious prophecy, flattered by his entourage, certainly he will think himself a supernatural leader.

In addition to his military competence and the superstitious prophecy that Marlowe gives to the character of Tamburlaine, many critics believe that good fortune also serves Tamburlaine to win all his battles against his enemies.

The irony is that his enemies before his friends believe that Tamburlaine is guided by good fortune. This fact plays as a psychological factor in the defeat of his enemies. Tamburlaine enemies believe that he is supported by supernatural powers and good fortune.

Bajazeth, the captive king of Turkey, from inside his cage hopes that Tamburlaine must be defeated in the coming battle: [**One V:1 : 232- 233**]

*But such a star hath influence in his sword*

*As rules the skies and countermands the gods*

Orcanes, king of Natolia, also believes that Tamburlaine strength and success are patronized and guided by the stars and good fortune: [**Two: I:1:59-60**]

*Fear not Orcanes, but great Tamburlaine,*

*Nor he, but Fortune that hath made him great.*

Gazellus, Viceroy of Byron, also has the same superstitious belief in fortune that guides to victory: [**Two: II: 3: 31 – 32**]

*'Tis but the fortune of the wars, my lord,*

*Whose power is often prov'd a miracle.*

Callapine's mind is haunted by the same belief, however, he thinks that Fortune this time will divert her direction towards his own victory in his coming battle against Tamburlaine: [Two: III: 1: 28- 32]

*But that proud Fortune, who hath followed long  
The martial sword of mighty Tamburlaine,  
Will now retain her old inconstancy,  
And raise our honours to as high a pitch,  
In this hour strong and fortunate encounter;*

However, Callapine comes to certainty that fortune is more greater than military forces: [Two: V: 2: 42- 43]

*Captain, the force of Tamburlaine is great,  
His fortune greater...*

Tamburlaine does not only have huge armies of well-prepared warriors, he also uses psychological warfare against his enemies.

His birth prophecy to reign the whole Asia as well as his good fortune terrorise those men in power, especially when it is proved through his various triumphs. These superstitious beliefs are used as crucial and decisive weapons in the hand of Tamburlaine.

## Chapter Three

### Tamburlaine's Pride and Megalomania

Through his mighty-line verse, Christopher Marlowe portrays Tamburlaine's physical appearance as a legendary hero of the classical epics, whose royal charisma foretells his competence as a great leader, and his future as a magnificent monarch.

One cannot help but to cite these mighty blank –verse lines due to their rhetoric and dramatic significance [Beal :13] "Marlowe was not the first to use blank verse in a dramatic work but he was the first to catch a glimpse of its full potential "[One: II: 1: 7-30]

*Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,  
Like his desire, lift upwards and divine,  
So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,  
Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear*

Marlowe assimilates Tamburlaine character to the legendary character of Atlas: Old *Atlas*<sup>5</sup>, burthen; 'twixt his manly pitch

*Apearl more worth than all the world is plac'd,  
Wherein by curious sovereignty of art  
Are fix'd his piercing instruments of sight,  
Whose fiery circles bear encompassed  
A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,  
That guides his steps and actions to the throne  
Where honour sits invested royally;  
Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,*

---

<sup>5</sup>- *Atlas is the guardian of the pillars of heaven – which hold up the sky –and later as a punishment he had to hold the sky himself.*

*Thirsting with sovereignty, with love of arms;  
 His lofty brows in folds do figure death,  
 And in their smoothness amity and life;  
 About them hangs a knot of amber hair,  
 Wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles<sup>6</sup> was,  
 On which the breath of heaven delights to play  
 Making it dance with wanton majesty;  
 His arms and fingers long and sinewy,  
 Betokening valour and excess of strength:  
 In every part proportioned like the man  
 Should make the world subdu'd to Tamburlaine.*

Such lines of brilliant rhetoric need neither comment nor analysis. They sum up Tamburlaine's character fully. However the irony here resides in the fact that these lines are said by Menaphon, one of the lords in the Persia seat.

Christopher Marlowe avoids referring to the historical physical defect in Tamburlaine's leg where he is called TimurLang, which means Timur the lame.

Marlowe aims at introducing Tamburlaine as a perfect figure physically and mentally to fit his supreme dramatic stature. The reference to the mythological heroes Atlas and Achilles is to confirm this supremacy.

Tamburlaine's sense of pride and megalomania is also based on his birth prophecy that he is going to rule the whole eastern world. He is: [Two: III: 5: 79- 84]

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<sup>6</sup>- Achilles is the chief hero on the Greek side in the Trojan War. He is portrayed as more passionate and seems more savage than the other Greek heroes.

*..., the shepherd's issue, at whose birth  
 Heaven did afford a gracious aspect,  
 And join'd those stars that shall be opposite  
 Even till the dissolution of the world,  
 And never meant to make a conqueror  
 So famous as is mighty Tamburlaine,*

This superstitious obsession leads Tamburlaine to believe that he is the undefeated conqueror since Fate and Fortune lead his steps and protect him : [**One: I: 2: 173-176 and 179 – 180**]

*I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,  
 And with my hand Fortune's wheel about;  
 And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere  
 Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.*

His pride leads him more to his megalomania to believe that heaven protects him:

*And Jove himself will stretch his hand from heaven  
 Toward the blow, and shield me safe from harm.*

Simkin[**2000: 92 – 93**] suggests that " *The cosmology of the two parts of Tamburlaine is certainly not consistent, stubbornly resisting attempts to systematize it. Quite apart from the fact that classical gods such as Jove and Mars mingle with the more orthodox figures of Christ and Mohamet, the relation of the gods to Fate and destiny is muddied* ".

Tamburlaine does not only use the superstitious prophecy against his enemies, but it has become a motive and a belief in his mind to conquer Persia and the whole East.

Furthermore, it is not only Persia and the East are his ambition, Tamburlaine even aspires to conquer some states in the West: [**One: II: 5: 84- 86**]:

*And, if I prosper, all shall be as sure  
As if the Turk, the Pope, Afric and Greece,  
Came creeping to us with their crowns apiece.*

Once more Marlowe makes use of the classical mythology to assimilate Tamburlaine's wars to Jupiter's rebel against his father Uranus, when he overthrew him from the Olympic throne to replace himself. Tamburlaine, the megalomaniac, identifies himself with Jupiter; he addresses Cosroe, the new Persian king that he aspires to overthrow him from the throne of Persia, showing his tremendous thirst to rule:

**[One: II: 7: 12-16]**

*The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown  
That caus'd the eldest son of heavenly Ops<sup>7</sup>  
To thrust his doting father from his chair,  
And place himself in the imperial heaven,  
Mov'd me to manage arms against thy state.*

Tamburlaine, thus, is motivated not only by the limited human being ambition, but also by supernatural mythological powers [Simkin: 2000: 91-92]" However, Tamburlaine's self-regard by no means guarantees his voluntary submission to Fate, God or gods. Tamburlaine reflects on Jove's example at several key moments in the play. In one respect, Jove (Jupiter) is a crucial precedent for Tamburlaine, since the ancient myths tell how Jove dethroned the titan Saturn in order to become supreme ruler ".

The restless spirit of Tamburlaine, the towering ambition that preoccupies his mind and the prophecy that blazes his enthusiasm to omnipotent power; all these sharpen Marlowe's genuine wit to show his great rhetoric and "mighty lines". Tamburlaine in an arrogant manner and excessive pride proclaims that :[One: II: 7: 18-27]

<sup>7</sup> - *Ops is the Roman goddess of abundance and the wife of Uranus.*

*Nature, that fram'd us of four elements  
 Warring within our breasts for regiment,  
 Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:  
 Our souls whose faculties can comprehend  
 The wondrous architecture of the world,  
 And measure every wandering planet's course,  
 Still climbing after knowledge infinite,  
 And always moving as the restless spheres,  
 Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,  
 Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,*

The above lines, in addition to their wonderful rhetorical language, express the Renaissance man's mind of the Elizabethan golden age. Suzanne Gossett [**Cambridge Companion: 2000: 161**] remarks that " *Tamburlaine has been convincingly dubbed a "Herculean hero", like his mythical forebear operating outside the moral norms of ordinary men*".

Furthermore Tamburlaine finds himself more powerful than the gods themselves. He challenges Mars, the Roman god of war, thinking that by taking the throne of Persia he is going to rule the world, which is another symptom of megalomania: [**One: II: 7: 58-62**] Tamburlaine kills Cosroe and takes off his crown, then he addresses his officers:

*Though Mars himself, the angry god of arms,  
 And all the earthly potentates conspire  
 To dispossess me of this diadem,  
 Yet will I wear it in despite of them  
 As great commander of this eastern world,  
 If you but say that Tamburlaine shall reign.*

According to Suzanne Gossett [2000: 162] Tamburlaine's "*pride brings down no divine retribution. As an eastern alien, Tamburlaine is both barbarous and awe-inspiring; but this alluring and terrifying fantasy represents unchecked forces in early modern England: ambitious men rising with 'giantly presumption' ..., sturdy rouges and decommissioned soldiers whom travelers might encounter in the countryside, half-piratical merchant explorers.*"

In the same meeting with his captains after putting the Persian crown on his head and calling himself the king of Persia, Tamburlaine's megalomania reaches its peak. Now he behaves as a god-like man, even more stronger than the gods: [One: II: 7: 65-67]

*So, now it is more surer on my head  
Than if the gods had hold a parliament,  
And all pronounc'd me king of Persia.*

Tamburlaine believes that his will power is more crucial than the will power of the gods. He does not care for the gods to announce him king since he possesses his own will. This over-self-confidence leads him to his megalomania.

Once again Tamburlaine asserts his iron will which is supported by 'Fate and Fortune' to proclaim himself "the scourge and wrath of God". Here, also, he wants to give his conquests and his victories a religious aspect: [One: III: 3: 41-45]

*For will and shall best fitteth Tamburlaine,  
Whose smiling stars gives him assured hope  
Of martial triumph, ere he meet his foes.  
I that am term'd the scourge and wrath of God,  
The only fear and terror of the world,*

The sense of megalomania urges Tamburlaine to extend his imperial power to where his aspiration and his imagination could reach: [One: IV: 4: 146-148]

*We mean to travel to th' Antarctic pole,  
Conquering the people underneath our feet,  
And be renown'd as never emperors were.*

Moreover, Tamburlaine's arrogance reaches its uppermost and his vanity shows his insanity. He is more stronger and more powerful than Mars the god of war and he is always a source of threat to the Roman chief of gods, Jupiter: [**One: V:1: 452-455**]

*The god of war resigns his room to me,  
Meaning to make me the general of the world:  
Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,  
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne:*

In another symptom of megalomania, Tamburlaine shows his superiority when he humiliates his captive kings in a very inhumane and ignoble manner. The stage directions (**Two: IV: 3**) tell us that he is "*drawn in his chariot by the Kings of Trebizon and Soria, with bits in their mouths, reins in his left, and in his right hand a whip with which he scourgeth them....*

In previous scenes (**One: IV-V**) Bajazeth, the king of the Turks, is put in an iron cage and is used as a footstool for Tamburlaine. He finds his superiority and his dignity above mankind by humiliating other dignified and respectable people.

Another humiliating and ignoble vicious act that Tamburlaine practices, when he divides what he calls "*The Turkish concubines*" among his common soldiers as harlots, in spite of their hopeless entreaties to save their honour and chastity. Even Orcanes, the captive king of Natolia entreats Tamburlaine not to defame his victory with such shameful and evil act. Neither the ladies nor the captive king's entreaties find an attentive ear to bring back the tyrant to his mind.

Tamburlaine's megalomania is seen evident in his dreams to achieve omnipotent power over almost the whole world. Once again he identifies himself to the mythical Jupiter, the chief god of the Romans, the son of Saturn [**Two: IV: 3: 125- 132**].

*Then in my coach, like Saturn's royal son  
 Mounted his shining chariot gilt with fire,  
 And drawn with princely eagles through the path  
 Pav'd with bright crystal and enchas'd with stars,  
 When all the gods stand gazing at his pomp,  
 So will I ride through Samarcandastreets,  
 Until my soul, dissevered from this flesh,  
 Shall mount the milk –white way and meet him there.*

During the siege of Babylon, Tamburlaine exercises more humiliation towards the captive kings. He orders his men to bridle and harness them as horses to his chariot to show his satanic power. In the meanwhile the Governor of Babylon is seen hung in chains on the walls of the city. He is shot dead, and the citizens are drowned in a nearby lake in a very dreadful genocide. [Two: V: 1: 160- 161 and 169 – 170]

*Go now, and bind the burghers hand and foot,  
 And cast them headlong in the city's lake.*

.....  
*Techelles, drown them all, man, woman, and child;  
 Leave not a Babylonian in the town.*

Tamburlaine thinks that his superiority is based in his cruelty, savageness and in humiliating others; while the fact is that he brings down upon himself inferiority and shame.

Tamburlaine's megalomania comes to its climax, when he asks for an edition of the Holy Qur'an and other religious books to be burnt, in a serious act of atheism [Ibid: 172 – 175

*Now, Casane, where's the Turkish Alcoran,  
And all the heaps of superstitious books  
Found in the temples of that Mohamet  
Whom I have thought a god? they shall be burnt.*

Tamburlaine thinks that he is safe from the wrath of God and His punishment. He pronounces boastfully: [Ibid: 178 – 181]

*In vain, I see, men worship Mohamet:  
My sword hath sent millions of Turks to hell,  
Slew all his priests, his kinsmen, and his friends,  
And yet I live untouched by Mohamet.*

It seems that Tamburlaine's sense is unbalanced, for right away he speaks of a 'god' whom he believes in, and thinks that he is 'his' scourge and the 'one' he has to obey: [Ibid: 182- 184]

*There is a God, full of revenging wrath,  
From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,  
Whose scourge I am, and him will I obey.*

While Burning the Holy Qur'an and other religious books, Tamburlaine begins to roar with excitement challenging and scorning prophet Mohammed to come to save his Book and his men, if he really has the power to do so: [Ibid: 186-193]

*Now, Mohamet, if thou have any power,  
Come down thyself and work a miracle:  
Thou art not worthy to be worshipped  
That suffers flames of fire to burn the writ  
Wherein the sum of thy religion rests:  
Why send'st thou not furious whirlwind down,  
To blow thy Alcoran up to thy throne,  
Where men report thou sitt'st by God himself?*

One can detect that Tamburlaine now after this blasphemous act of burning the Holy Qur'an and abjuring Prophet Mohammed, is psychologically sick. He is unable to think well. The one who thinks that he is "the scourge of God" seems to doubt if there is 'God' at all to him he has to pray.

He might think himself a deity since he comes to this state of atheism. To Michael J. Kelly [2008: 9]" *Tamburlaine also sought to establish himself as a replacement to the lost godheads of Islam and Christianity*".

Whether he is the "scourge of God" or "god" himself a matter that Tamburlaine could not tell:[**Two: V: 1: 199 – 201**]

*Seek out another godhead to adore;  
The God that sits in heaven, if any god,  
For he is God alone, and none but he.*

Patricia Demers in her thesis [**1971: 40**] states that Tamburlaine's "*act of burning sacred literature is hard for us to erase from our minds. Aurally Marlowe imparts to his hero allusions that cause us to wonder about his progress. While Tamburlaine was once confident of Jove's protection..., following some of his bloody victories, he concludes that he is now a sufficient match for, and even a conqueror, of the same deity*". This act alone, apart of all other acts, affirms Tamburlaine's megalomania that leads him to atheism.

Tamburlaine now is raving; he does not know what he is saying after committing the sin of atheism. However according to Nathaniel Beal [**2008: 59**] " *During his conquests Tamburlaine proclaims himself the Scourge of God in justification for his cruelties* ". Beal also argues that "*Tamburlaine rise to power is also marked by cruelty and blasphemy. He never exhibits pity except to spare the Soldan of Egypt... only for the sake of his wife...*"

Suddenly after the incident of burning the Holy Qur'an and abjuring prophet Mohammed, Tamburlaine feels that he is psychologically and physically sick: [Two: V: 1: 217]

*I feel myself distempered suddenly.*

Simkin comments on this sudden sickness saying that [2000: 94] "Although there is no evidence of any such retribution in the first part of the play, a number of critics have pointed out that Tamburlaine sudden sickness.... follows almost immediately after the burning of the Koran... and have cited this as evidence of divine punishment for his blasphemy" David Cope [1996: 4] on the other hand has his own point of view arguing that "if Tamburlaine's sudden death is due to blasphemy the question then arises as to why he didn't fall when he compared himself to or defied gods in earlier scenes". God's retribution and punishment is not instantly. God respites but not omits. God is the most Compassionate and the most Merciful, he gives enough time for the human being to repent and come to penitence.

However, Tamburlaine has not yet realized that he is only a feeble human being, that he is mortal, and if he thinks that he is the undefeated conqueror, death is coming to conquer him: [Two: V: 1: 219 – 221]

*Something, Techelles, but I know not what.*

*But, forth, ye vassals! What soe'r it be,*

*Sickness or death can never conquer me.*

The final scene in the whole two- part play shows us Tamburlaine in his chariot drown by the captive kings of Natolia and Jerusalem, but this time attended by physicians.

He is still humiliating his captive kings, still boasting to challenge sickness and death and still living his fantasies that he is the unconquered god -like man [Two V: 3: 42-45]

*What daring god torments my body thus,  
And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine?  
Shall sickness prove me now to be a man,  
That have been term'd the terror of the world?*

Though he is sick, yet Tamburlaine does not want to accept this fact as a sick man, but a greater warrior who is going to face not only his mortal enemies (Callapineand his allies) but also the gods who seek his death [Ibid: 51 – 53]

*Ah, friends, what shall I do? I cannot stand.  
Come, carry me to war against the gods,  
That thus envy the health of Tamburlaine.*

Still raving because of his serious psychological and physical sickness, yet he is still haunted by his martial powers and ready to challenge death. Tamburlaine sets himself above man's mortality. Death is only his 'slave' who takes the murdered souls whom Tamburlaine kills. Even death fears to face Tamburlaine [Two: V: 3: 66- 71 and 75-77]

*Not last, Techelles? no, for I shall die.  
See where my slave, the ugly monster Death,  
Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear,  
Stands aiming at me with his murthering dart,  
Who flies away at every glance I give,  
And, when I look away, comes stealing on.*

Tamburlaine goes on raving and boasting in pride and megalomania:

*Look, where he goes; but see, he comes again,  
Because I stay: Techelles, let us march,  
And weary Death with bearing souls to hell.*

Nathaniel Beal [2008: 47 -48] comments that "*Tamburlaine seeks to conquer death by essentially equaling it. He sets out to become the ultimate giver of death, the ultimate soldier, and by doing so attempt to control the only phenomenon which is out of his control*".

Though in his last hours of life, Tamburlaine's towering ambition to conquer other lands is in its uttermost. He asks for a map to see the boarders of his vast empire, and what is left unconquered: [Two: V: 3: 124 – 126]

*Give me a map; then let me see how much  
Is left for me to conquer all the world,  
That these, my boys, may finish all my wants.*

Tamburlaine is aware now that death is approaching. He is sorry to leave this world while still other parts of the world unconquered yet. In one of his long speeches before his death he bitterly utters the following line twice: [Ibid. 151 and 159]

*And shall I die, and this unconquered?*

Tamburlaine's mind is now obsessed by the spectre of death. He crowns his son, Amyras and bids him to mount his royal chariot [Ibid: 180]

*That I may see thee crown'd before I die.*

It is obvious now that Tamburlaine is unable to come down from his chariot but by the help of his lords [Ibid :181]

*Help me, my lords, to make my last remove.*

Tamburlaine is aware now he is mortal and must accept his destiny. He once called death his 'slave' but now death is [Ibid :218]"the" eyeless monster that torments my soul, "The last words also to his sons and followers before his death denote the same idea: [Ibid: 246- 249]

*Farwell, my boys! my dearest friends, farewell!  
My body feels, my soul doth weep to see  
Your sweet desires depriv'd my company,  
For Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die.*

Though Tamburlaine finally accepts his fatal destiny, yet he dies with his obsessive notion that he is still "the scourge of God".

Michael J. Kelly comments that [2008: 9]" *Even when Tamburlaine was dying he never appealed to any god for help or lamented his actions. Indeed, right to the end of his life Tamburlaine cared only for the temporal, and never felt inferior to any "being".* This means that he is a typical example of megalomania and that this psychological disease leads him to atheism. Patricia Demers [1971: 43] also states the same idea that Tamburlaine "... as he is dying, he attributes no supremacy to divine powers for having brought about his fall".

She concludes that Christopher Marlowe in this play presents [Ibid: 45]" *a sketch of glorious humanity, with glory that verges on idolatry and humanity that, with all its potential, must submit to limits*".

## Chapter Four:

### Love and Pacifism Versus Hatred and War

#### A Whisper of Love in the Tremendous Turmoil of War

Marlowe's brilliant dramaturgy surpasses that of his contemporaries. Within this deep and vast ocean of violence and bloodshed, the theme of individual love appears so evident between the tyrant Tamburlaine and the delicate Zenocrate. This love relationship stands as a notable dramatic episode in the play. The evil side and the good side of mankind are presented magnificently.

Ironically, the blood thirst warrior of cruelty and savagery appears for the first time on stage in a scene of love with his captive princess of Egypt.

By this dramatic episode of love, Marlowe conveys a moral that even within this world of evil there is a glint of goodness. Even within darkness there is a glim of light, and even within hatred there might be found hope of love.

Tamburlaine's first words in the play reveal that treasure and wealth mean nothing to him. Love and mighty power are more important.

When Agydas exposes to him, in a sort of a bargain, their treasures as ransom, Tamburlaine's response is that Zenocrate's beauty and love are more precious to him than wealth [One: I: 2: 87- 92]

*Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,  
 Brighter than is the silver Rhodope<sup>8</sup>,  
 Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills,  
 Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine  
 Than the possession of the Persian crown,  
 Which gracious stars have promis'd at my bith.*

Tamburlaine the barbarous warrior who only thinks [One: IV: 2: 55] "of nought but blood and war" now is captive to the beauty and love of Zenocrate, the feeble and weak lady. The power of love, rather than the power of sword, that enables him to utter such delicate and smooth words. If he is a lion roars in the thicketed jungle, he is also the nightingale that warbles on a branch of a tree.

It is not only he who has attempted to woo Zenocrate as we have seen in act one, scene two, Zenocrate, on the other hand, later on falls in the net of his love. She confesses to Agydas that she loves Tamburlaine and prefers to live with him [One: III:2:24]

*That I may live and die with Tamburlaine!*

Though Tamburlaine is portrayed as savage, barbarous and bloodthirsty, he is also given some features of a human being who has tender feelings to love and to be loved. He is also a man of kindness and hospitality when he offers Zenocrate, and those accompanied her, all the facilities of entertainment one can offer to his honourable guests.

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<sup>8</sup>-Rhodope is a Greek courtesan, said to have been a Thracian and a fellow – slave of Aesop (a slave and the composer of Greek fables) and to have been taken to Egypt. The legend relates that one day while Rhodope was bathing, an eagle flew away with one of her slippers and dropped it into the lap of the pharaoh of the day. The king was struck with the beauty of the slipper, had a search made of the owner, and married her.

Zenocrate, moreover, bids A gydas not to defame Tamburlaine since he shows his respect and honour and behaves as a man of dignity [Ibid: 36-39]:

*The entertainment we have had of him  
Is far from villany or servitude,  
And might in noble minds be counted princely.*

Martial leaders are often noble, well –mannered and courteous in times of peace; but butchers and blood thirsty in times of war. Tamburlaine is indeed a man of war who identifies himself with Mars, the mythical god of war; he is now Zenocrate's infatuated admirer who is trapped in her cage of love. When she is asked by Agydas[Ibid: 40-43]:

*How can you fancy one that looks so fierce,  
Only disposed to martial stratagems?  
Who, when he shall embrace you in his arms,  
Will tell how many thousand men he slew;*

Zenocrate's answer is more rhetoric and more sentimental: [Ibid: 49- 52]

*As looks the sun through Nilus<sup>9</sup> flowering stream,  
Or when the morning holds him in her arms,  
So looks my lordy love, fair Tamburlaine;  
His talk much sweeter than the Muses<sup>10</sup>' song  
They sung for honour' gainst Pierides<sup>11</sup>,  
Or when Minerva<sup>12</sup> , did with Neptune<sup>13</sup> strive:*

<sup>9</sup>- *Nilus, supposed to be the son of Oceanus and Tethys in Greek mythology. He represents the god of the Nile River itself.*

<sup>10</sup>- *Muses are the daughters of Zeus; goddesses of literature, music and dance, later of all intellectual pursuits.*

<sup>11</sup>-*Pierides is the birthplace of the Muses and of the poet Orpheus.*

It is obvious, thus, that Tamburlaine's character of violence and terror is different form the passionate and tender hearted Tamburlaine in the presence of his adorable beloved, Zenocrate. Marlowe's skillful dramaturgy could be observed in his characterization of Tamburlaine. He is both an embodiment of wrath, brutality, bloodshed and death. He is also the sensitive and delicate character; however, he is the rough and dreadful fighter rather than the sensitive lover. Tamburlaine is a dictator and tyrant when the matter concerns his will power of war and sovereignty. His pride and arrogance leave no more room in his mind for argumentation or the idea of peace and mercy. When Zenocrate pleads him to have some pity on her country and her countrymen, his reply is [One: IV: 2: 125]

*Not for the world, Zenocrate, if I have sworn.*

In a similar situation Zenocrate entreats him to raise the siege off Damascus in the name of their love [One: IV: 4: 75-79]:

*If any love remain in you, my lord,  
Or if my love unto your majesty  
May merit favour at your highness' hands,  
Then raise your siege from fair Damascus' walls,  
And with my father take a friendly truce.*

Once more Tamburlaine's answer is a clear –cut refusal: [Ibid: 80 – 81]

*Zenocrate, where Egypt Jove's own land,  
Yet would I with my sword make Jove to stoop.*

<sup>12</sup>- Minerva is the Italian goddess of crafts and trade guilds. She was identified with the Greek goddess Athena and seems to have taken over the martial characteristics of Athena.

<sup>13</sup>- Neptune is an Italian god of water. Under Greek influence he became a sea god and was identified with Poseidon.

So here he thinks and acts as a cruel monstrous fighter in the battlefield, not ready to accept any argumentation. His megalomaniac mentality leads him to atheism when he abjures God as thus.

In act five scene one Christopher Marlowe presents one of the best monologues in the play uttered by Tamburlaine. This monologue consists of sixty blank verse lines full of rhetoric, passion and profound meditation. In this monologue Tamburlaine expresses his deep love to Zenocrate the fair and the divine: **[One: V: 1: 155-159]**

*Whose sorrows lay more siege unto my soul  
Than all my army to Damascus' walls;  
And neither Persian's sovereign nor the Turk  
Troubled my senses with conceit of foil  
So much by much as doth Zenocrate.*

In this monologue one comes to feel how Tamburlaine suffers a deep inner conflict between his courteous and compassionate soul in one hand and his nature of arms, terror and bloodshed in the other hand.

The monologue is of notable dramatic significance since it shifts the audience's attention from the field of war, hatred and bloodshed to the field of peace, meditation and love. This monologue as the other monologues and speeches show Tamburlaine's rhetoric in both worlds of war and love at its best.

However, Tamburlaine's profound love for Zenocrate is perceived in its overwhelming agitation. During her sickness and then after her death Tamburlaine expresses his excessive feelings of love and grief. While in her death bed, he describes her expecting departure from this world as **[Two: II: 4: 6-7]**

*.... a frowning cloud,  
Ready to darken earth with endless night.*

Zenocrate is the springhead of his life if she lives and the cause of his death if she dies [Ibid: 55-56]

*Live still, my love, and so conserve my life,  
Or, dying, be the author of my death.*

While she is dying Tamburlaine elegizes Zenocrate with wonderful verse describing her beauty and her love supreme to all mythical goddesses and ladies of the classical epics. His final two lines in this elegy epitomize his great sincere love [Ibid: 94-95]

*Zenocrate had been the argument  
Of every epigram or elegy.*

Tamburlaine's furious reaction just after Zenocrate's death is something unbelievable. He is greatly shocked by her death as if he is not sure if she is really dead. He bids Techelles to draw his sword and cleave the earth [Ibid: 98 – 101]

*And we descend into th' infernal vaults,  
To hale the Fatal Sisters<sup>14</sup> by the hair,  
And throw them in the triple moat of hell,  
For taking hence my fair Zenocrate.*

While raving, he comes to address the dead Zenocrate[Ibid: 111-112 and 117-118]

*Behold me here, divine Zenocrate,  
Raving, impatient, desperate and mad,*

.....

.....

*And, if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great,  
Come down from heaven, and live with me again!*

<sup>14</sup>- In Greek mythology: three old sisters, children of Nyx (Night). They are responsible for man's fate. Klotho (the spinner), who holds the distaff, Lachesis (apportioner), who draws off the thread and Astropos (inflexible), who cuts the thread in short.

Tamburlaine, then, decides that Zenocrate's dead body will not be buried until he dies; for the two bodies have to be put in one tomb.

Furthermore, Tamburlaine in a furious fit of despair asks his sons to burn down the town in which Zenocrate has died [**Two: III: 2: 1,5, 45-46**]

*So, burn the turrets of this cursed town,*

.....

*Death and destruction to th' inhabitants!*

.....

*Boys, leave to mourn, this town shall ever mourn,*

*Being burnt to cinders for your mother's death.*

Although we are now in front of Tamburlaine the infatuated adorer; yet we come to observe this monstrous tyrant for the first time powerless before death. If Zenocrate's love has stirred a little bit of Tamburlaine's humanity, her death now teaches him that man's powers are limited. Nathaniel Beal [**2008: 46**] finds out that Zenocrate's death " destroys the last of Tamburlaine's hopes... He is suddenly conscious of mortality and 'heaven' has power that he does not... This is the tyrant's first awareness that there is one thing that cannot be conquered even by the mighty will of this" tyrant.

Beal concludes that [**Ibid: 47**] "Zenocrate's death thus serves as a reminder to the great murderer that everyone dies. No matter how powerful an individual might be, death itself cannot be escaped. "

This episode of love story in the play represents a faint voice of human love among the very huge vociferation of weapons.

## A Voice of Pacifism

Another theme of remarkable dramatic significance that Christopher Marlowe inserts skilfully among the enormous clatter of destructive weapons is the theme of pacifism.

Similar to the theme of love between the barbarous conqueror Tamburlaine and the delicate lady Zenocrate; the theme of pacifism in this play seems to be of notable significance.

The dominant atmosphere in **Tamburlaine the Great** is the atmosphere of war and bloodshed; therefore to hear the voice of peace and security though faint in such world of war is something reasonable.

The first time to hear this faint voice of pacifism comes from Zenocrate when she asks Tamburlaine to leave the world of war and retire to peace. However her first step is scarcely to be realized. This happens when Bajazeth, the captive emperor of Turkey and his wife Zabina begin to heap curses upon Tamburlaine at the siege of Damascus, Zenocrate asks him to be aware of such curses not to harm him, though she says this in an ambiguous manner: [**One: IV: 4: 27-28**].

*My lord, how can you suffer these  
Outrageous curses by these slaves of yours?*

This question might have two different meanings: either the Turks have to be punished because they have insulted you, or – which is more probable – to raise the siege off Damascus since it is her own country. Moreover Zenocrate might be afraid for her husband to be cursed by God. However, her entreaties to Tamburlaine to raise the siege, to save her country and her countrymen occur in the context of seizing fire and come to peace [**Ibid: 79**] "And with my father take a friendly truce". It is in a way a voice of pacifism though still is not that clear-cut voice since she is speaking only about her country not about war in general. This voice comes clear when Zenocrate asks Tamburlaine directly to give up the world of war and bloodshed and retire to peace and peaceful life: [**Two: I: 4: 9 – 11**].

*Sweet Tamburlaine, when wilt thou leave these arms,  
And save thy sacred person free from scathe,  
And dangerous chances of the wrathful war?*

These words come to him as a thunderbolt and his reaction is more furious [Ibid: 12 – 15]

*When heaven shall cease to move on both the poles  
And when the ground, whereon my soldiers march,  
Shall rise aloft and touch the horned moon,  
And not before, my sweet Zenocrate.*

Zenocrate's words come to confirm the theme of pacifism in the play; yet warfare seems a more dominant theme as it is shown in his definite answer. Peace is seen as a drop in a vast turmoil sea of war and destruction. It is a faint glim in this enormous world of darkness.

More evident voice of pacifism is shown in the attitude of Calyphas, Tamburlaine eldest son, when he refuses essentially the idea of war. However, Christopher Marlowe relates it to cowardice.

Calyphas hesitates to follow his father's path of war and conquests. He prefers to stay with his mother at home [Two: I :4: 65 – 68]:

*But while my brothers follow arms, my lord,  
Let me accompany my gracious mother:  
They are enough to conquer all the world,  
And you have won enough for me to keep.*

The other two sons, Amyras and Celebinus, are ready to follow their father with a spirit of blood thirst: [Ibid: 92 – 93]

*... strive to swim through pools of blood  
Or make a bridge of murthered carcasses,*

Calyphas also shows a sign of cowardice when he refuses the idea of war on the ground that war is dangerous and he is frightened to be killed [**Two: III: 2: 93 – 94**]:

*My lord, but this is dangerous to be done;*

*We may be slain or wounded ere we learn.*

Pacifism is evident in Calyphas's reaction towards his father's cruel act of cutting his own arm to show his boldness as a fighter. Calyphas's words show his tenderness and delicacy [**Ibid: 131**]:

*I know not what I should think of it; methinks' tis a pitiful sight.*

However, the most evident voice of pacifism, apart from Calyphas's cowardice resides in the following lines [**Two: IV: 1: 27 – 30**]:

*I know, sir, what it is to kill a man;*

*It works remorse of conscience in me,*

*I take no pleasure to be murtherous,*

Nevertheless Calyphas corrupts this noble notion with the next line in which he thinks that pleasure could be gained through drinking wine:

*Nor care for blood when wine will quench my thirst.*

So his two brothers are thirsty for red blood, he is thirsty for red wine.

The most cowardly act of Calyphas occurs in the battlefield when he refuses to join his two brothers, preferring to remain in his tent, describing his brothers "fools". He even makes fun of them, [**Ibid: 49 – 50**]:

*Take you the honour, I will take my ease;*

*My wisdom shall excuse my cowardice.*

Calyphas has to pay for both his pacifism and his cowardice. His death by the hands of his cruel father is something horrible, but it is the price of his attitude in a world dominated by the idea of bravery, bloodshed and war.

Marlowe's wit of dramaturgy enables him to bring out two opposed themes to develop their deep meanings. Man's world is a mixture of hatred and love, of war and peace. Man himself is a mixture of opposed spirits of rudeness and mildness. Life should be lived with its kindness and cruelty, with its mirth and sadness. Nothing is absolute in either side.

## Conclusion

### Tamburlaine the Great is a Morality Play

It is clearly apparent that the theme of pride and megalomania dominates the whole world of the play, through both the rhetoric language and the barbaric acts of the central figure Tamburlaine.

A shepherd inspired by his great will of power and motivated by his birth prophecy to rule Persia and the whole Asia, finds himself an emperor of many Asian countries.

Tamburlaine excessive pride leads him to megalomania when he finds himself "the scourge and the wrath of God"; and sometimes he matches himself to God.

Throughout the whole drama, Marlowe portrays him as a dreadful, cruel and savage monster who knows nothing but bloodshed and destruction. He kills thousands and thousands of people, destroys and burns many towns. He even humiliates his captive kings and emperors. Such person full of pride to the extent of madness probably will find himself above mankind.

Though the play is taken sometimes as a tragedy; yet it seems more as a morality play rather than a tragedy. Tamburlaine's character never reveals nobility or dignity regarding the traditional concept of tragedy. His great pride is scarcely seen as a tragic flaw, but more evident as a sin. His death at the end of the play could hardly be seen as a catastrophe, since he dies without accepting God's will but his own will of power. Tamburlaine never comes closer to the edge of self-recognition, he is always the magnificence.

The play thus is a morality play and Tamburlaine is a sinful man full of pride that leads him to think that he is above mankind. This pride leads him to commit the sin of abjuring his religion and his prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H). He even boastfully burns the Holy Qur'an; and all these blasphemous acts lead him in to the trap of atheism.

Marlowe's clever gesture of Tamburlaine's sudden sickness, just after these blasphemous acts, which leads to his death, is an obvious heavenly punishment.

In this context Simkin has his own point of view that **Tamburlaine the Great** is a morality play adding that [98] "It may be that Peter Hall<sup>15</sup> is right when he describes it as an immoral play in a morality play structure". Regarding Tamburlaine's sudden sickness Simkin argues that [95] it "might have been a divine power's response to his audacious challenge".

On the other hand David Pecan [2012: 29] also argues that even if we take the play as a tragedy, yet it "is clearly didactic in nature". It conveys to us a moral that a human being should be restricted to his human abilities and to realize his human limits and not to soar too much beyond these limits.

Tamburlaine's excessive aspiration acts contrary to human morals and religious teachings, therefore he is subject to Heaven's retribution. Regarding it as a morality play Pecan adds that (**Ibid: 36**) "For this type of drama to meet its didactic aims, to turn to Sidney's belief that it 'maketh kings fear to be tyrants' the play must not inspire a catharsis through identification and empathy, but rather catharsis through revulsion."

Pecan comes to conclusion that "From a generic standpoint, then, it can't be a tragedy if they like Tamburlaine. It can't be a tragedy if nothing bad happens to the prideful king". Therefore **Tamburlaine the Great** as Pecan states [**Ibid: 40**] "is explicated as a morality play designed to impress audiences with the spectacle of divine punishment... It is clear that Marlowe's 'savage comedy' is manifested again in the burning of the Koran as the impetus behind Tamburlaine's downfall".

Christopher Marlowe's genuine wit presented to the Elizabethan theatre one of the grand masterpieces of drama. The play also is a great piece of rhetoric especially the mighty lines said by the central figure of the play.

<sup>15</sup> - Peter Hall (1930 - ) English director and theatrical manager. He was the director of this play at the National Theatre production of 1976 – 1977.

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