

Shahid Nadeem's Play *Dara* and the Distortion of the History

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Abstract

The present research paper explores the text of the play *Dara* written by Shahid Nadeem from the power-knowledge nexus perspective. The researcher finds that the play depicts that history represented by the ruling class is fabricated, which presents historical heroes as villains and villains as heroes. The researcher analyzes Shahid Nadeem's play *Dara* to see how the historical character of Aurangzeb Alamgir is represented in the play. It is a commonplace to look at the emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir as a devoted Muslim who indulges his time to serve Islam. However, the researcher finds that the play questions this representation of Aurangzeb Alamgir in the history books and redefines him as a fanatic and extremist who use religion to take revenge on his brother and who shook the very spirit of Islam. The researcher uses Michael Foucault's concept of history, power, and knowledge. History is not linear, history is not what is told through textbooks and media; history is buried and there is a need to dig the buried truth. The findings of this research show that Shahid Nadeem presents two ideologies by his play, the Sufi image of Islam and the fundamentalist image of Islam. He brings the forgotten hero on the stage of the theatre. Nadeem questions and exposed the nexus of power and knowledge

Keywords: Sufism, Distortion of History, Dara, Power-knowledge Nexus.

Introduction

Background to the Study (Why)

According to K.K. Aziz, Our history textbooks contain myths and distortion of reality (*Murder of History*). History is told by the ruling elite and a hired historian is linear. Power controls the production and presentation of history in schools and colleges of the country. That distorted history presents great historical heroes as villains and villains as heroes. It is a common thought that Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir is a true Muslim who spent his time to spread Islam. Aurangzeb Alamgir is presented in history as a hero, as a moral man and a tough stone and Dara is presented in history as a villain and a man of disbelief. Foucault tells us about the nexus of power and knowledge. Knowledge is produced under the influence of power. Mughal Empire's history is presented in a distorted form. But in reality, history is not what is told through textbooks and media; history is buried and there is a need to dig opposite. Mughal history is needed to be redefined to understand its impact on the sub-continent in general and Pakistan in particular.

“Dara” As An Effort To Reclaim Our Heroes and to Rectify the Distortion of Our History

Reclaim is a verb which means retrieve or recovers something previously lost, given or paid. Reclamation of hero gives the idea of renewing a forgotten hero which disappears somewhere in history. Rectification is a process of correcting an error or something wrong. A distortion is an act of destroying or misrepresenting the truth. The present paper deals with distorted history. History is an aggregate of past events. It is a branch of knowledge that studies the past; the assessment of notable events. Michel Foucault's major works consist of *History of Madness and Civilization*; *The Order of Things*; *Archaeology of Knowledge*; *Discipline and Punish*; *History of Modern Sexuality*. Foucault's first major work, *History of Madness and Civilization in the Classical Age* (1961) originated in his academic study of

psychology. It deals with a Parisian mental hospital and his psychological problems. Foucault's objective of *The Birth of the Clinic* was to find out the source of knowledge. Clinical observation helped the doctors to get knowledge about the human body.

Power Knowledge Nexus

The researcher selects the theory of Michel Foucault. He claims that all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past. Foucault's work looks at the institutions which enable this power to be maintained, such as State punishment, prisons, the medical profession and legislation about sexuality. Researcher incorporates Foucault's theories of Power/Knowledge. Foucault observed that the discourse of an era brings into being concepts, oppositions, and hierarchies, which are products and propagators of power, and these, determine what are "knowledge", "truth" and "normal" at a given time. Drawing on Jeremy Bentham's notion of the panoptic surveillant State, that exerts its power through discursive practices, circulating ideology through the body-politic, Foucault highlighted the subtle, indirect oppression and the "capillary" modes of power that controls individuals and their knowledge. His primary concern has been with power's relationship to the discursive formations in society that make knowledge.

Foucault understood power as continually articulated knowledge and vice versa; that knowledge always endorses the position of the powerful and that knowledge is created by power structures. Foucault based his approach both on his theory of the limits of collective cultural knowledge and on his technique of examining a broad array of documents to understand the episteme of a particular time. Thus, following the Foucauldian mode of analysis, New Historicists seek to find examples of power and manifestation of discursive practices, how they are dispersed within the text, and how they contribute to establishing the "greatness" or 'failure' of a text at a given point of time.

Michel Foucault was a French historian and philosopher, associated with the structuralist and post-structuralist movements. He has had a strong influence not only in philosophy but also in a wide range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines. He became academically established during the 1960s when he held a series of positions at French universities. From the 1970s onwards, Foucault was very active politically. He was a founder of the Grouped' information Surles prisons and often protested on behalf of homosexuals and other marginalized groups. He frequently lectured outside France, particularly in the United States and in 1983 had agreed to teach annually at the University of California at Berkeley. An early victim of AIDS, Foucault died in Paris on June 25, 1984. In addition to works published during his lifetime, his lectures at the College de France, being published posthumously, contain important elucidations and extensions of his ideas. His academic formation was in psychology and its history as much as in philosophy; his books were mostly histories of medical and social sciences; his passions were literary and political. Foucault's major concern is knowledge, truth, and power. He contends that the problem in society becomes the construction of discourse. According to Peter Barry, "Foucault's work looks at the institutions which enable this power to be maintained, such as State punishment, prisons, the medical profession and legislation about sexuality" (Beginning Theory, p. 118). He presents the problem to see how men are governed by themselves and others and by the production of truth. Such a society must be rejected as immutable truths with the idea of rationality as a natural human quality. Michel Foucault's major works consist of History of Madness and Civilization; The Order of Things; Archaeology of Knowledge; Discipline and Punish; History of Modern Sexuality.

Shahid Nadeem

Shahid Nadeem, Pakistan's leading playwright, and the director are renowned for his commitment to human rights and peace and his bold subjects. He is the founder and in-house playwright for Ajoka Theatre. He has more than 35 original plays and several adaptations to his credit. His plays have been performed in Pakistan, India, the US, UK, Norway, Bangladesh, Nepal, Iran, and Oman. His plays have also been performed at NSD's Mahotsav for the past several years. His critically acclaimed plays include "Barri" (Acquittal, 1986), "Teesri Dastak" (1991), "Dekh Tamasha, Chalta Ban"(1992), "Aik Thee Naani" (1993), "Kala Meda Bhes" 1996), "Bala King"(1998) "Bulha" (2001), "Dukh Darya" (2006), "Burqavaganza" (2007). He has also written and directed telefilms and drama serials including serials "Neelay Hath" (The Blue Hands, 1989), "Zard Dopehar" (The Yellow Noon, 1995) and "Janjaal-pura" (1996) and telefilms "Jawaz" (2003), "Mujahid" (2004) and "Mistaken" (2007). He has served Pakistan Television as General Manager, Director Programmes and Deputy Managing Director. He is also co-director of the Panjpaani Indo-Pak Theatre Festival, which pioneered interaction between theatre activists of India and Pakistan. He has also worked as Communications Officer of Amnesty International, based in London and Hong Kong. He was awarded the Feuchtwanger/Getty fellowship in 2001 and has lectured at various universities in the US.

Shahid Nadeem's Play (Dara)

"*Dara*" dramatizes the true story of Shah Jahan, the Mughal emperor famous for building the Taj Mahal and the victory of his radical elder son Aurangzeb Alamgir over his moderate and liberal younger brother, Dara Shikoh to succeed him. It is an epic drama that depicts battling sons of the man who built the Taj Mahal. The play addresses vital questions both about Islam's historic role and its place in the modern world. 1959, the imperial court of

Mughal India is a place of opulence and excess; music, drugs, eunuchs, and harems. Two brothers, whose mother's death inspired the Taj Mahal, are heirs to this Muslim empire. Now they fight ferociously for succession. Dara, the crown prince, has the love of the people and his emperor father- but younger brother Aurangzeb holds a different vision for India's future. Islam inspires poetry in Dara, puritanical rigor in Aurangzeb. Spanning the princes' lives from cradle to grave, DARA is an intense domestic drama of global consequence- for India then and for our world now.

Objectives of the Study (Distortion of our History)

The basic purpose of this paper is to expose the power knowledge nexus who distorted history to achieve their ends. The history that children read in textbooks and media is inaccurate. It is presented in a dissimilar way of reality. Authority had destructed the history of the Mughal Empire. They had presented villains as heroes and heroes as villains. But no one tries to look at history in-depth and with a different perspective. This paper tends to reclaim a forgotten hero and ex; it poses the distorted history of the Mughal Empire. The present study should enable people to look at history through a new perspective.

Problem Statement

In our sociopolitical structure, power knowledge nexus presents Aurangzeb in history books as a hero, as a moral man and a tough stone, but *Dara* is presented in history books as a villain and a man of disbelief. Mughal Empire's history is presented in history books in a distorted form. Shahid Nadeem through his play "*Dara*" presented an alternative version of history. In his play, *Dara* is given the status of a hero. It is an effort to expose the power knowledge nexus and reclaim our forgotten hero.

Research Objectives

1. The main objective of this research is to find out the elements which show the effort of the author to expose the distorted history.
2. Another purpose of the present study is to reveal villain veiled in the hero's image and hero covered under the villain's picture.
3. This study gives people a way to understand history from a different perspective.
4. This paper also deals with the importance of Sufis' image of Islam for masses in society.

Research Question

1. How does the Text of Dara expose the power knowledge nexus?
2. How does Shahid Nadeem present Dara Shekoh as a forgotten hero to expose the distortion of history?
3. How does Shahid reclaim Dara's image as a hero?
4. How does Shahid Nadeem unveil Aurangzeb Alamgir's injustice done in the name of religion?

Literature Review

In a paper titled "Strategies of Cultural activism in the selected plays of Shahid Nadeem" the researcher, Mubashar Altaf discusses the use of art, literature and other cultural products to promote social change through Nadeem's works. Qamar Zaman in his research article "Social Realism in the selected plays of Shahid Nadeem" explores the appropriate representation and symbol to express the social and political attitude of society. Saira Rani analyses our social system in which power is held by men, through cultural norms and customs that favor men and withhold opportunity from women in her article "Patriarchal

structural analysis of Shahid Nadeem's selected plays". Abdul Qaddus discusses the importance of "Qawali as a narrative agency in the plays of Shahid Nadeem". Mubashar Altaf in another research work "Exploration of myths and hegemonic values" explores myths and gives the idea that how socially powerful people use their influence to convince less powerful people. He also investigates the homelessness of a woman in his other article "The homelessness of the women: A feministic study of Shahid Nadeem's selected plays". There is another research work on 'Politics of Gender in Shahid Nadeem's selected plays' by Sumaira Saleem. Mahreem Baloch also generates a paper on the topic of "Base Vs Superstructure in Shahid Nadeem's play *Kala Meda Bhes*".

Theoretical Framework

The researcher selects the theory of Michel Foucault. Foucault declares that all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past. History, asserts Foucault, can never provide us with the "truth" or give us an accurate picture of past events or the world view of a group of people. He proclaims that it provides its adherent with a practice of literary analysis that highlights the interrelatedness of all human activities, admits its prejudices, and gives a more complete understanding of a text that does the Old Historicism and other interpretive approaches.

Foucault challenges the supposed objectivity of history, redefines the meaning of a text, and asserts that all critics must acknowledge and openly declare their own biases when interpreting a work. The objective of Foucault's work, he suggests, 'is to see how men govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth' (Foucault 1991: 79).

Foucault declares that history is not linear, for it does not have a definite beginning, middle, and end, nor is it necessarily teleological, purposefully going forward toward some known end. Nor can it be explained as a series of causes and effects that are controlled by

some mysterious destiny or all-powerful deity. For Foucault, history is the complex interrelationship of a variety of discourses (the various ways _ artistic, social, political, and so forth _ in which people think and talk about their world). According to Foucault through language and thoughts, each period in history develops its perceptions concerning the nature of reality (or what it defines as truth) and sets up its standards of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, in addition to its criteria for judging what it deems good or bad, and what group of people articulate, protect, and defend the yardstick whereby all established truths, values, and actions will be deemed acceptable.

According to Foucault, historians must expose each of the layers of discourse that come together to shape a people's episteme and piece together the various discourses and their interconnections among themselves and with no discursive practices. But power distorts our history. The purely negative role of power, however, which is reflected in the dichotomies legitimate-illegitimate, reasonable- unreasonable and true-false, makes the OD a transitional text in defining the complex relation of power and knowledge (Foucault 1978c; Lemke 1997).

According to Foucault, historians must realize that they are influenced and prejudiced by the episteme in which they live. Since their thoughts, customs, habits, and other actions are colored by their episteme, historians, Foucault argues, must realize that they can never be objective about their own or any other historical period. To be a historian, then, means one must be able to confront and articulate one's own set of biases before examining the various discourses that comprise the episteme of any given period. Michael Foucault has six key concepts:

1. The writing of history is a matter of interpretations, not facts. Thus, all historical accounts are narratives and can be analyzed using many of the tools used by literary critics to analyze narrative.

2. History is neither linear (it does not proceed neatly from cause A to effect B and from the cause, B to affect C) nor progressive (the human species is not steadily improving over time).
3. Power is never wholly confined to a single person or a single level of society. Rather, power circulates in culture through exchanges of material goods, exchange of human beings, and, most important for literary critics as we'll see below, exchanges of ideas through the various discourses a culture produces.
4. There is no monolithic (single, unified, universal) spirit of an age, and there is no adequate totalizing explanation of history (an explanation that provides a single key to all aspects of a given culture). There is only a dynamic, unstable interplay among discourses, the meanings of which the historian can try to analyze, though that analysis will always be incomplete, accounting for only a part of the historical picture.
5. Personal identity_ like historical events, texts, and artifacts--is shaped by and shapes the culture in which it emerges. Thus, cultural categories such as normal and abnormal, sane and insane, are matters of definition. Put another way, our identity consists of the narratives we tell ourselves about ourselves, and we draw the material for our narratives from the circulation of discourses that constitutes our culture.
6. All historical analysis is unavoidably subjective. Historians must, therefore, reveal how they know they have been positioned, by their own cultural experience, to Interpret history.

Data Analysis

Shahid Nadeem presents Dara Shekoh as a hero in his work "*Dara*". He presents an opposite picture of history in front of us. History which is presented in our textbooks and which is produced to us through other resources is distorted in a way it suits the authority.

The elite class presents history in the way it suits them. Foucault declares that all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past. History can never provide us with the “truth” or give us an accurate picture of past events or the world view of a group of people. It provides its adherent with a practice of literary analysis that highlights the interrelatedness of all human activities, admits its prejudices. Upper class and rulers make Aurangzeb Alamgir; who is corrupt; their hero and they hide the heroic deeds of Dara Shekoh. For example in the book of the history of Punjab Text Book writer asserts that:

The third son of Shah Jahan was Aurangzeb. He was a very good person from the account of temper and aptitude. He had the qualities of consistency, statesmanship, and comprehension. (p.42).

Dara is presented on the other hand as an evil man.

During the infirmity of Shah Jahan; Dara Shekoh was present in Durbar (degrader). He had started to take important steps to triumph over the dangers which are the hurdles in his way of getting the throne. Dara Shekoh had arranged vigilance on the departing ways of Delhi. His brothers were very much worried because of such deeds of Dara and, they also began their preparations to get the throne. (p. 42, 43).

But in the play, Dara Shahid Nadeem tells us the nature of Dara and Aurangzeb through Shah Jahan.

Shah Jahan: These unlucky eyes had watched their children growing up, Dara's love for education, Shujat's indignation, Murad's gallantry, your intelligence, inverse, and malice of Roshan Aara and Aurangzeb's lust of incumbency and vengeful temperament. (Dara, SN. Pg #3 line 7, 8, and 9).

In this version of history, Shahid Nadeem explores that Dara is the one who is loved by masses and he is full of good qualities. On the other hand, citizens do not love and respect Aurangzeb rather they are frightened of him. As in the text

Muslim: Do you see it! Over there with the stairs of Mosque, on both sides of Urdu Bazaar's road, n the roofs of homes and with the wall of Mina Bazaar. People are everywhere; they are irrupting in troops, from the side of Jamona Ghat, from the side of Chandani Chook. Just to see a single sight of him, to shower their love on him.

Kishan: There was never such a great crowd even on the celebration of the kingship of a king. Though there is the arrangement of enjoyment and funfair. (Dara SN (pg#3 to 4)

These lines prove the love of masses for Prince Dara Shekoh. Their love for Dara and horror from Aurangzeb is expressed as:

Kishan: Tame, tame, tame what you are saying. You are the janitor of King Aurangzeb and such a mutinous conversation. You would be thrown from this very rampart; your bones would turn in antimony.

Muslim: If the elephant of greatest king Dara Shekoh passes from these bones after winning the battle. I accept it from head to toe. (Dara, SN pg#4 line 9)

In our history books, Aurangzeb is presented as a successful king.

Aurangzeb had paid much attention to his arrangement of the empire. He believed that monarchy is the fidelity of God and if the ruler did not fulfill his duty, then he will be questioned by God on the Day of Judgment. He took great care of fairness and justice. Subjugates and complainants were free to visit Durbar without any hesitation. (50)

But in reality, he is the cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire. As in the start of the play, Shah Jahan predicts about the future condition of Hindustan when he was praying as:

If there was not such heavenly sight of Taj Mahal to gratify my eyes, then I will pray to my God: “Illahi, take away my vision, make me sightless before I can see more slaughter, more conspiracies, more deceptions, and more betrayals. I do not want to become the witness of that annihilation and devastation which had become the future of the Mughal Empire. (pg#3)

On another point, Sarmad estimates the bad luck of Aurangzeb’s Empire as

You are worried to save Dara, concern about yourself, care about your king, care about yourself, concern about your kingdom. Nothing will be left behind you fool. Nothing will be left. The consequences will be ghastly. Throne will become the ornament of the museum. (Pg#16)

Shahid Nadeem rectifies the picture of Dara as a true hero. He reclaims Dara Shekoh as a hero. He redefines history and gives us a different perspective on it. He completes the conditions of historic. New Historicism redefines the meaning of a text and asserts that all critics must acknowledge and openly declare their own biases when interpreting a work. So Nadeem also gives a new version in which he presents Dara as a hero and a religious person. He shows us the view of the people of that time that what is the value and image of Dara in their sights. Shahid Nadeem adds a song in his work “Dara”

Allah is the king, God is the king

Our king, beloved king

He lives in every heart

He inhabits it breaths

He is the assistant of Allah

But he is a poor naiq

Dara is the king, our king

Dara is the king, our king

He is the herald of Jesus

He is a lover of whites

He is the companion of destitute

He is the defender of defenseless

He is the passenger of peace

He is the confabulator of truth

Shah Dara king, our king

(pg#4, 5)

Though Dara is imprisoned by his cruel brother Aurangzeb; he had lost his army and is defeated. But when he entered Delhi, people came in a crowd to get a single sight of him. They prayed for him and welcome him as a King. As a woman said “Prince! You are the angel of blessing for us prince. We sacrifice our lives and belongings on you.” (pg#7)They announced him as a king; as Sarmad announced Dara’s kingship by his speech.

Sarmad: Citizens of Delhi, mendicants, shopkeepers, vendors, wanderers, domestic servants, grifter, dislodged, famished; I want to give you good news. The fate of the Empire of Hind has awakened. The cries of deprives and disabled has been heard, the flags of the vanguards of love and tolerance are started waving. I give you this good news that the crown of kingship is dressed on the head of the great prince Muhammad Dara Shekoh. I pronounce the kingship of Dara. Zindabad king Dara Shekoh. O people of Delhi, celebrate the coronation of Dara, play the jubilation, sing and dance. King Dara Zindabad.

Dara also as a good king loves his nation and country.

Dara: O citizens of Delhi, o the citizens of Hind, whatever I had done, I had done this to magnify Hindustan, to made the Mughal empire strong. No such force exists which has the ability to break my relation with you. My love for the people of Hindustan is immortal.

(Pg#8)

Dara has all heroic qualities. He is an adorable human being, an open-minded person as well as a preeminent Muslim. He is a brave and strong fighter in his nation. He is fearless of death and his brother Aurangzeb. As he utters in the play when he was imprisoned along with his son “Dara: Brave and courageous fight unarmed. The brave man himself is a strong weapon (pg#18). And when Nazar Baig tells him that Aurangzeb has prepared a case against his religious beliefs; he answers him that “We are not afraid from your plunderer king, from the puppet courts of his hands, who dare to doubt on our Believe or our love for religion (pg#18). His open-minded and the love of masses is proved as:

Spectator II: If Dara is king then things are different. He is the admirer of art and he is an open-minded ruler.

Pistol (tamancha): Dara! Dara lives in our hearts. He is the one who is our king. He is our hope, our faith, our expectation”. (pg#21)

And

Second person: When Shah Jahan had increased the grainage on Hindu merchants; it was Dara, who criticize this decision in fraught durbar and the emperor was compelled to take the decision.

First-person: But now Shah Jahan is imprisoned in the castle of Agrah and Aurangzeb is going to hit the captivation on all non-Muslims.

Ramo: God takes care of us; we become strange on our land.

Tamancha: May Dara be protected, may his prosperity rise, God accepts our prayers rising from the core of our hearts. Dara! It is for you. (Samantha, Ramo, and others start singing and dance together). (pg#21 and 22)

In the history presented by the state, Dara is considered as a dreadful Muslim as well as a human being. He is shown as a non-brave man as in the Punjab Textbook of history, three times, he is defeated by Aurangzeb and he runs from the battlefield.

“Dara’s army was defeated and he ran away from the battlefield. Aurangzeb’s glory was set because of that war.” (43)

Dara got injured at the climax of the war. He runs away to Agra to save his life in a state of extreme injury. His army supposes that he is dead that is why his army dispersed. Dara Shekoh ran to Delhi when Aurangzeb astricts Agra. (43 and 44). There is only a dynamic, unstable interplay among discourses, the meanings of which the historian can try to analyze. That analysis will always be incomplete, accounting for only one part of the historical picture. These textbooks do not show us the tricks played by Aurangzeb.

If we argue that Dara is a hero of his time then there is another question that needs to be answered who is villain then. History also provides us with a fake hero. They do it intentionally. This is no doubt a wrong way of writing history. Foucault argues, historians must realize that they can never be objective about their own or any other historical period. To be a historian, then, means one must be able to confront and articulate one’s own set of biases before examining the various discourses that comprise the episteme of any given period. Our history tells us that Aurangzeb is a hero. They present him as a good man and a complete Muslim. Punjab textbook is 7th class is full of this version of history. In this book, the great campaigns of Aurangzeb are told in a fabricated way. He fights three times with Dara and wins all the time. Shah Jahan dislikes Aurangzeb because of the thirst of the throne and his cruelty. But this book shows that Shah Jahan loves him “Shah Jahan, was found of Aurangzeb’s erudition and knowledge. (pg 45). But as new Historicism asserts; history is not linear. It is also shown that great king Shah Jahan along with other people also cheated Aurangzeb and this is injustice with him but he successfully defeated them. For instance

He is prestigious and of strong intention according to his personality. Because of that grace, he succeeded in the wars for the throne during the ailment of Shah Jahan. He obtained the throne of Hindustan. He recognized that the designation of

kingship is the fidelity of God and he realized that he had to answer in front of God for all his responsibilities. He recognized that royal treasure is the fidelity of masses. He was very hard-working and duteous in government affairs. (45)

But in Shahid Nadeem's version of history, we can see that Aurangzeb has an opposite picture. The first rectification done by Nadeem is that Shah Jahan does not like Aurangzeb rather he is against him on his cruelty and injustice. As in the opening scene, we see that Shahid Nadeem says to him "Aurangzeb's lust of incumbency and vengeful temperament (Pg #3). This is also interpreted by Jahan Aara when she was reading his diary in front of Etbar. She also explores his cruelty.

Cruel, hard-hearted Aurangzeb, I hate you, your double-crossing, and your Jah prasti. How Deceitful you are, you have a harmless smile on your face and rosary in your hand while pronouncing the death of your beloveds either by cutting their heads or giving them poison. You are a white serpent, from whom years ago a mendicant has forewarned Emperor Shah Jahan. He said that Mughal emperor will be scattered after you and when Emperor had asked that from which of my off spring's hands, it will be done, then he answered that yes, one with the white complexion. Aurangzeb at that time you are just ten years old. Since that day a dilemma about you had sparked in father's heart and you have accomplished the perception of a mendicant. You have given the punishment of death by eating poison, pushed other one in the woods of Arakan and threw the third in front of the court by reframing him as an atheist

Secondly, Shahid also rejects the idea of Aurangzeb's justice nature and love for masses by saying "Kishan: Tame, tame, tame what you are saying. You are the janitor of King Aurangzeb and such a mutinous conversation. You would be thrown from this very rampart; your bones would turn in antimony. (Dara, SN pg#4 line 9). His cruel nature is also shown in his dialogue with his missionaries and his behavior with the lower working class. As he says

to his worker: “Speak, what news you have brought? Speak fast. What is the news about the parade of rebellious? Are you going to tell me or I threw you down from the wall of the rampart.” Moreover, he is not a good son as he declares when he is told that Sarmad has declared the kingship of Dara:

(With anger) announced the kingship! That crazy bagger? Who gives that Jewish permission to announce the kingship of Hindustan? Who is he to decide who is the inheritor of the throne of the Mughal Empire? I even did not give this permission to my respected father Shah Jahan. (pg#9)

Another unkind deed of Aurangzeb is the death of Dara. He prepares a false case against him because he just wants to finish him by hook or by crook. He hears the plan of mullah Kavi and replies to him

Too good, so it is possible to cut his head. Begin the proceeding of the case fast. All of you arrange the material and witness and appoint the pleaders and Imams of Mosques for the advertisement of this case. And yes, choose the authors of religious court carefully to hear this case. (13)

After the death of Dara; Aurangzeb hangs his headless body on Lahori Door. When his head was sent to Shah Jahan he asserts the downfall of the Mughal Empire

“Now the destruction of this empire will not be stopped. One brother will slaughter his other brother, the daughter will slaughter her mother and father will slaughter his son. The congeal of blood and Ganga of hate will flow in Hindustan. Aurangzeb today you have razed the plant which was planted by Zaher.ul.Din Babar. This was not the death of Dara rather this was the death of Mughal family” (40).

The version of the history of the Mughal Empire, which is told by Shahid Nadeem is his play Dara is opposite to the version of history which is told by state. The history which is

told by the state presents Dara as a villain, a weak person who has no power and skills. He is proved to be a religionless man. He is presented as a person who abuses Islam. On the contrary, Aurangzeb is shown as a hero and a true Muslim. He is presented as the best son, best brother, best king and best human being. He is brave and skillful. He is strong and intelligent. But Shahid Nadeem rejects this kind of history. He provides us with a different account of history. In which Dara is a hero who is loved by his family as well as the masses. He is intelligent, educated, brilliant, strong and a good person. He has a soft corner for minorities. He does not measure people on the bases of caste, color, creed, race or religion. He loves and cares for them equally. But unlike Dara; Aurangzeb is cruel, unjust, fraud, brutal, pitiless and evil. He has no love for family and masses. He only wants the throne and authority.

Sufis and masses play a very vital role to reveal the injustice of rulers in any historic period. Shahid Nadeem also unveils Aurangzeb and his follower's evil image and Dara's purity in front of us through masses especially Sufis. The dialogue between Kishan and Muslims is very important in the play. We come to know about Aurangzeb's cruelty and love of people for Dara through Muslim and Kishan.

Kishan: Ram, Ram, Ram what you are saying. You are the janitor of King Aurangzeb and such a mutinous conversation. You would be thrown from this very rampant; your bones would turn in antimony.

Muslim: If the elephant of greatest king Dara Shekoh passes from these bones After winning the battle, I accept it from head to toe. (Dara, SN pg#4 line 9)

When Dara was imprisoned and he enters the city; citizens welcome him warmly. This shows their love for him. Citizens also play the role of narrators in the story. Time and again their conversations help the reader to understand the story. The discussion of

Tamancha, Ramo, spectator I, spectator II, first Person and a second person also pays a great account in revealing the king's cruelty.

In the final scene, the conclusion was also narrated by Courtier I and courtier II. In the whole play, the horrific future of the Mughal Empire is interpreted and in the final scene, it happens.

On the other hand, the function of Sufi is played by Sarmad. He is the one who announced the kingship of Dara.

Sarmad: Citizens of Delhi, mendicants, shopkeepers, vendors, wanderers, domestic servants, grifter, dislodged, famished; I want to give you good news.

The fate of the Empire of Hind has awakened. The cries of deprivates and disabled has been heard, the flags of the vanguards of love and tolerance are started waving. I give you this good news that the crown of kingship is dressed on the head of the great prince Muhammad Dara Shekoh. I pronounce the kingship of Dara. Zindabad king Dara Shekoh. O people of Delhi, celebrate the coronation of Dara, play the jubilation, sing and dance. King Dara Zindabad.

When Sarmad talks to Mullah Kavi, here we come to know that the case which was prepared against Dara is based on falsehood.

“**Shetan Kavi ast**, so Molana, make them fool? (They keep silence and move on) deceived them. Told lie, conspired them. (Sarmad smiles and hoot “**Shetan Kavi as**”) **har chund ky man zaeef o iblees Kavi asd. La hol wala kovat illah billah.** (pg#20)

Kavi and Tabarak plan to kill Sarmad too. Because they are frightened that if Sarmad was alive they will never succeed to kill Dara.

“Kavi: Until and unless this shameless bagger is alive, Dara does not die. We need not one rather two dead bodies Molana Tabarak Sahib”

Tabarak: patience Mullah Kavi. One by one” (pg#20)

After the death of Dara when Aurangzeb goes to the mosque, he has a conversation with Sarmad. Here Sarmad very fearlessly tells Aurangzeb about his cruel and evil deeds. He recites metaphoric poetry.

Ankas ky tera taj.Jahani dad. Mara Hama asbab.e preshani dad

The one who grants you this crown of kingship

Is the one who gives me this stock of worries

He dressed him whom he finds full of flaws

He grants vulnerability to one who is flawless

He replies to Aurangzeb that he is naked because he has covered Aurangzeb’s brutality with his clothes. He has covered the heads of Dara, Murad, Shujah, Suleman, and Sultan Muhammad. Aurangzeb was depressed by it. He orders to make a plan for the death of Sarmad.

Conclusion

The study explored and analyzed the text of the play *Dara* by Shahid Nadeem from the angle of power-knowledge nexus relationship. The researcher has found that the text of *Dara* challenges the prevalent view of history regarding the Mughal Empire. It seems that history with whom people are acquainted is distorted. Whatever students are taught in the name of history in school and colleges is a fabrication. Aurangzeb is presented as a hero in history books written in Pakistan who was presenting as the villain by Shahid Nadeem. It shows that the author wanted to say that some ruling elites suppressed the Sufi version of Religion and promoted the fundamentalist version of Religion in the country. Here power-knowledge nexus is exposed. Elite class, state, and historians have composed history in the way it suits them. They endorsed the Aurangzeb instead of Dara Shiko’s who was Darwish

and a Sufi. The text of *Dara* exposes this distortion of history. He reclaims the forgotten hero Dara and unveiled the injustices done by King Aurangzeb.

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