

Representation of Power and Sacrifice in T S Eliots's *Murder In The Cathedral*

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Abstract

The dramas began to emerge in the 20th century and it became One of the prosperous and more popular genre in the world of literature most of the dramas was previously based on the Christian themes and religions themes the modern drama reached to its peak with the words, imagination, verse and thoughts of T S Elliot. Murder in the Cathedral depicts the conflicts of good and bad, power and sacrifice, truth and untruth it possesses sequences of interlude which describes the before and after portion of the play. Murder in the Cathedral views perfect image and struggle between The Archbishop and The King between the good and the bad.

Keywords: *dramas, conflicts, sacrifice, power*

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Introduction

Murder in the Cathedral is the verse dramatic play written by Thomas Stearns Eliot in the 1935 and was performed in that year the play reflects the murder of the Thomas Beckett who is the Archbishop of the church. The play reflects the murder of the Archbishop Bishop during 1170 in the ancient times and the king who was ruling was King Henry. The play was written in the Cambridge Massachusetts during the modernism literary period and the setting of the play consists in the Canterbury ,England in December of 1170 when the Archbishop returns to the cathedral after being away from the period of seven years from Canterbury main themes of the play consist of power and sacrifice.

Overview of The Play

Murder in the Cathedral by T S Eliot contents historical background it is a modernist play based on the historic themes of previous dramas the play is unique as it is written in the verse form the play is the history of the incident and events

happened previously and has been extraordinarily describe in the modern techniques along with T S Eliot's the form was popularised with the efforts and the care of Ezra Pound during the time most of the play was used to be based on the general of Christian themes of religions .The play also shares similar views of Antigone, tragedy by Sophocles that narrates the story of a woman who is young and she disobeys the rules and views of her uncle who is the king and eventually she has to suffer and that also reflects the theme like murder in the cathedral the play can historically also have been traced by the story that is mentioned in the Geoffrey Chaucher's The Canterbury tells that shares the information of group of some people who visits the Cathedral where Bishop was murdered.

Representation of Power and Sacrifice In the play *Murder In The Cathedra*

Play murder in the cathedral is divided by two parts and then with a interlude it is separated in the very beginning of the play group of woman of Canterbury is shown and they are viewed as chorus in the play in the very starting of the group we came to know that Archbishop Thomas Beckett who is away from Canterbury due to the conflict between his ethics and rule of king before the conflict has occurred they used to be a good friend but when the king forced him to give him the supreme power of religious authority he denies to this demand and the relation then grew bitter with the passing of the time and thus resulted into a big conflicts between the religion power and the ruling power and that created problem for the people of the Canterbury .All the people used to follows the religious orders and love Archbishops for his pure and noble nature so due to this incident of conflict the tension was further increased and he left Canterbury. After the period of seven years Thomas Beckett the Archbishop is return in the cathedral of Canterbury the people of the Canterbury welcome him and they are happy to see him back since he has been back to the cathedral after seven years .The people are happy with his comeback but they are also in tensions and worries due to the conflict between him and the king.

An Analysis of Power and Sacrifice:

The theme mainly consists of power and sacrifice when the knight enters the cathedral the people who were present there advised Bishop to flee away from the place but he refuses by saying that he will stay there and we will not go away and even after knowing that he will have to sacrifice his life he faces the critical situation by taking the virtues and noble decisions of not moving from the part of righteousness and truth and he will sacrifice life for the truth when he says these line,

“Real power is purchased at the price of certain submission ,your spiritual powers is earthly perdition power is present for him who will wield ”(Pg no 186)

When the tempters tries to convince him by offering him many choices but he firmly ignore all those things and stays constant in the belief of sacrificing oneself for the good and truth as good is the thing that being done by the God and he is readily available to sacrifice himself for the sake of God for he believes that God is the supreme power of all the world. The play depicts the power of the king, the king is ambitious he wants to be supreme authority he was before a good friend of the Archbishop Thomas Beckett but due to the struggle for power against the religious views and authority soon he turns to be grew bitter against him and due to this Archbishop had to be away for seven years from the Canterbury. In this play the king is not seen knight comes and assassinates the Archbishop and they also represents apology for the act of killing the Archbishop to the public of the Canterbury all this happens for one thing power which was the root cause of the Archbishop death. The forth knight speak these lines after killing Archbishop

“The speaker who have preceded me to say nothing of our leader , Reginald Fitz Urse have all spoken very much to this point. I have nothing to add along their particular lines of argument what I have to say may be put in the form of a question who kill the Archbishop?”(Pg. no 218)

The knight directly addresses to the audience after the murder of Archbishop all the knights told the public they all are not guilty as they were performing their duty they shares the fact they were just performing the duty and are not guilty for the deed when we looked this we can say that they were just following the duties and we are obeying the order of the king.

Conclusion

Murder in the Cathedral by T S Eliot represent how the fighting between both the person the king and the Archbishop Thomas Beckett takes place and how the struggle for the position and power begins and in return the Archbishop took decision of not moving from the path of truth and rather sacrifice his life for the higher king who is the king of all, the God .In one way T S Eliot has reflected the character of the king who is fighting for power that is bonded to materialistic thing and in the other way the character of Archbishop reflects the sacrifice for the truth and God . The thing that king want was power and the other thing that is beyond the power is sacrificed for the God that Archbishop Thomas Beckett did.

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