

## Abstract

This research aims to deconstruct the contradictory representations of Tipu Sultan in selected literary and historical accounts from three traditions. The British tradition portrays Tipu as a despot and a man of blood and war. *The Tiger of Mysore* by G.A. Henty, for example, characterizes Tipu as a tyrant who launches terrible attacks on neighbouring territories, enforces Islam on his non-Muslim subjects and tortures British prisoners of war. The Indian tradition honours Tipu as a modernizer and the first nationalist hero to sacrifice his life for India's freedom. *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* by Girish Karnad, for instance, shows Tipu as a modernizing technocrat and a visionary who implements European methods to energize trade and industry in his kingdom. The Pakistani tradition represents Tipu as a semi-divine warrior whose conflict with the British invader is viewed in terms of *jihad*. *Aur Talwar Toot Gai* by Naseem Hijazi, for example, projects Tipu as an Islamic hero who regards his territory as a sacred land that needs to be protected against foreign occupation and expects Providence to guide him in this struggle. This dissertation contends that these competing narratives have made the figure of Tipu exceedingly misunderstood concealing many aspects of Tipu's personality. A fresh reassessment is long overdue. Deconstruction of Tipu's portrayal in the British, Indian and Pakistani accounts reveals that all three traditions tell Tipu's story in the light of their own ideological considerations and subjective concerns thereby fictionalising Tipu's personality. This research concludes that Tipu was a complex blend of virtues and frailties: He was both flawed and deific; despot and hero.

This dissertation uses Jacques Derrida's concept of *différance* to draw a comparative analysis of all three traditions to highlight their gaps, silences, and differences. This method demonstrates that Tipu is a flowing signifier whose interpretations would evolve as we acquire more

information about him. The project also employs Hayden White's concept of history as a narrative as it permits using historical documents as a literary genre. Michel Foucault's concept of discourse helps to show that power determines which representation is to be accepted as true. Alun Munslow's concept of history as literary undertaking as well as empiricist enterprise is invaluable because it facilitates re-evaluation of Tipu's character. This project departs from previous research on Tipu in that it breaks fictionalised aura surrounding the figure of Tipu and establishes his personality as elusive.