

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE AND KALIDASA

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Introduction

The tastes of men differ as much as their sentiments and passion, and in feeling the beauties of art as in smelling flowers , tasting fruits , viewing prospect and hearing a melody, every individual must be guided by his own sensations and the incommunicable association of his own ideas. That is what Sir William Jones felt regarding the appreciation of work of art. The charm of a great classic as a work of art in common with all great works of art lies in its eternal freshness and novelty ,and to each and every mind a great work of reveal a new meaning and a new charm which alone are the source of all enjoyment one derives from reading it .

The two great souls Shakespeare and Kalidasa are the two oceans of intellect. They are the shining stars of their respective countries. Both of them belong to the golden period of literature in their respective ages and countries. Shakespeare wrote his works during the Elizabethan period which is the golden period of literature, particularly of drama, in England. Kalidasa created his during the Gupta age which is considered the golden age of Sanskrit literature in India.

The plays of Shakespeare and Kalidasa come among the great works of classical antiquity which reveal manifold charms. But in spite of their greatness Shakespeare and Kalidasa have their own merits and demerits for which they are praised by some critics and criticized by others.

Shakespeare as well as Kalidasa have evoked in their literary and dramatic as much by the presence of divine or semi-divine characters. However, the status of the supernatural characters is not the same. Shakespeare has depicted characters suffused with the supernatural powers and divine qualities like a magician Prospero, Ariel, Caliban, Cerimon etc. Kalidasa has gone a step forward as his divine characters themselves play leading role in the plays like Abhijnanasakuntalam and Vikramorvasiya. Kalidasa seems to retain these supernatural characters and also the particular marvelous powers associated with them as integral part of the story. In the last plays of Shakespeare the magical note that sounds from time to time and helps to give them their unique characters. According to Tillyard, "It enters into welsh scenes in Cymbeline, the statue scene in the Winter's Tale and it may meet us at any moment in the tempest. Both Shakespeare and Kalidasa derive their material from mythology, legends and folk tales where the supernatural elements are inextricably mixed with natural and human element. The supernatural and the superstitions figure prominently in both Kalidasa's and Shakespeare's plays. In Abhijnanasakuntalam, the curse is of course a central supernatural element which sows the seeds of conflict in the smooth course of love in Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Similarly Shakespeare's last plays are full of spirits, heavenly gods. Omens and portents. Many strange happenings occur in their plays due to the supernatural elements, overriding the ordinary laws of nature but tragedy is averted and happy conclusion is brought through

supernatural agencies. Sometimes the supernatural leads totally to the transformation of character. In *Abhijnana Sakuntalam* the device of curse saves Dushyanta from being tarns formed into vicious and strengthens him as profoundly moral being; similarly, the oracle in Shakespeare's plays leads a jealous person like Leontes to penitence and reconciliation finally to achieve the higher purpose in the end. Shakespeare himself realized" that happiness was possible only through miracles and divine interventions. (Datta 183) One thing important to be noted here that supernatural happenings provide the impetus for all the significant turns of the event in their plays. In the plays of both Shakespeare and Kalidasa, there is te divine voice that causes reunion. Thus supernatural is the major source of plot construction in their plays.

In addition to the metic similarities, there are also a few technical similarities between Shakespeare's Romances and Kalidasa's plays. In these plays the main action is triggered off by a force or power that is beyond the control of the protagonist. In *Pericles*, for example, it is riddle which when explained by Pericles, involves him in the machinations of the king Antiochus. Pericles subsequent escapades are all caused by this riddle-episode. Similarly, in *Abhijananasakuntalam*, the heroine's loss of the ring and the consequent loss of of the ring and the consequent loss of husband are caused by the sage Durvasa's curse. An even more striking similarity lies in the use that Kalidasa and Shakespeare make of supernatural elements. Kalidasa and Shakespeare have introduced the supernatural elements at the end of the story to serve a dramatic purpose and to bring a dramatic intervene very often in the play when the human beings are very helpless, face critical situation and are unable to find a natural way to over cross it. It is high time, therefore, that the supernatural powers intervened. This divine intervention at the end of the play saves an ugly situation in their dramas and prepares an inevitable step towards the reunion and reconciliation of hero with heroine and others.

In *Vikramorvasiya*, the metamorphosis is preceded by a supernatural agency, where a disembodied sagely voice admonishes Pururava to grasp sangamaneeya, the diamond of union. This is quite in keeping with recurrent supernatural interventions throughout the play. The King with a jewel in his hand, embraces a certain creeper and metamorphosis is undone and Urvashi regains her form. The king forgives her, thus the play ends on happily. Kalidasa introduces a popular and beloved puranic figure Narada at the end of the play to bring nirvahana in the last juncture of the story and to ensure the union of Pururava and Urvashi to be a lifelong and permanent union of love. The danger is averted only through the intervention if Indra. Narada arrives from Indra with the message that the Kind should not lay down his scepter so soon. As Indra still wants his heroic services and that Urvashi would bear his company till his death. That the play ends happily with the Rambha, brings the material for the Installation of prince Ayus as Yuvaraja, which the great Indra himself has prepared. After conveying the divine message, the young prince, Ayus is crowned as the Yuvaraja, the son of the immortal and the mortal couple.

In the *Winter's tale*, Hermione is accused of high treason in having committed adultery with Polixenes and having conspired with camillo against Leontes, her royal husband. However, she denies all charges against her. She argues her case with a subdued eloquence, showing a scorn for death but a deep concern for her honour. But Leontes brushes aside all her arguments. He remains totally unaffected by Antigonus's as well as Paulina's arguments also. His obsession of jealousy is

terrifying in its intensity. At this critical moment, Apollo's oracle declares her caste; Polixenes innocent; Camillo, a loyal subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant and newly born baby Leontes' legitimate issue. Thus, the oracles resolve all doubts. In the tempest, Prospero is credited with the power of a medieval magician. He uses his magic for the beneficent purpose of bringing the sinner to repentance, of furthering love and goodwill etc. Prospero does not use his supernatural powers for an evil purpose but only to bring about the best result. Indeed, there is such dignity and mobility in the exercise of his supernatural powers that he appears as a beneficent providence and certainly not as magician with the devil. Similarly in *Malavikagnimitra*, Kalidasa delineates the story with a touch of supernatural flavor. Kalidasa has beautifully narrated the Ashoka-Dohada episode in Act III for his dramatic purpose of achieving the marriage of the lovers Malavika and Agnimitra. The narration in the final act is partly used for gathering the scattered threads of the dramatic story and for clarifying the mystery surrounding Malavika. The unexpected revelation causes an agreeable and pleasant surprise and leads the story to a happy conclusion. Incidentally, Malavika's disguise as a serving maid is explained as a necessary result of an astrological prediction. Kalidasa has covered the propriety of the incidence under the formula of Siddhadesa. Social acceptance of such supernatural forces was very well known to the author. It is, therefore, that he punctuated is Drama with the simple device of Siddhadesa in order to promote the element of suspense of the reinforcement of the love story. The music of the supernatural is highly ornamental device which embellishes the plays of both the dramatist, Kalidasa and Shakespeare; and which at the same time provides a delectable entertainment in the play. There is a strange unearthly music, which characterizes all their plays. This music is multipurpose music; it serves various dramatic purposes in the play. This supernatural music contributes to the joyous atmosphere and it has a sublime or spiritual character.

Thus Kalidasa and Shakespeare unanimously believe in the theory of happy endings of their plays and the happy endings are made possible by the supernatural overriding the ordinary laws of nature. Thus both the dramatists use the supernatural to achieve the dramatic purpose. The danger is averted only through the intervention of divine elements in the end. Thus the supernatural occurrences serve to accomplish all significant turns in their plays. The supernatural events transform the tragic course of life into an instrument of good and their by suggesting the idea of providence of destiny which shapes human life.

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