



COMPARISON: THE STATE OF LOVE IN A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM AND OTHELLO WITH THE APHORISMS OF THIRUVALLUVAR

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Abstract. Comparative literature is a vast study of two or more literary works or literatures where it doesn't have any boundaries. This study takes the inter-relationship between two or more literary works of their cultural, religious, economic and historical aspects. Thus, embracing the human experiences in a whole is the uniqueness of comparative literature. Shakespeare and Thiruvalluvar are the scholars who have studied the nature of a human psycho. Thiruvalluvar has advocated all the human values in his works. They are pride, joy, intimacy, honesty, truth, anxiety, compassion, morality, hospitality, charity, generosity, etc. A close reading of Shakespeare's work also reveals the above features. The characters of Shakespeare have the features of virtues and vices in them.

Keywords: Love, marriage, Shakespeare, Thiruvalluvar, comparative, study, man, women, joy.

1 Introduction

Comparative study is an art of deep learning. It is a dynamic approach which has no knots to it. It starts to observe the things by his/ her own perception and gets the learning. Likewise, a man learns anything and everything by the appearance. He studies the features of the object and tries to analyse it. He puts the various virtues related to the features. After knowing the unknown, he learns the art of comparison.

Shakespeare was born on April 26, 1564, at Stratford-upon-Avon. He was an English poet, playwright and an actor. Shakespeare is regarded as the "Father of English Literature" and has a nick name- 'Bard of Avon'. He has produced the finest work for the English language. Thiruvalluvar is also known as Valluvar who is said as the Father of classical Tamil Literature. His contribution of Kural makes the universe mortal by its values. It is believed that, he lived in Mylapore (Chennai) with his wife Vasuki. His birthplace and time are not available till now. Even some critics say, there is no poet called Thiruvalluvar.

2 Related Work

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a romantic comedy by Shakespeare. In the place Athens, the artisans and workmen are practising a play for the marriage of Duke of Athens 'Theseus' and the Queen of Amazons 'Hippolyta'. Hermia the daughter of Egeus loves Lysander. Helena the friend of Hermia loves Demetrius who is the suitor to Hermia. As Hermia's father disapproves her love, she decides to elope with Lysander, flee into the woods to get married. Hermia says her plan to her friend Helena where in turn Helena says this to Demetrius. He follows the love pair in the woods where Helena follows him. Meanwhile, there was a quarrel between the King Oberon and the Queen Titania. They are the King and the Queen of the fairy world. Oberon decided to spell a magical juice to Titania. He asks his fairy Robin Goodfellow, a puck to get the juice. On the other hand, Oberon overheard the conversation between Demetrius and Helena where he disapproves her love. Oberon orders Puck to pour the magical juice to Demetrius where Puck mistakenly poured the juice to Lysander. Oberon pours the magical juice to the eyes of Titania. Lysander wakes up and sees Helena where he falls in love with her. Oberon understood the confusion and pours the juice to Demetrius where he wakes up and sees Helena and he also loves her. Thus, both the men loves Helena. As the workmen rehearse their play in the wood, Puck creates a mischief where he puts asses head on Nick Bottom. Titania sees him and falls in love and takes him along with her. Demetrius and Lysander fights for Helena and falls down exhausted in the ground, where Puck brings the two girls and makes them to sleep. Oberon was pleased to see Titania so he releases the spell on her. He further releases Lysander from the spell. Demetrius says he does not love Hermia and loves Helena. Thus, the lovers were married happily in the same day.

Othello is a tragic play by Shakespeare which depicts the pride and jealousy as the theme. Othello is the army's general who gets married secretly to Desdemona, the daughter of nobleman Brabantio. Iago hates Othello as he was deprived of the position as lieutenant whereas Cassio was appointed by Othello. Iago plots his plan against Othello as he made Cassio to drink and asks Roderigo to fight with him which made Cassio to leave his rank. Cassio feels bad for his actions where Iago advises him to seek Desdemona's help to get back his rank. Desdemona leaves her handkerchief (which was given by Othello to her as a love gift) and Iago asks Emilia to get the kerchief and give to him. Without knowing her husband's intention she gives it to him where he places the kerchief in Cassio's room. Iago spoils the mind of Othello on Desdemona's adultery. Iago succeeds in his plot as Othello decides to murder his wife. Knowing the truth from Emilia, Othello kills himself. Everyone was death in the end of the play and Cassio was made as the Othello's successor.

3 Comparison of Love

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a romantic tragedy which tells the story of the two couples. Each character goes into different turmoil to make their love succeed.

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
Another moon; but, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! (*Act 1 Scene 1*)

Theseus, the Duke of Athens and Queen of Amazons Hippolyta are going to get married in Athens. Theseus exclaims that they are four days left for their marriage and going to be united very soon on the day of the new moon. He feels that the days are moving so slowly as the moon is taking more time to fade away for the new dawn. He feels time is the factor which separates the couplets to be united. "And if there were no waking hour, my love, In dreams would never from my side remove". (Couplet 1216)

In the above couplet, it's the exact opposite as the woman wants the time to prolong so that she cannot be separated from her beloved. She feels to not have the waking time and has only the night time as she wants the moon to sustain forever where she can make love forever with her lover. Thus, time plays the vital role in love making between the lovers. Theseus feels the night time as the obstacle for him to be united with his woman whereas in Thirukkural, it is the precious night time which mingles the lovers together.

But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness. (Act 1 Scene 1)

These lines say that marriage is a happiest ceremony in life which gives bounds of happiness. When Hermia rejects the man her father had bought to her to marry, Theseus advises her that married women are happy when compared to unmarried women. He urges her to marry Demetrius whom her father had bought to her. When Shakespeare explores the concept of happiness in the married life, it is vice versa in Thirukkural.

Thou art not evening, but a spear that doth devour
The souls of brides; farewell, thou evening hour! (Couplet 1221)

Here, the evening time is not a good sign for the married women as their men aren't with their wives. After the marriage men travel far away from their wives for their fortune. As a result, married women suffer the hell on earth. Thiruvalluvar says evening is the time which slays the married women to the core. Thus, the concept of marriage has both good and bad experience.

How now, my love? why is your cheek so
pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast? (Act 1 Scene 1)

Lysander questions Hermia on seeing her faded cheeks. He asks what made her to have a pallid hue in her face. He asks what has happened and why are her rosy cheeks faded so quickly from her. Sorrow brings the pallid hue to a person. As Hermia's father didn't approve for their marriage she feels so disappointed and as a result she became pale where her rosy cheeks have faded so quickly from her. "I willed my lover absent should remain; Of pining's sickly hue to whom shall I complain?" (Couplet 1181)

These are the words of the beloved who got the pallid hue from her absent lover. She exclaims saying that to whom she will say her sorrow as she got this kind of paleness in her body. So, in both the cases the pain caused by the love can be seen by the pallid hue which spreads all over the body.

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind. (Act 1 Scene 1)

Helena says a woman who is mad in her man would show her love to him even if he is a cruel person. In love everything seems correct and perfect. Even the fault of the loved ones finds attractive to the eyes of the lovers. She says the bad behaviour and the cruelty of the man turns to form and dignity. She justifies this by saying love is not seen through eyes, it is seen with the mind.

Though he my heart desires no grace accords to me,
Yet every accent of his voice is melody. (Couplet 1199)
My friend, I went prepared to show a cool disdain;
My heart, forgetting all, could not its love restrain. (Couplet 1284)

Here, in Couplet 1199, Valluvar says though the man doesn't bestow the love on the women, his words are sweet to the ears of the women who loves him a lot. In the next Couplet, the girl tells her friend that she will fight with her man for the wrong things he did and she was prepared to it. But once she saw him, she forgets everything and wanted to embrace him. This shows that Love is blind.

Thus, in both the cases love doesn't come by the looks it sprouts through the mind and the heart.

Othello is a play which shows the man's person fall caused by the jealousy which has grown in one's mind. Separation and togetherness are the unique features in a relationship. Holding in the arms of the man whom the woman loves is the real treasure. Time plays the important role in a relationship as it strengthens the soul's love firmly.

It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms, (Act 2, Scene 1)

In the above scene, Othello proclaims his extreme happiness as he could find his wife in front of him after a long time. He says he has gained the sheer joy in meeting his wife and wants the same tempest (separation) very often as he could enjoy the togetherness with his wife frequently. After every small intervals of separation love blossoms. Being in thought of our loved ones and meeting them is the kick factor in love. "O let my spouse but come again to me one day! I'll drink that nectar: wasting grief shall flee away." (Couplet 1266)

The above couplet conveys the idea that return of the loved ones gives the immense pleasure to the woman. All sort of grief could vanish off when the beloved soul comes and cherishes with the love.

Any person who has grown the feel of doubt is bound to lose his life.
Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. (Act 3, Scene 3)

These monologue lines are uttered by Iago who tends to poison the mind of Othello. Handkerchief is a symbol of love between Othello and Desdemona. Othello gives the kerchief to Desdemona as the identity of their love. But she mistakenly drops it and was picked by Emilia which was later got by Iago. Jealousy is a poison which has intrude into the mind of Othello and gives the end to his life completely. As Othello doubts his wife it shows how fragile a jealous mind works. Thus, handkerchief is a clue which makes Othello to get into the mood of doubt towards Desdemona. "I wreathed with flowers one day my brow, The angry tempest lovers; She cries, 'Pray, for what women now Do you put on your flowers?'" (Couplet 1313)

Thiruvalluvar says how a woman's mind gets agitated when her man does an action. The above couplet says the possessiveness between the lovers. Here the man has

made a garland by climbing a tree which became a clue to the women to doubt him. She became angry on him and asks for whom did he made the garland to confess his love. Thus, the garland became a clue to test the relationship. Both the legends Shakespeare and Thiruvalluvar, characterized the depth of jealousy. Handkerchief and garland are the two symbols of love which testifies the love and spoils the life of the men and the women.

Othello accuses Desdemona as she has done adultery to him. In Act 5, Scene 2 while Desdemona was in bed asleep, he plots a plan to kill her. He accuses her for being unfaithful for her husband. When Desdemona says she was loyal to him, he says her to think of her sins. "Think on thy sins." (*Othello*)

He approaches his wife in the wrong way. He curses and punishes her by his sword. "Flower-soft is love: a few alone, Know its delicacy so fine." (*Couplet 1289*)

Here, Valluvar says that a man should know how to handle his beloved in both physically and psychologically. She has to be tendered softly like a rose. If the man keeps his woman in a comfort love zone his life is heaven or else the woman will vanish in his life. Thus, only a few are capable in handling a woman properly and attain the real happiness through it. "She was false as water" (*Othello, Act 5, Scene 2*)

Chastity of Desdemona was crucified by Othello where he utters as Desdemona as a falsely figure. He compares her to the water as her character to be false. Here Shakespeare uses the source of water to distinguish Desdemona's character

As heaven on living men showers blessings from above,

Is tender grace by lovers shown to those they love (*Couplet 1192*)

Water is shown as a pure form as Thiruvalluvar has said Rain is the one which provides life to the plants by his power of showering water to them. Love is compared to rain. The love from the beloved ones is same as how the rain provides water to the earth. Both the action are same. Thus, in one case, water is used as the symbol for the chastity and in another case water is used as the symbol of pure love.

Thiruvalluvar emphasis that the chastity of a wife is a boon to the man. He expresses the idea through the following couplet.

What greater fortune is for men

Than a constant chaste woman?

Shakespeare and Thiruvalluvar imposed that life is to be celebrated with the concept of love. They emphasized simplicity, modesty and celebration through love. They held glory of family of the sunshine with their children. Though there are many centuries between them of their respective era, their ideology of happiness is the sole purpose of life. "In this bangled beauty dwell, The joy of sight sound touch taste smell." (*Couplet 1101*)

Thus, man-woman relationship is the purest gem for the joy of life. Valluvar has also affirmed that life without love is like a sprouting of the dried tree from the stony ground.

4 Conclusions

Thiruvalluvar had devoted his whole book to the concept of love where all the three sections of his book prevails love as the central idea. Individual's virtue, responsibility towards the society and the man-woman intimacy has the light of love in them. Thiruvalluvar firmly believes man-woman love is the sheer joy of life. He

has spoken about every nook and corner of the profound love. No man can live without the pleasure of love. Even the animals were not exception for this. There are two dimensions of love in Thirukkural. There are secret courtship and wedded love. Thiruvalluvar has depicted the concept of universal love in various aspects. He first portrays the Pre-marital love in a very refined manner. Love is exhibited in a non-verbal communication technique. Non-verbal signs are the most powerful weapon for the blossoming of love. Thiruvalluvar is a man who uses eyes as the tool to exhibit the secret courtship. Various literary devices are been used. Metaphor, simile, pathetic fallacy were been used. Thirukkural stood as a footprint to showcase how a man and woman should live peacefully in the ups and downs of their love life.

Shakespeare had exhibited the shades of love in his plays. There can be love at first sight, a matured love, love in its purest form, love by the attraction of the manliness, a love by the valour of the man. Thus, creating the study between the giants of various era is the fundamental essence of comparative literature.

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