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Women in *The Tempest* and *Abhignansakuntalam*: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

William Shakespeare was born in England between the 16th and the first part of the 17th century, but Kalidas was born in India in the 4th century BC. Unlike Kalidas, who wrote in Sanskrit, Shakespeare's literary works are all written in English. Shakespeare, in addition to his sonnets and other poetry, has added approximately 37 plays to world literature. The fact that there are just three plays by Kalidas is a plus. i.e., *Abhignansakuntalam*, *Malvikagnimitram*, and *Vikramorvasiyam*, in addition to his epics and short poems. The researchers discovered startling similarities in the presentation of subjects like love, nature, and the portrayal of men and women, even though they come from different cultures, languages, times, and places. *The Tempest*, which is thought to be Shakespeare's final play, particularly in terms of how women are portrayed, has a remarkable resemblance to Kalidas' *Abhignansakuntalam*. Both authors describe their heroines as innocent, pure children of nature. Therefore, comparing the depictions would be highly intriguing.

Keywords: Nature, Nurture, beauty, Sensitive, Pure, Similarity

Introduction

In *The Tempest*, Critics frequently describe Miranda as a pure child of nature. “Our perception of Miranda's nymph-like beauty, her incomparable elegance, and her purity of spirit, according to Anna Brownell Jameson, has a unique and individual character” (Bloom, 2010, p. 91). Jameson praises Miranda for having nymph-like beauty. This nymph-like beauty of Miranda has a startling resemblance to the elegance and allure of Sakuntala, who is a nymph and Maneka's daughter. Jameson says:



She has never seen one of her sex; instead, she has been accompanied by rocks, trees, clouds of all shapes and colors, and quiet stars. Her playmates have been the ocean surges, which lowered their frothy crests and ran flowing to her feet. (Bloom, 2010, p. 91).

Jameson notes that Miranda does not exhibit any social artificiality since she has no social company. She likes to be accompanied by rocks, woodlands, cloud shapes, and silent stars.

Sakuntala, in *Abhignansakuntalam*, according to myth, was abandoned by Maneka, her nymph mother, who had come to seduce Vishwamitra from his penance. Maneka accomplished her goal, but doing so required that she wed Vishwamitra. Sakuntala was born, but Maneka left Vishwamitra after her plan had been achieved. Maneka wrapped Sakuntala with leaves and laid her on the ground before departing. The legend holds that Sakuntala was first raised by birds (her name, Sakuntala, is Sanskrit for "one who has been raised by the birds") until being discovered by a sage named Kanva. Sakuntala shared Miranda's experience of being surrounded by nature because Kanva's hermitage was situated nearby in a forest. Sakuntala had company in the form of trees, vines, and flowers. These two protagonists are raised by single parents and are both orphans.

The portrayal of Miranda in *The Tempest*

Miranda's father, Prospero, lands on an isolated island after being betrayed by his younger brother. Miranda was just three years old and without a mother; thus, Prospero's duties were exceedingly demanding. Prospero had neither social capital nor political clout on this island; all he had was time, which he used to raise his daughter. Miranda doesn't have a

mother, but Prospero prevents her from missing her through his tender care and guidance.

Jameson claims:

She is so finely crafted but straightforward that she almost seems ethereal. Imagine any other lady placed next to Miranda, even one of Shakespeare's most beautiful and kindest creations—and not one of them could be compared for a minute without seeming harsh or unnatural compared to this unadulterated child of nature (Bloom, 2010, p. 92).

Jameson thinks Shakespeare's invention Miranda is the loveliest and most real character ever. She is unmatched among other Shakespearean ladies, according to her, and she refers to her as "the pure child of nature," when she learns that her father created the storm and the consequent agony for the passengers on the ship. She replies:

O! I have suffered

With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel, who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,

I am dashed all to pieces.

(1.2, 2-8) (Vaughan, 2011, p. 33)

Miranda is so kind that she finds it incredibly upsetting to watch people struggling. Her emotional and sentimental development may be seen in her response when she learns that many others have been caught in a storm.

Portrayal of Shakuntala in *Abhignansakuntalam*

Sakuntala was abandoned by her nymph mother, Maneka, as was previously



mentioned. She was raised by the wise man Kanva. She spent her early years amid nature, like Miranda. Like how Prospero treated Miranda, Kanva served as a mother and a father to her. Sakuntala has also been referred to as the pure child of nature, like Miranda. As noted by Lalwani, “Kalidas has depicted Sakuntala as a lovely blossom of nature, a nymph's daughter, delivered by a sage; thus, uniting in herself romantic beauty and austere simplicity, artless appeal and overpowering desire (Lalwani, 1998, p. 588)” According to Kalidas, she used to only drink water after watering the plants. The following few words beautifully capture Sakuntala's purity and beauty:

She seems a flower whose fragrance none has tasted

A gem uncut by a workman's tool

A branch no desecrating hands have wasted, Fresh honey beautifully excellent.

No man on earth deserves to taste her beauty, Her blameless loveliness, and worth,

Unless he has fulfilled man's perfect duty And is there such a one on earth?

(Lalwani, 1998, p. 587)

She is compared to a flower that hasn't been touched by time and a jewel that hasn't been carved by a craftsman by Kalidas. On this planet, the writer discovers no one deserving of taking in her beauty. “How else among mortal women could there be the birth of such beauty? The flash with quivering light arises not from the earth's surface (Lalwani, 1998, p.590).”

When writing about Sakuntala, M. Mansinha:

Sakuntala embodies girlish purity well. She is one of the bushes and vines her wise father ordered her to take care of, and she has only yet experienced the loss of a pet buck.



Then the young and attractive king from the city appears. When Sakuntala finally gets to see him face to face, she experiences the psychological problems that love causes in young people's hearts for the first time in her brief existence. Oh, why do I have such sensations when I see this man, she screams out in innocence. They appear out of place in a hermitage. (Mansinha, 1969, p.82).

Sakuntala combines beauty, elegance, and purity in Mansinha's eyes. He alludes to Sakuntala's response upon seeing Dushyanta, the monarch. Sakuntala may undoubtedly experience the love-related sensations that are frequently observed in adolescents. Still, it is impressive that she also exhibits awareness that such feelings are inappropriate in a hermitage. "Lalwani observes that Sakuntala is a combination of beauty and vivacity, simplicity and sincerity. Lalwani, 1998, p.600)".



Miranda and Shakuntala: A Comparison

As was already said, some commentators have referred to Miranda and Sakuntala as being like pure children of nature. While Sakuntala is referred to by Saroj Lalwani as "a flower of nature," Anna Jameson refers to Miranda as "a pure child of nature." Two, "She (Sakuntala) is like Perdita and Miranda, nature 's child. Her intimacy with nature is evident when she bids farewell to the creepers with such poignancy. (Lalwani, 1998, p.598)". M.R. Kale describes Sakuntala's farewell to the creepers with great poignancy "O Vanjyotsana, although you were united with a mango tree, do you embrace me, in return, with your arm like twigs that point in this direction. From today, I part (Kale, 1983, p.143)".

Additionally, neither of these two heroines has a mother who unites them. Miranda's



father moved her to the island when she was three. Therefore, she likely lost her mother when she was still a baby. On the other hand, Sakuntala is alleged to have been abandoned by her nymph mother, Maneka, when she was a little child. Also interesting is that both Sakuntala and Miranda were raised by single parents.

Additionally, the lover's appearance appears to be a point that connects the two plays. In *The Tempest*, When Ferdinand first sees Miranda on the lonely island, he immediately falls in love with her. He is utterly smitten by Miranda's attractiveness. He takes her as goddess 'when he first sees her, Most sure the goddess (Vaughan, 2011, p.422).' In *Abhignansakuntalam*, Dushyanta arrives at the hermitage of Kanva and falls in love with Sakuntala as soon as he sees her. He is as enamored with her beauty as Ferdinand is. Dushyant asks, "How else could there be such birth among mortal women?" The trembling light flash does not originate from the earth's surface (Lalwani, 1998, p. 590).

Conclusion

Shakespeare and Kalidas presented their ladies similarly, according to our comparative analysis of *The Tempest* and *Abhignansakuntalam*. Both playwrights' heroines are innocent natural children. They have grown into lovely women thanks to nature. Although there are certain similarities between these two plays, this article has primarily focused on how women are portrayed. This essay attempted to investigate the grounds on which Shakespeare and Kalidas, two writers from distinct eras, nations, and cultures, are frequently contrasted. One of the factors that unite these two plays is undoubtedly how women are portrayed in both. When we discussed the plays, we discovered that they both showed motherless daughters who grow from childhood to maturity under the kind guidance of their single parents.



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Additionally, we have found that the heroines of both writers have similar personalities, mannerisms, and humility. Another obvious resemblance is the entrance of a romantic relationship. Shakespeare lived in 16th-century England, whereas Kalidas lived in India in the 4th century BC. However, characterization, especially the representation of the females in the chosen plays, put Shakespeare and Kalidas very near to one another. This essay does not attempt to prove that Shakespeare is the Indian equivalent of Kalidas or that Kalidas is the English equivalent of Shakespeare. Still, it does draw attention to how similarly the women are portrayed in the chosen plays.



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