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**SHAKESEAREAN SONNETS: PRESENTATION OF ETERNAL LOVE
BEYOND GENDERS AND BEAUTY**

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Abstract:

This research paper represents the concept of love in the sonnets of Shakespeare. To bring forth this concept the love sonnets some of sonnets of 154 sonnets are taken into consideration. The love for Shakespeare is beyond any physical beauty and it is not the love for few days, weeks or years. It is the love that lasts for ages. Not only the poet surpasses the concept of beauty but also, he has surpassed the concept of gender in love. His love is eternity and without involvement of any kind of gender and beauty. His 154 sonnets are embodiment of this beautiful concept. This research paper is a try to put forth these aspects of Shakespearean love before the reader.

Introduction

Shakespeare the poets of the poets and the master playwright of English literature is well known for his unique characterisation in his plays. But without mentioning his poetic talent, his use of rhetorical language and his thematic pattern of sonnets his achievements remain incomplete. Shakespeare is the one who has given this poetic world a unique structure of sonnets with his 154 sonnets. These divided in to three main groups. The first group contains 17 sonnets, based on almost same theme. While reading these we find that the theme of love in these n not as mature as in the next sonnets. Dr. William Boyd who has written an essay on Shakespearean Sonnets namely “A waste of Shame” has expressed “These sonnets read a lot like a commission and could have been paid for by the young man’s mother, perturbed by his lack of interest in the opposite sex.” Then further there is the second group containing the poems addressed to an unknown youth. And remaining that is 28 sonnets out of 154 sonnets are addressed to a dark lady. the theme of love seems to be getting matured with the growth of each passing sonnet.

Objective

The objective of this research paper is to put forth the thematic similarity among the sonnets written in honour of two different genders, yet containing the true essence of timeless love in both. Although it seems awkward when we say a single person loves the both genders in the

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same amount and with the same zeal, yet it is true in the case of Shakespeare representation of love in his sonnets addressed to both of genders. here in this paper, we will consider the way how this love is represented and how the timelessness of the same is expressed. Don Paterson the famous Critic in his essay love in Shakespearean sonnets argues:

However, the question: "was Shakespeare gay?" strikes me as so daft as to be barely worth answering. Of course, he was. Arguably he was bisexual, of sorts, but his heart was never on his straight side. Although in the modern context the idea seems to be justified but the aim of present paper is not to question the sexuality of the poets of the bard, rather it is to represent the way Shakespeare has expressed his love and has shown that true love is far more away from the concept of gender and beauty.

Data

The data chosen for the following is the the texts of the sonnets as detailed below:

- Sonnet 130: My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun .The sonnet tells us about the physical beauty of the dark lady Shakespeare is in love .Shakespeare truthfully describes in the sonnet that the lady is not physically beautiful at all, yet his love for her is rare and unique
- Sonnet 50: Not marble not gilded monuments, this sonnet represents that how poetry is useful in making a man immortal in this world. This is the method to preserve the memories of your loved ones, because time cannot destroy words although it is a great destroyer.
- Sonnet 106: Represents what type of beauty this world is seeing, that is the feminine beauty, although the beauty carried by Shakespeare friend is unnoticed, because a common man is not able to see the real beauty that lying in the heart of a good person. The idea of the sonnets has drawn a similarity between the fact that as we need special eyes to this almighty Formless God, similarly an eye of goodness is required to the

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see the goodness lying the the heart of someone.

- Sonnet 18: It is beautiful presentation of his love for the same gender he himself belongs to. Although this presentation of true love, unless seen otherwise.
- Sonnet 116: Belongs to the truthfulness of the true love that is required for the unchanged true love and regard among the lovers.

Analysis and discusssions

Shakespearean sonnets are an echo of words love and Time. these two words are the most recurring words in the sonnets. although the love differs yet its truthfulness never ends. Let's start with how Shakespeare has compared the beauty of his beloved and the beauty of his friend. In the sonnet 18 he starts:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

See how skilfully Shakespeare expresses that the seasons which are creation of mother nature falls short of in front of his friend as he is more lovely and temperate than this summer day. Moving further he compares that the eternal summer of his beauty and good heartedness would never fade as he is a true soul, that remains in heart forever. And when he praises the beauty of the dark lady, it is a true representation of the love that our soul contains. In the Sonnet My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun he says:

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;

Although it appears Shakespeare is being so plain in expressing his love that his beloved would have minded it, yet it is well clear in the end of the sonnet when he confesses that his love is beyond this physicality and it is rare:

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

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As any she belied with false compare

We see the love Shakesperare represents go beyond the bodily beauty it is very much near to the concept of the love of the souls that is far more away from the love of physical beauty and gender.

His love in both of the cases is rare, if we consider his love and affection for the same gender, it is rare and unique , and if we consider the love and affection for the dark lady it again becomes rare and unique because it is beyond the concept of love prevailing at that time . In his Sonnet Shakespeare writes in justification of his love for his unnamed friend to whom it is believed that these sonnets are addressed to that the poets of the the times keep on seeing beauty in the physical beauty of female. They are not able to see the beauty that lies in the heart of his friend:

They had not skill enough your worth to sing:

For we, which now behold these present days,

Had eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

This uniqueness of is what that make

Now as we have compared the way he has presented his love for both of the genders and how skilfully he is praising both of his relations that his love becomes rare and unique, we will move further to consider the timelessness of this LOVE

Shakespeare is very much confident about the timelessness of his love. he writes that not marble not gilded monument will keep the record the beauty of his friend, instead these verses of immortal poetry will keep the record and memory of his friend forever.

So, till the Judgement that yourself arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes

Professor J.H. Hulme in his book “Elizabethan Sonnets” rightly remarks:

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“ This world has limited the concept of love within the narrow limit of gender and beauty, but Shakespeare in his 154 sonnets has destroyed that Criterion and let the world out of this boundaries of gender and beauty.”

Shakespeare goes on the extent to prove that the love is not love that impediments find. See how clear is the Shakespeare’s idea of true love. As we are well aware of the fact that love just happens, without any conditions and Shakespeare has all the facts in his sonnets to justify this idea. That’s why in his sonnet he writes about impediments that can change love, but if the love is truthful how can it be changed. To a great extent the remarks of Dr. D.M. Longfellow is worth quoting:

Shakespearean concept of love especially presented in his sonnet addressed to both of his loves is what we can call “an unaltered, unique and timeless love” (essay entitled “The concept of unaltered love in Shakespearean Sonnets)

Shakespeare is so much engrossed in making his love timeless that in proving his idea he ends the sonnet with a challenge. He clearly writes:

If this be error and upon me proved, I never writ, nor no man ever loved

Only a true lover can pause such a challenge that Shakespeare has put forth in the concluding Couplet of this sonnet. The extent of this love can be felt, read and justified in the context of the reading of this sonnet. Shakespeare has gone in depth to prove the fact that love is beyond genders and beauties and beyond the limits of time and decay.

For the representation of this type of unique love Shakespeare has chosen the unique form of poetry that is Sonnet. He not only chose this form, but also has immortalise this form as it is named as the Shakespearean sonnet. The structure of this sonnet form is three quatrains of four lines each thus making twelve lines and the concluding couplet of two-line Shakespearean has chosen the rhyme scheme for these quartrains as abab, cdcd, efef, and for the couplet it is gg. All the quartrains presents the idea and the couplet provides the solution to the idea discussed in the quartrains.

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Result and discussion

Keeping in the view the themes we have discussed has two aspects, one is the Shakespeare love for his patron that is a male figure and his love for the dark lady who is not beautiful. Although both of these represent two opposite genders, yet Shakesperare's love has united it. The presentation of love and its timelessness is unique in a sense because it is beyond the aspect gender and beauty. Mostly it is thought that love happens when someone has good looks, but Shakespearean love has crossed the boundaries of physical love. The language chosen for the presentation of the love as it is evident from the quotes depicted from the various sonnets is marvellous and worth the representation of this kind of love. Although modern critics charge the Shakespeare for gay love, but here we can say that paying a tribute to someone in his poetry whether he is a male cannot make that person a gay, rather must be seen as a devotion beyond the perspective of gender. The concept of love is unique and for Shakespeare it is eternal and his poetry is the source to preserve this eternal love.

Conclusion

As depicted above the heterogeneous and homogeneous love of Shakespeare and its timelessness takes Shakespearean love to the new heights of unique love and close to the Indian Concept of Sufi love. The Indian concept of Sufism is that all the worldly creatures are females and they are married to this almighty formless one. In this instance the love is eternal as it is with God. Every human being has atleast two different faces of his personality, one is worldly and another is spiritual. Thus, Shakespeare love for his friend has reached to the level of spirituality where the concept of body ends and the love of souls starts. In such kind of love no sexuality is involved, what is involved is the true spiritual love. His love for the black lady is also beyond this worldly affair, as it is not the love of the bodies, instead it is the love of the true soulmate. Thus, it will be good to conclude the that Shakespearean sonnets are the best blend of eternal love beyond gender and beauty.

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References:

Primary Resources:

<http://triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/SHAKESPEARE/SONNETS/Download.pdf>

http://files.libertyfund.org/files/118/0613_Bk.pdf

<http://www.tweetspeakpoetry.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Top-10-Shakespeare-Sonnets-and-How-to-Write-a-Sonnet.pdf>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46455/sonnet-55-not-marble-nor-the-gilded-monuments>

SECONDARY RESOURCES

Dr. William Boyd essay on Shakespearean Sonnets namely “A waste of Shame”

SHAKESPEAR’S SONNETS, EDITED BY JAMES SCHIFFER ISBN 9780367475680

ANALYSIS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S POEMS BY NARULLAH MAMBROL

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