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REPRESENTATION OF HARMONY BETWEEN NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE IN *THE ABHIGYANSHAKUNTALAM* AND *THE TEMPEST*

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ABSTRACT

The Abhigyanshakuntalam and *The Tempest* are beautiful expressions of two of the greatest dramatists i.e. Shakespeare and Kalidasa respectively. In both, there is harmony of mother nature and human nature. Nature provides the background for both the plays. Heroines in both the plays are essentially the children of nature. Shakuntala, the heroine in Kalidasa's *The Abhigyanshakuntalam*, is beautiful as blossoming flower, nimble as a deer, happy as the dew-washed leaves of the forest. Similarly, Miranda, in the *Tempest*, is one of the most lovable heroines in the plays of Shakespeare is the very essence of innocent womanhood nurtured by nature. She gains her childlike innocence and purity in the lap of Mother Nature. She is unaffected, dignified and graceful; she is just the kind of character that any lover of nature and human nature would have liked to create. Both the characters are bred of nature. Present paper deals with the benign nature of Mother Nature nurturing the humane qualities in the characters of both the plays. It is an endeavour to express the harmony of nature and human nature.

Key words: **nature, human nature, harmony, dignity.**

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Kalidasa and William Shakespeare are undoubtedly the greatest poets of Sanskrit and English literature respectively. Englishmen regard Shakespeare as the greatest poet and dramatist the world has ever produced; Indians similarly pay the same compliment to Kalidasa. Indeed, both Shakespeare and Kalidasa are poets of the world. Although they belong to different times and nationalities, they are for all time and universal.

Kalidasa, (flourished in 5th century AD, India), Sanskrit poet and dramatist, probably the greatest Indian writer of any epoch. The six works identified as genuine are the dramas Abhijnanshakuntala ("The Recognition of Shakuntala"), Vikramorvashi ("Urvashi Won by Valour"), and Malavikagnimitra ("Malavika and Agnimitra"); the epic poems Raghuvamsha ("Dynasty of Raghu") and Kumarasambhava ("Birth of the War God"); and the lyric "Meghaduta" ("Cloud Messenger").

In drama, his *Abhijnanshakuntala* is the most famous and is usually judged the best Indian literary effort of any period. Taken from an epic legend, the work tells of the seduction of the nymph Shakuntala by King Dushyanta, his rejection of the girl and his child, and their subsequent reunion in heaven. The epic myth is important because of the child, for he is Bharati, eponymous ancestor of the Indian nation (*Bharatavarsha*, "Subcontinent of Bharata"). Kalidasa remakes the story into a love idyll whose characters represent a pristine aristocratic ideal: the girl, sentimental, selfless, alive to little but the delicacies of nature, and the king, first servant of the dharma (religious and social law and duties), protector of the social order, resolute hero, yet tender and suffering agonies over his lost love. The plot and characters are made believable by a change Kalidasa has wrought in the story: Dushyanta is not responsible for the lovers' separation; he acts only under a delusion caused by a sage's curse. As in all of Kalidasa's works, the beauty of nature is depicted with a precise elegance of metaphor that would be difficult to match in any of the world's literatures.

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616) was an English poet, playwright and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon". He has a reputation revealed, perhaps, by no one. Although William Shakespeare is viewed as the quintessential English writer, Shakespeare's poems and plays have altered the course of European and World literature. The shadow that William Shakespeare has cast over the world has influenced artists, poets, philosophers and thinkers. His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of about 37 plays 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, , and a few other verses, the authorship of some of which is uncertain. His plays have been translated into every major living languages and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

The Tempest is a play by William Shakespeare, believed to have been written in 1610–11, and thought by many critics to be the last play that Shakespeare wrote alone. It is set on a remote island, where Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, plots to restore his daughter Miranda to her rightful place using illusion and skillful manipulation. He conjures up a storm, the eponymous tempest, to lure his usurping brother Antonio and the complicit King Alonso of Naples to the island. There, his machinations bring about the revelation of Antonio's lowly nature, the redemption of the King, and the marriage of Miranda to Alonso's son, Ferdinand.

Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* are sublime literary works of incomparable poetic brilliance and great wisdom of life. Both are unique dramas expressing nature and human nature. They are dedicated to man's relations with nature and especially to the sanctity of parenthood.

The Abhigyanshakuntalam and *The Tempest* are beautiful poetic dramas having a lot of elements in common. The setting of both the plays is idyllic. *The Abhigyanshakuntalam* is Kalidasa's greatest achievement while *The Tempest* reveals Shakespeare's maturity in style. Both the plays are romantic, dealing as they do with love in its highest manifestations, and embodying the profoundest thoughts of the poets on the subject. Nature provides the background for both the plays, in *The Abhigyanshakuntalam* it is equivalent to a character. In this sense, they are both pastoral. The first part of the action of *Shakuntala* takes place in the hermitage of Sage Kanva, the foster-father of Shakuntala. The heroine is essentially a child of nature, beautiful as a blossoming flower, nimble as a deer, happy as the dew-washed leaves of the forest. She is so much part of nature that later when she leaves the hermitage to join her husband, she creates a gap in nature.

Trees of the hermit's grove, you have within you
The very spirits of the forest gods.
She would not drink herself before she sprinkled
Your venerable roots with kindly showers.
Though food of ornaments, she herself would not
Denude your branches laden with sweet flowers.
Her festival occurred when spring had first
Showered its blooms, casting their magic spell.
Now that she travels to her husband's house
Time has come for us to say farewell. (*The Abhigyanshakuntalam* , IV)

Even her friends Anasuya and Priyamvada, equally griefstricken, break out: "Holy father, the grove will be a perfect vacuity without Sakuntala"

After Prospero lands in an enchanted island with his daughter Miranda it's the nature that is sole mate of for them in this remote place away from human habitation. Caliban's words perfectly reveal the picture of the island when he says: "The isle is full of noises, Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not." (III, ii, 141-142). Twelve years have gone by when Miranda came to this island and she can also be called a child of nature and is nurtured by nature.

In both the plays the heroines, Shakuntala and Miranda, are bred of nature and are nurtured by nature. Miranda, even, is very essence of innocent womanhood as she has not known any human being except her father, Prospero. Prospero's love and concern for his daughter are as deep as Kanva's for Shakuntala. In fact nature and Prospero have been Miranda's sole instructors. It is on the island she grows up to ask questions and to fall in love. Her father, a victim of treachery of his brother lost his dukedom. Eventually, Miranda lost her status and position as the Princess of Milan. She has grown up in complete ignorance of the world in which she lives. To her father, she is the world and all the people who live in it. Miranda is thus unaffected by the ordinary influences of the civilized world beyond the enchanted island which shapes her outlook on life. Inevitably she retains her childlike innocence and purity. She is unaffected, dignified and graceful; she is just the kind of character that any lover of nature world like to create.

Shakuntla and Miranda are the embodiments of fertility symbolism. Like Miranda, she is mother and earth-spirit, first a girl then a loving gardener, then a dedicated mother. In Kanva's hermitage, she is friend and companion to all nature. She is the life-breath, the positive and auspicious force in nature all that is gracious. To declare her in Kalidasa's myth a goddess of fertility is to state a truth but no means to say enough. She like Miranda is the essence of living things because in them we recognize the genial warmth by which life flourishes. They are benign elements in nature. It is no exaggeration to say that Shakuntala embraces all nature as she conceives it. The tenderness of her heart exceeds the pathos of her fate. Her love for all creates in gradation from shrubs, trees, flowers, birds and beasts to her friends and most all to her husband knows no limits. She seeks to modify nature only in so far as she seeks to bring warmth, encouragement and affection into her relation with all living things. She is wholly innocent of ethical dilemmas. Ralph Waldo Emerson, a famous American philosopher, essayist and transcendentalist, urged that a forest might be the equivalent of Church.

Both Kalidasa and Shakespeare give universal thought its most consummate poetic expression. Nature and man are one. Both Shakuntala and Miranda represent an instinctive harmony with their nature; their lovers, the King Dushyanta and Ferdinand, merely add understanding to intuition. The four at heart are one.

Art and nature predominate; we judge the plays just as we judge human beings. Although in *The Tempest* magic permeates the play is indeed very human. In the opening scene the storm upsets the peaceful life in the boat. The storm recalls Shakespeare's other storm in King Lear in which the intense suffering brings the King to sympathy and to the realization; "ripeness is all". At the end of the play, we respect and sympathize with Lear as a symbol of universal suffering. But the storm in *The Tempest* is inspired by Prospero's magic and is controllable. Although one sympathizes with Gonzalo's cry "The wills above be done, but I would fain die a dry breath".

Outwardly, the redemptive power is in girls Miranda and Shakuntala. In *The Abhigyanashakuntalam* the hero and heroine suffer and they suffer because of the curse of Duvasa: the suffering chastens them and brings them closer while in *the Tempest* love is spontaneous and natural. Prospero says: "O, Cherubin, /Thou wast, did preserve me" (*The Tempest*, I, i. 23-26). Thus a review attentive to detail however, reveals that the family has from the first been the true basis of the poet's thought. In time of danger Miranda is from the first considered as potentially another. She is innocent, pure and full of compassion and has anxiety for others.

Prospero lives from Miranda; his "crying self" is evaluated in terms of parenthood. Kanva, although an ascetic, performs the duties of a worldly father. He feels intensely when Shakuntla leaves for Dushyanta's palace. Shakespeare takes up this pattern of children going away from their beloved in *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* with a difference: the children are lost and found and they bring the parents together.

The action is designed as in *The Tempest*, by a different method to transform evil into good, by which the family is created and the family of man, or human society. *The Abhigyanshakuntalam* is a play dealing with the generation of men and with the generation or song of worlds. In the final scene hero and heroine are seen with their son, father and mother and symbols of the masculine and feminine principles sustaining this world and the other conceivable worlds. Gods and men are united. Prospero, in Naples hopes to see the nuptial of his beloved solemnized, and like Dushyanta hopes for continuity of his rule in the world.

Finally the highest human values and spiritual significance win over all inhumanness and wickedness. Shakespeare has put most of his experience into the *Tempest* as Kalidasa has done into *Shakuntala*. Destruction and regeneration take place in both the plays. In the last Act of *Shakuntala* we see *Shakuntala*, the mother of *Bharatha* and the incarnation of goodness and *Dushyanta* is re-born through suffering. He is no longer the pleasure-seeking, romantic *Dushyanta* of the earlier acts. He too has passed through the ordeal of fire; he has gone through a long and austere *tapasya*. Suffering and penance makes him worthy of *Shakuntala*, the foster child of *Kanva*. A wicked and corrupt old world is destroyed and world as created in *The Tempest*, it is the "brave new world. The play breathes the very spirit of the Renaissance, the spirit of discovery and exploration. The Godlike reach of the human mind is in evidence everywhere in the play. The note of regeneration is struck in every character in the play with the sole exception of the wicked *Antonio*. Even in the half-fish and half-human *Caliban*, there is awakening:

I will be wise hereafter.

And seek for grace. What a thrice-double as

Was I, to take this drunkard for a god

And worship this dull fool. (*The Tempest*, I,I, 23-26)

The Abhigyanshakuntalam and *The Tempest* contain distinctive human sentiment and value of nature which appeal to one and all. Both the plays celebrate goodness, human values, and reject the bolder and wicked confrontation of evil.

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