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Tragedy and Nature in *Shakuntala* and *The Tempest*: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This article explores Kalidasa's Shakuntala and William Shakespeare's The Tempest in terms of shared and distinct approaches to tragedy and nature's role in drama. Shakuntala and The Tempest come from different cultural and religious traditions involving different dramatic forms, but both depict human relationships with other beings and places that affect feelings, memory, and patterns of reconciliation. In Shakuntala, the hermitage in the forest fosters mutual care and respect between humans and other species. In The Tempest, the island fosters conflict over memory and power and eventual forgiveness between humans. Neither work is a traditional tragedy with a fatal ending, but both include themes of loss, estrangement, death, broken relationships, and permanent separation. Close readings and other literary analyzes show how Kalidasa and Shakespeare resolve tragic themes in different ways, through reunion and restoration of cosmic order in Shakuntala and through the rejection of revenge in The Tempest. Nature is portrayed in both plays as more than a setting; it influences human behavior and helps bring about reconciliation..

Keywords: Kalidasa, Shakespeare, Shakuntala, The Tempest, tragedy, nature, recognition, memory, forgiveness, restoration

1. Introduction

Comparing Kalidasa's Shakuntala with Shakespeare's The Tempest highlights the similarities and differences between two great dramatic traditions in different languages and cultures with different theatrical practices but similar interests in themes of human suffering and conflict and humanity's relationship to nature. Shakuntala tells the story of a young woman who undergoes a series of romantic and emotional challenges before being reunited with her love. The Tempest tells the story of a man who has been wrongfully exiled and whose life and others have been disrupted by violence, though he later seeks reconciliation and forgiveness. Neither Shakuntala nor The Tempest is a tragedy, but both include tragic elements. For example, Shakuntala experiences rejection and uncertainty at the hands of her former lover, Dushyanta, and Prospero grieves the loss of his position and home for many years. Both plays explore connections between individual and collective issues of justice, truth, power, and moral responsibility (Thapar 112; Vaughan and Vaughan 84).

Nature plays a significant dramatic role in both plays. In Shakuntala, the hermitage in the forest is central to

Shakuntala's character and development. Shakuntala and other residents of the hermitage are associated with virtues, including peacefulness, compassion, devotion, and harmony between humans and nature. Characters from nature, including plants, animals, ascetics, and hermitage girls, are integrated into a single moral order. The presence of King Dushyanta in the hermitage highlights the differences between his courtly power and the lives of hermitage residents. Nature is not merely a backdrop but an important part of the moral framework by which the characters' actions are evaluated (Pollock 96; Thapar 128).

The island in The Tempest serves much the same role but is described more ambiguously. It is a place of exile for Prospero and Miranda, a birthplace for Caliban, a place of work for Ariel, and a place of political rehabilitation for shipwrecked nobles. The island is also where Prospero practices magic and exacts revenge on those who have wronged him. Shakespeare, like Kalidasa, uses descriptions of nature to separate his characters from the political world and highlight their personal qualities and moral struggles. Both authors use descriptions of nature to facilitate character development, though Kalidasa's descriptions are generally more positive and nurturing, while Shakespeare's are often linked with freedom and conflict (Vaughan and Vaughan 157; Singh 73).

Separation and memory are other key similarities between the two texts. In Shakuntala, separation is made more painful by Shakuntala's loss of memory due to a curse placed on her by Durvasa. Dushyanta's lack of recognition of Shakuntala results in a variety of other harms, including harms to her sense of self and marriage and social status. In The Tempest, Prospero's memory of the past harm done to him prevents him from letting go of the past and acting without its influence. Key differences between Kalidasa's and Shakespeare's views on memory include the need in Shakuntala to regain memory and the need in The Tempest to somehow master memory. These differences allow the authors to address the different harms that can result from separation, including loss of memory and inability to put past hurts behind you (Thapar 141; Shakespeare 1.2.53-188).

The two dramas differ in how they resolve conflict and achieve reconciliation. In Shakuntala, reconciliation between Shakuntala and King Dushyanta restores dynastic ties. In The Tempest, reconciliation is achieved when Prospero forgives betrayal rather than seeking revenge. Reconciliation is the theme of both plays' resolutions to conflict, though it is achieved in different ways. Key elements of reconciliation in Shakuntala include the revelation of truth and recognition. Key elements of reconciliation in The Tempest include the rejection of revenge and overreaching power (Pollock 214; Vaughan and Vaughan 293).

This paper explores similarities and differences between two plays in a comparative analysis of themes such as tragedy, nature, memory, estrangement, authority, and reconciliation in Shakuntala and The Tempest. The paper demonstrates that representations of nature in both plays play an important plot role in influencing human behavior and moral dilemmas. Other findings of the comparison include the ways in which both Kalidasa and Shakespeare represent tragedy as a process of reconciliation. Both playwrights suggest that suffering has value to the extent that it

promotes self-understanding and reconciliation (Thapar 207; Vaughan and Vaughan 318).

2. Review of Literature and Research Method

Scholarly criticism of Kalidasa's Shakuntala often focuses on rasa theory and other elements, including separation and recognition scenes and the play's adaptations from the Mahabharata. Features unique to Kalidasa's work, such as the curse of Durvasa and the lost ring, add psychological and theatrical complexity compared with the Mahabharata story. These plot elements create a conflict between private and public realities of love and recognition that Kalidasa uses to examine other themes related to love. Study of Sanskrit theories of aesthetics is helpful in analyzing Shakuntala, as the play lacks the tragic ending typical of Western drama. Shakuntala includes episodes of love, separation, loss, marvel, and reunion that align more closely with rasa theory than with classical Western theories of tragedy (Pollock; Thapar).

The natural world plays a significant role in different readings of Shakuntala. Shakuntala is often compared to trees, blooms, animals, water, seasonal changes, bees, and kindness. Such comparisons are not mere poetic flourishes in the text but tools to characterize the moral values of life in the hermitage and Shakuntala's role there. The hermitage is portrayed as a society defined by values of self-restraint and kindness. At the court, by comparison, individual identity and other truths must be proven and confirmed by others. Thus, the shift from the hermitage to the court highlights key differences between private and official spheres (Thapar).

Critical interpretations of Shakespeare's The Tempest include a variety of schools. Earlier critical interpretations viewed Prospero as an artistically and politically powerful or benevolent ruler. More recent critics have raised ethical questions about Prospero's treatment of Ariel and Caliban. Postcolonial critics have highlighted themes of colonialism, slavery, and land disputes related to the island. Ecocritical readings have explored other elements of the island, including climate, acoustics, and knowledge of the natural world. These critical perspectives have focused critical analysis on the island as a key site of political and ethical issues in the play rather than simply a setting (Vaughan and Vaughan; Hulme and Sherman).

Genre has played a role in analysis of The Tempest. The play includes several tragic elements, such as political treachery, banishment, attempted murder, revenge, dejection, and threats of more violence. Shakespeare transforms these elements into a work of romance with themes of reconciliation and the restoration of royal power. By choosing forgiveness rather than revenge, Prospero stops the action short of a full revenge tragedy. Comparisons with Shakuntala can be drawn on the basis of similarities in the ways in which serious suffering is presented as important but not the ultimate aim of the plays.

The current research uses a comparative, qualitative approach that relies heavily on literary analysis. Major works analyzed include Monier Monier-Williams's English translation of Kalidasa's play Shakuntala and William Shakespeare's play The Tempest. Topics of analysis in these works include elements of tragedy, natural settings, exile, recollection, supernatural

forces, power structures, female weakness, reconciliation, and other themes. Instead of defining tragedy narrowly to fit both works, the researcher views the tragic element broadly as an experience of deep emotional or social disruption that can exist alongside a happy ending involving reunion rather than death.

A comparative approach is important because Sanskrit and Shakespearean romance belong to different theatrical traditions. Theoretical writings in Sanskrit drama stress emotion and rasa, and Shakespeare's romance plays include elements of threat and marvel, political intrigue, and comic resolution and reunion. Comparison should not aim to fit both plays into a generic framework. Rather, comparison can help us understand how these playwrights draw on different cultural and theatrical resources to portray themes of suffering and recovery.

This methodological approach can help preserve differences in culture between the two plays. The forest hermitage, island, curse, storm, lost ring, supernatural elements, and recognition scene serve different purposes in the two cultural contexts. However, the plays can be compared in terms of dramatic structure because these and other elements disrupt the social order and create circumstances for the characters that require them to rethink issues of memory, duty, authority, and attachment. Comparisons of this kind are most productive when they are used to illuminate differences rather than to eliminate them.

3. Tragic Experience: Separation, Exile, and Failed Recognition

The most obvious connection between Shakuntala and The Tempest is that both plays deal with the theme of passing through hardship without letting it dominate the overall message of the work. The most painful moment for Shakuntala involves the loss of social standing in a relationship with which she is emotionally attached. When Shakuntala visits Dushyanta's court, believing that they are married because they were married in the forest, a curse has erased her from Dushyanta's memory. This experience affects Shakuntala in ways far beyond heartbreak, she fears losing her social status and other benefits forever because her personal experiences do not give her social standing.

The courtroom scene shows unequal power dynamics. King Dushyanta can challenge and question Shakuntala's claims without fear. Shakuntala has no such protection and must convince the king of her connection to him, the only person who knows the truth about their relationship. Shakuntala's loss of the ring makes her position even weaker, as physical evidence is more convincing to the king than her word. In Kalidasa's play, mistaken identity is portrayed as a major social and emotional problem, not a minor one..

> *"Though he repulsed thee, 'twas the sage's curse / That clouded his remembrance; 'twas the curse / That made thy tender husband harsh towards thee. / Soon as the spell was broken... / Thou didst regain thine empire o'er his heart." (Kalidasa, act 7)*

The curse described in the story stops Dushyanta from being completely evil, but it doesn't undo the shame felt by Shakuntala. The play's resolution depends on the audience's awareness of Shakuntala's shame.

After the memory is restored to Dushyanta, he is faced with the ethical question of his role in her shame, though he bears some of the blame.

The Tempest opens with a different kind of disruption. Prospero was overthrown by Antonio in Milan, threatened with harm to his young daughter, and exiled. On the island, years later, Prospero has a chance to reinvent the balance of power. His enemies are stranded on the island at his mercy, divided from one another, and vulnerable to his magical powers. Potential revenge themes run throughout the play, but Shakespeare frames the key question as a moral one, whether Prospero will exercise his power to take revenge, rather than a practical one..

> *"Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick, / Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury / Do I take part. The rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance." (Shakespeare 5.1.25-28)*

The tragic effect of both plays also comes from delay. Delay in Shakuntala results from spells, physical separation, and lost rings. Delay in The Tempest is self-imposed by Prospero, who delays recognition of his enemies until he thinks they have undergone enough psychological change. Delay adds dramatic tension because reconciliation is still possible. Audience members observe characters in a state of incomplete loss and incomplete recovery.

But delay has other ethical functions. In Kalidasa's work, delay highlights the suffering that results from the social ineffectiveness of truth. In Shakespeare's work, delay highlights the dangers of punitive justice. Prospero's planned delays and trials make the island setting feel like a courtroom, though the play as a whole rejects cruelty. These differences may help explain how both authors present tragedies that do not have tragic endings..

> *"They now are in my power; / And in these fits I leave them while I visit / Young Ferdinand, whom they suppose is drowned, / And his and mine loved darling." (Shakespeare 3.3.109-112)*

4. Nature as an Ethical and Dramatic Force

Nature in Shakuntala is depicted in intimate rather than alienating ways. Shakuntala's forest home is not a site of conflict between nature and society but a sacred landscape where human and nonhuman beings interact according to common social norms. Throughout the play, Shakuntala waters trees and other plants, defends animals, and is often described using references to plants and seasons. These references suggest that Shakuntala's personal identity is defined not just by family and marriage ties but by other social connections that have influenced her behavior toward other beings.

This ecology also plays a role in expressing emotion. Kalidasa describes Shakuntala's appearance using terms that evoke flowers, vines, shade, bees, bodies of water, and other spring and summer elements. The natural world affects not only how characters express emotion but also the circumstances under which they experience and express it. Dushyanta's attraction to Shakuntala is filtered through his experiences of nature, and he often interprets natural details as expressions of romantic love..

> *"Ah, happy bee! how boldly dost thou try / To steal the lustre from her sparkling eye; / And in thy circling movements hover near, / To murmur tender secrets in her ear." (Kalidasa, act 1)*

The bee incident illustrates the connection between nature and psychology. A small insect causes embarrassment, action, comic terror, and a chance for Dushyanta to interact with Shakuntala. The bee is both physically present and imagined by Dushyanta. Kalidasa does not make a sharp distinction between nature and psychology. Natural objects play active roles in the drama.

The forest setting takes on additional ethical significance in scenes of hunting and leaving. After Dushyanta enters the play as a hunter, he must give up violence at the hermitage. In a scene in which Shakuntala leaves for the court, the departure theme is played out not only with human characters but also with the forest, which seems to grieve her absence. Presenting the forest as emotionally connected to Shakuntala helps to heighten the impact of her isolation at court..

> *"Straightway depending from a neighbouring tree / Appeared a robe of linen tissue, pure / And spotless as a moonbeam—mystic pledge / Of bridal happiness; another tree / Distilled a roseate dye wherewith to stain the lady's feet." (Kalidasa, act 4)*

The island in The Tempest is also a transformative place, though it lacks the unity seen in Prince Henry's realm. Different characters have different associations with the island. For Prospero, it represents safety, exile, performance space, and a means of regaining political power. For Caliban, it is homeland. For Ariel, it is linked with travel and freedom, though Ariel is bound to serve. For Ferdinand and Miranda, it is a place of romance. Shakespeare portrays the island as a place over which different characters stake competing claims.

The first scene introduces themes of instability. Events in the first scene seem to be natural disasters, but later events show that Ariel is responsible for them at Prospero's request. Boundaries between natural, magical, and theatrical forces are blurred. In the first scene, traditional social distinctions between nobles and commoners are also set aside because sailors, not nobles, are essential to survival at sea. Thus, natural disasters challenge traditional political hierarchies.

> *"Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises, / Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not. / Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments / Will hum about mine ears." (Shakespeare 3.2.148-151)*

Caliban's words provide a sensory description of the island separate from Prospero's control. They challenge the idea that the island's ruler is the only cultured or refined person on the island. Caliban's descriptions of his sensory experiences with the island show that it cannot easily be viewed as a possession of others.

The comparison with Shakuntala provides useful insights. In Kalidasa's play, the forest setting encourages mutual interactions between characters. In Shakespeare's play, the island setting highlights conflicting desires for ownership and liberty among characters. In both plays, the setting challenges the power of rulers.

Dushyanta must curb his impulses in a sacred setting. Prospero must come to understand that restoration sometimes involves giving up power..

> *"This island's mine by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first, / Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me / Water with berries in 't, and teach me how / To name the bigger light and how the less." (Shakespeare 1.2.396-400)*

The difference between the hermitage and the island is reflected in the characters' connections to place. Shakuntala connects to the forest through active preservation efforts, such as watering and feeding other animals, as well as being recognized by the landscape after leaving. Caliban connects to the island through claims of prior possession and sensory familiarity. Neither connection to place is the same as the other, but both offer counterpoints to ideas about people's relationships to landscapes as property or backdrop.

Both playwrights associate nature with ethical awareness. Kalidasa explores the possibility of royal awareness of other creatures' forms that the king could otherwise dominate. Shakespeare explores the possibility of awareness of others' claims to power independent of the king's. In both plays, natural settings take on ethical importance by refusing to be fully incorporated into human projects..

> *"Hear me, ye trees that surround our hermitage! / Shakuntala ne'er moistened in the stream / Her own parched lips, till she had fondly poured / Its purest water on your thirsty roots; / And oft... in her love she robbed you not e'en of a single flower." (Kalidasa, act 4)*

5. Memory, the Supernatural, and Human Agency

Memory is a primary way in which the two plays echo and contrast with one another. Shakuntala depicts memory loss, the curse of Durvasa and the absence of Dushyanta's ring mean that Dushyanta does not, and cannot, remember his wife. The play illustrates a frightening social dynamic in which an individual may know the truth but lack social acknowledgment of that truth. Shakuntala has full memory of her relationship with Dushyanta but lacks social acknowledgment of this memory because Dushyanta, a person with social authority, does not share her memory.

The curse assigns blame in complicated ways. Shakuntala's forgetfulness about Dushyanta causes her to overlook a guest. Her punishment is more severe than her intentional wrongdoing. The supernatural realm teaches moral lessons by punishing humans more severely than they deserve, showing that human happiness is fragile. Eventually, the ring helps Shakuntala remember Dushyanta. Other plot elements indicate that she should spend time repenting before being reunited with him, implying that true remembrance involves moral understanding..

> *"When fatal lethargy o'erwhelmed my soul, / My loved one strove to rouse me, but in vain; / And now, when I would fain in slumber deep / Forget myself, full soon remorse doth wake me." (Kalidasa, act 6)*

Prospero's relationship with memory is quite different. He has vivid memories of Antonio's treachery and instructs Miranda to

learn about the past from his account. Memory provides Prospero with motivation and political justification but also risks limiting his freedom by keeping him locked into resentment. The main moral issue of The Tempest is not memory but finding ways to avoid memory becoming a permanent justification for revenge.

The supernatural helps highlight this difference. In Shakuntala, supernatural elements, including a curse and eventual divine intervention, show that other forces affect Shakuntala's life. Supernatural elements in The Tempest are mostly limited to Prospero's control over other supernatural beings, such as Ariel. Supernatural elements are political as well as spiritual. Prospero's control over other movements, fears, sleeps, sounds, and visual experiences makes him politically responsible for the uses to which these powers are put..

> *"Your charm so strongly works 'em / That if you now beheld them, your affections / Would become tender. / Dost thou think so, spirit? / Mine would, sir, were I human." (Shakespeare 5.1.17-21)*

Ariel's interaction with Prospero is one of the play's key examples of dramatic reversal. Ariel helps Prospero see things from a compassionate perspective. This reversal challenges the belief that masters are necessarily wiser than servants and suggests that people with power can become more ethical by considering the hardships of others.

Recognition in both plays is closely tied to other changes in character. Dushyanta needs to recognize something he previously was unaware of. Prospero needs to decide how to act on something he has always known. The two plays differ in whether memory is restored or disciplined, but both suggest that recognition depends on changes in knowledge relationships, not simple knowledge..

> *"The rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent, / The sole drift of my purpose doth extend / Not a frown further." (Shakespeare 5.1.27-30)*

6. Gender, Love, and the Movement toward Restoration

Love in both plays involves some degree of vulnerability for the characters, but the vulnerability is unequal. Shakuntala's social vulnerability is greater in The Recognition of Shakuntala than that of her male lover, who does not need any formal recognition of their marriage to Dushyanta. Shakuntala's loss of recognition threatens her sense of self. The scene in court highlights a gendered dynamic around evidence and power, as the king's doubts about Shakuntala's identity affect her legally, but her own claims do not have the same power.

Kalidasa does not depict Shakuntala as emotionally immature. She loves, recalls, dislikes, endures hardship, and eventually reunites with Dushyanta in a changed emotional state. Leaving her sheltered life as a hermit and experiencing public humiliation and reconciliation helps Shakuntala mature emotionally. Shakuntala's reunion with Dushyanta is important because she is not restored to her former emotional state without change..

> *"Hold in contempt the innocent words of those / Who from their infancy have known no guile; / But trust the treacherous counsels of the man / Who makes a very*

science of deceit." (Kalidasa, act 5)

Miranda's role is different but similarly determined by paternal control. Prospero limits what Miranda knows about her past and her interactions with Ferdinand and evaluates Ferdinand. Miranda and Ferdinand's attraction seems natural, though facilitated by Prospero's plans. Miranda's naivete brings energy to her speech but also shows the limited social experiences Miranda had before the shipwreck.

Both heroines play a key role in the play's resolution. Shakuntala marries Dushyanta, and their child continues both their family lines. Miranda marries Ferdinand, helping to restore relations between Milan and Naples. Younger characters in both plays enable resolution of conflicts among older characters..

"O, wonder! / How many goodly creatures are there here! / How beauteous mankind is! O, brave new world / That has such people in 't!" (Shakespeare 5.1.215-218)

The endings of the two plays involve restored relationships in new forms, not restored relationships as such. Dushyanta is reunited with Shakuntala, but his reunion with her is transformed by feelings of regret. Prospero is reunited with Milan, but first he must consider his role as ruler and father after exercising powers beyond those of a normal ruler.

This is why giving up earthly ties is a theme in The Tempest. Prospero forgives his wrongdoers, promises to set Ariel free, awkwardly regards Caliban, and discards the magical tools by which he has ruled the island. Returning to politics depends on Prospero's ability to set some boundaries. His reentry into society as a political being depends on his willingness to give up absolute power.

"But this rough magic / I here abjure... I'll break my staff, / Bury it certain fathoms in the earth, / And deeper than did ever plummet sound / I'll drown my book." (Shakespeare 5.1.50-57)

The endings challenge traditional assumptions about male power. Dushyanta's claim to kingship is restored when he accepts responsibility for his wife and child as part of his royal identity. Prospero's dukedom is restored when he rejects the idea that it gives him absolute control as a ruler. Thus, restoration of male authority in these plays requires a change, not just a return, to their previous positions of power.

This contrast is particularly clear in depictions of the next generation. Bharata's relationship with Shakuntala enables a reunion that promises a dynastic connection for the next generation. The relationship between Miranda and Ferdinand overcomes long-standing political animosity and hints at a future political alliance. While children and marriage cannot heal past wounds between parents, they can block the transmission of resentment to the next generation. Both plays suggest that connections between generations can be valuable only if parents have learned lessons from past conflicts.

"Now has he gained, / As the brave tamer of the forest-beasts, / The title Sarva-damana; but then / Mankind shall hail him as King Bharata, / And call him the supporter of the world." (Kalidasa, act 7)

7. Comparative Discussion and Major Findings

Together, Shakuntala and The Tempest offer contrasting models of restoration and ecology. Kalidasa envisions a moral ecosystem that includes both humans and other natural and sacred beings. Life in the forest teaches human observers important ecological lessons about self-sacrifice and mutual aid. Disbelief and alienation in the court result in tragedy for characters who learned truths in the forest. Restoration involves belief and reintegration of human and other natural and sacred kin.

Shakespeare's island is morally complex because of conflicting perspectives on it. For Prospero, it is a home from which he hopes to regain Milan. For Caliban, it is stolen property. For Ariel, it is a workplace from which freedom is sought. For Miranda and Ferdinand, it is a place of romance. So there is no overarching moral message about Shakespeare's island. The play suggests problems with property ownership and with the morality of controlling other people and places..

> *"This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine." (Shakespeare 5.1.330-331)*

Despite these differences, in both plays, environmental displacement allows characters to gain insights into social life that would otherwise remain hidden. Dushyanta visits a hermitage that limits the violence associated with royal rule, and aristocratic characters in The Tempest visit an island that limits their ability to avoid dependency. Opportunities for social change arise when environmental displacement interferes with established hierarchies and exposes characters to new ways of life over which they have little control.

Memory offers another useful point of comparison. Determining the truth in Shakuntala requires memory; determining the truth in The Tempest requires forgetting an act of revenge because the truth has been frozen. Both plays promote healing, one by encouraging memory and one by discouraging revenge. Both plays require some change in how people relate to their memories before they can move forward..

> *"The charm dissolves apace, / And as the morning steals upon the night, / Melting the darkness, so their rising senses / Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle / Their clearer reason." (Shakespeare 5.1.74-78)*

The key conclusion drawn in the article is that there is no conflict between tragedy and nature in either play. Tragedy involves the breakdown of relationships due to a lack of mutual affirmation and ethical boundaries. Nature settings serve to reveal such breakdowns. Forest and island settings are not mere backdrops but important elements that highlight ethical change.

The comparison challenges a simple definition of tragedy. Neither Shakuntala nor The Tempest can be classified as tragedies if tragedy involves only death. If tragedy is defined more broadly to include social and personal humiliation, exile, near loss, and permanent damage to interpersonal relationships, then both plays can be considered tragedies. What is unique about both plays is that they do not accept suffering as the ultimate reality of life..

> *"Though he repulsed thee, 'twas the sage's curse / That clouded his remembrance; 'twas the curse / That made thy tender husband harsh towards thee. / Soon as the spell was broken, and his soul / Delivered from its darkness, in a moment, thou didst regain thine empire o'er his heart." (Kalidasa, act 7)*

Another key theme is the interaction of private feelings and public concerns. The marriage of Shakuntala takes place in a private forest setting but is not valid unless and until it is accepted by the king in a public context. In The Tempest, conflicts that take place in a public political context are transplanted to a private, magical setting on an island, where they are resolved before the characters can return to the public world. Both plays highlight the links between private and public concerns related to marriage and inheritance.

This connection helps explain why acknowledgments are not just private acts. Dushyanta's acknowledgment of Shakuntala helps determine the status of his and Shakuntala's child and restore a dynasty broken by lack of an heir. Prospero's forgiveness of others does more than resolve his own grievances, it changes relations between Milan and Naples and helps create a new dynasty through Miranda and Ferdinand. Both plays feature bittersweet endings that are private, family, and political..

> *"Let us not burden our remembrances with / A heaviness that's gone. / I have inly wept, / Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you gods, / And on this couple drop a blessèd crown." (Shakespeare 5.1.239-244)*

The last parallel shows attitudes toward control in the two works. In Kalidasa's drama, the order of the universe is greater than the power of individuals to control events. Characters are constrained by curses, fate, sacred sites, and divine acknowledgment. In Shakespeare's work, the main character Prospero has great power over events on stage, but giving up that power is part of his moral growth. Humility is expressed differently in the two works, one through submission to divine powers and one through voluntary surrender of individual power.

For this reason, both plays ultimately associate restoration with restraint. Dushyanta's desire to control others' memories remains unfulfilled, while Prospero chooses not to control others' freedom forever. A shift from control to restraint is key to the ethical message of both plays' conclusions. In both plays, a restored world order requires acknowledgment of something besides human power, divine order in Shakuntala and the freedom and humanity of other beings in The Tempest..

> *"I'll deliver all, / And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales, / And sail so expeditious that shall catch / Your royal fleet far off. My Ariel, chick, / That is thy charge. Then to the elements be free." (Shakespeare 5.1.365-369)*

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Table 1. Comparative Dimensions of Tragedy and Nature

Dimension	Shakuntala	The Tempest
Natural space	Forest hermitage; care and sacred reciprocity	Island; contested possession, power, and wonder
Central rupture	Separation and failed recognition	Exile, betrayal, and revenge
Memory	Lost and later restored	Preserved intensely and ethically transformed
Supernatural	Curse and cosmic intervention	Prospero's magic and spirit labor
Restoration	Recognition, reunion, dynastic continuity	Forgiveness, renunciation, political reconciliation

8. Conclusion

Kalidasa's Shakuntala and Shakespeare's The Tempest come from different artistic and cultural traditions. However, both playwrights explore themes of suffering and loss, recognition, and moral regeneration. In Shakuntala, the main characters suffer conflict and loss because of forgetfulness and other obstacles to their relationship, including the move from the hermitage to the royal palace. In The Tempest, Prospero and others experience loss and conflict related to political betrayal, exile, and resentment, as well as aspirations for power and control, but also find ways to reconcile. Nature plays an important role in both plays, though the relationship between people and nature differs. Kalidasa portrays the forest hermitage as a place where moral values associated with cooperation between humans and nature are upheld. On the island in The Tempest, power struggles and other conflicts occur alongside self-discovery. Neither play ends tragically. In Shakuntala, Dushyanta's recognition of Shakuntala renews their relationship. In The Tempest, Prospero's choice not to seek revenge prevents further suffering. These endings suggest that, while earlier suffering is not undone by reconciliation, characters may find new ways to cope with it. Recognition and other strategies allow both playwrights to turn potential tragedy into stories of reconciliation and renewed relationships.

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