

# Surpass of supernatural and superstitious element in *Chandalika* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

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## ABSTRACT

*Chandalika* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are works which are old but molded with supernatural and superstitious spices that appetites the audiences and the readers. Still in Modern gadget world Barbie Angel movies and Horror Movies are in a favorite list. Tagore and Shakespeare will be in the mind of people until their demand goes beyond the reality. They detail superstition and supernatural are not only for the lower class but also for the rich of Elizabethan society.

Hindu and Buddhist legends often assist Tagore in his pavement walk. *Chandalika* is based on a Buddhist legend according to which Ananda, the chief disciple of Buddha asked an untouchable girl for water. Most of his works are decorated with the superstitious believes which makes the audience to sit at the tip of their seats.

The legend says that the girl gave him water but was attracted to him by his handsome personality. Ananda went his way unconcerned about the girl or her feeling like a unseen butterfly in a peak hour city signal. When the monk is a real monk not a pseudo the girl intended to get him back to herself was magic in which her mother was an proficient. The magic and the mother's love for her daughter drew him to her door that night. It was when the girl spread his couch that Ananda understood the situation and prayed to Lord Buddha. Prayer broke the charm of the magic and released Ananda from the girl's habitat.

K.R. Kripalani calls this tale crude. If is not so crude, as it is simple and straight forward. What Tagore does is to make it complex and rich. The untouchable girl to the play, Prakriti is not drawn to Ananda by least but by a sense of idea of caste and the limits it imposed on her. For the first time she feels she is a human being like anybody else who can quench another's thirst with water from her well.

“Give me water” reverberates in her heart and she describes her awakening as a ‘new birth’. She wants to serve him and to dictate herself to him. She did not care for the king’s son who came there earlier during a hunting expedition and admired her beauty. But how to bring Ananda near to her? The only method is magic. Her mother sees Prakriti’s folly. When Ananda passes that way once again her desire to drag Ananda to her door by means of her mother’s magic becomes uncontrollable. Kripalani calls this self – consciousness over reaching its limit perhaps it is tower to say that it is a real devotion, love in a deeper sense. Prakriti is not educated enough to realize that she must exterminate herself to be able to love truly it is that education she gets when her mother’s magic tortures Ananda and literally drags him to her place deprived of all the radiance in which she sees him shinning when he asks her to give him water. Prakriti has another “rebirth” life. One who uses a magic spell and revokes it has to die, according to the old belief.

Is *Chandalika* a tragedy? In sense, it is a conflict, torture, and pain form the chief experience of considerable portion of the play. Prakriti’s mother dies. But Prakriti, the protagonist of play not only does not die but comes out purified by the fire of her mental agony and the play ends with Ananda’s prayer to Buddha in a calm and serene tone. It is easily an evident that mostly tragedies bring calmness. The central thing theme of the play is the “rebirth” of Prakriti, first to a sense of her humanity and then to a higher state in which her love and devotion are no longer possessive. This play may be a tragedy.

The name Prakriti literally means Nature. Like nature Prakriti evolves being ‘reborn’ every time though something primitive remains till the final stage of the evolution. Her rebirth can be seen twice in the course of the play.

The very first words she speaks are of a mature person. When her mother refers to Uma’s penance Prakriti replies,

“Yes, mother, that’s it – I am doing penance for someone whose call has come to me”

She knows Ananda to be the chief disciple of Buddha and is also aware that the king’s punishment is more bearable than Ananda not reacting to any harm done to him. She knows that the daughter’s desire to work

magic on the great monk is a folly and a sin, but it is the maternal feeling for suffering of the daughter that makes her agree to do this.

She not only takes the risk gladly but even dies gladly, she is sorry only for the sin of torturing the monk. She implores his forgiveness.

O Prakriti, I cannot bear to see you suffer so. Come, get up. I will chant his spells, I will bring him. All along the dusty road I will bring him. I want nothing; he says in his pride. I'll break that pride and make him come running and crying, 'I want I want. (120)

Here, by seeing these words the author proves his power of using the supernatural element for one's own desire and how it gives, the end to the lady.

The mother has worked her spells for fifteen days. Because of the power of Ananda it does not affect him easily. When her mother tries to give up chanting, Prakriti is very adamant in continuing the spell and sees what happens to Ananda through the magical mirror.

Prakriti first says it is better but soon her mind melts for Ananda suffers greatly. Prakriti thinks that her own suffering and his bring them together. Even the spell makes her happy. Ananda's face changes; he controls himself as a true Buddhist. Prakriti realizes the situation and understands the falsehood of her own desires. The cataclysm of Nature is described in various ways accompanying the working of the spell.

There is a time in which literature has been greatly influenced by the popular believes of the time. This is during the age of Shakaspeare, the Renaissance, where practically every type of written words deals with the supernatural. The man among the writers who use such supertnatural themes, Shakespeare stands out from them all because of his profound contributions to literatures which embodies and illustrate the current beliefs of the era. His work helps to free the imagination by introducing the mythological as having the elements and qualities of humans. The supernatural is used abundantly because of popular belief and demand from the people. And these superstitions are not confined to merely the lower class ignorant or common folk. Wealthy and better educated Elizabethans also entertain believes in the supernatural (Schelling 158).

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a romantic comedy- a comedy of Love, full of mirth. Shakespeare uses love as an instinctual force which will bring about happiness and social reconciliation over wide range of human experiences.

*A Midsummer Night* is one of the two nights of the year when fairies were thought to be particularly powerful and when magic and every form of witchcraft were believed to be practiced. The lovers are cast in the tradition of romance. The fairies particularly Oberon and Puck- give the impression of being airy beings.

The Play features three interlocking plots, connected by a celebration of the wedding of Duke Theseus of Athens and the Amazonian queen, Hippolyta, and set simultaneously in the woodland, and in the realm of Fairyland, under the light of the moon.

In the opening scene, Hermia refuses to follow her father Egeus's instructions to marry Demetrius, whom he has chosen for her. In response, Egeus quotes before Theseus an ancient Athenian law whereby a daughter must marry the suitor chosen by her father, or else face death. Theseus offers her another choice: lifelong chastity worshipping the goddess Diana as a nun.

Meanwhile, Oberon, king of the fairies, and his queen, Titania, have come to the forest outside Athens. Titania tells Oberon that she plans to stay there until after she has attended Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. Oberon and Titania are estranged because Titania refuses to give her Indian changeling to Oberon for use as his "knight" or "henchman," since the child's mother was one of Titania's worshipers. Oberon seeks to punish Titania's disobedience, so he calls for his mischievous court jester Puck (also called Hobgoblin and Robin Good fellow) to help him apply a magical juice from a flower called "love-in-idleness," which when applied to a person's eyelids while sleeping makes the victim fall in love with the first living thing seen upon awakening (due to the god of love, Cupid, shooting a love arrow at a virgin queen but it, being deflected off a moon beam, flew into a patch of flowers, where the love potion, contained within the arrow, drained into the flowers, giving them their powers). He instructs Puck to take back the flower to make Titania fall in love with the first thing she sees when waking from sleep, which he is sure will be an animal of the forest.

Oberon's intent is to shame Titania into giving up the little Indian boy. He says, "Ere I take this charm from off her sight. As I can take it with another herb, / I'll make her render up her page to me." Having seen Demetrius act cruelly toward Helena, Oberon orders Puck to spread some of the magical juice from the flower on the eyelids of the young Athenian man. Puck had to mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, not having actually seen either before. Helena, coming across him, wakes him while attempting to determine whether he is dead or asleep. Upon this happening, Lysander immediately falls in love with Helena since he is still under the influence of the flower.

Oberon sees Demetrius still following Hermia and is enraged. When Demetrius decides to go to sleep, Oberon sends Puck to get Helena while he charms Demetrius' eyes. Upon waking up, he sees Helena. Now, both men are in pursuit of Helena. However, she is convinced that her two suitors are mocking her, as neither loved her originally. Hermia is at a loss to see why her lover has abandoned her, and accuses Helena of stealing Lysander away from her. The four quarrels with each other until Lysander and Demetrius become so enraged that they seek a place to duel each other to the death to prove whose love for Helena is the greatest. Oberon orders Puck to keep Lysander and Demetrius from catching up with one another and to remove the charm from Lysander, so that he goes back to being in love with Hermia.

Meanwhile, a band of six lower-class labourers "rude mechanicals", as they are described by Puck have arranged to perform a play about Pyramus and Thisbe for Theseus' wedding and undertaking into the forest, near Titania's bower, for their rehearsal. Nick Bottom, a stage-struck weaver, is spotted by Puck, who (taking his name to be another word for a jackass) transforms his head into that of a donkey. When Bottom returns for his next lines, the other workmen take one look at him and run screaming in terror. Determined to wait for his friends, he begins to sing to himself. Titania is awakened by Bottom's singing and immediately falls in love with him. She lavishes him with attention, and presumably makes love with him. While she is in this state of devotion, Oberon takes the boy. Having achieved his goals, Oberon releases Titania, orders Puck to remove the donkey's head from Bottom, and arrange everything so that Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena will believe that they have been dreaming when they awaken. The magical enchantment is removed from Lysander, leaving Demetrius under the spell and in love with Helena.

Mysticism and goodness is also used Shakespeare's writing in the form of fairies. The first one such work used for these purposes that has profoundly shaped fairies and the imaginations of the audience, is *A Midsummer's Nights Dream*. This "crown and glory" of the English fairy world has immensely influenced modern literature by being the first of its kind in a time when society wholeheartedly believes in the existence of these creatures. This creation of fantasy continuous to receive open-armed reception because it is good literature from which writers seek to draw inspiration (Nutt 1-3)

Fairies are believed to be the same as nymphs, identified with the fairy queen. Shakespeare is both influenced by the beliefs in fairies. He also influences his audience with his interpretation of fairies written in his works. Shakespeare's fairies are no longer mortal but are supernatural although they have no divine attributes. Shakespeare's fairies frequently exhibit human attributes such as feelings of love, jealousy, hatred, etc. (Mendl 56)

How Tagore's *Chandalika* deals with the superstitious believes of chanting and spelling on Ananda, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the spelling of the fairies on the lovers is also the proof and roof of their works. Under the sense and faith of the superstition both writers are exposed by the superstitious belief vividly and clearly that makes their works a successful one.

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