

REFLECTION OF THE SANGAM POETRY IN THE FILM, THE TWILIGHT SAGA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Srinidhi. B,

Ph.D Research Scholar,

Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai.

srinadzzozo@gmail.com

Abstract

The comparative literature travels through different disciplines that reconnoiter different genres, locations, culture, and language belonging to different time periods. This give a better understanding of different literature from different countries creating an opportunity to think, analyze and explore the context beyond limitations. This is one of the fields that create the way for the regional languages of other countries to acquire global reputation on its translation into English accounted for their merits as well as limitation. The main purpose of comparative literature is to compare and understand more than a field of study that links the border and boundaries of nation, history, people, behavior, customs, myths, philosophy and other movements. The attempt of this paper has corroborated this theory by comparing the Sangam poetry of Tamil literature and The Twilight Saga, an American film. This paper compares the five parts of the Twilight movie to the five different landscapes of the Sangam or Tinai poems belonging to the Sangam age. The different themes and aspects of Sangam or Tinai poems are well reflected in this film. The translation of the Sangam poetry into English by A.K. Ramanujan, an Indian English poet, offers the best introduction to explore and understand the culture, the natives, behavior, social life and also the geographical aspects of the Sangam age. This research attempts to cross beyond boundaries with the help of comparative study to analyze and understand literature across national borders, across time period and across language.

Keywords: Comparative literature, Sangam poetry, twilight, movie, genres.

Literature helped people from all over the world to know their history, their culture, Philosophy and understand their society and issues prevailing in the place they live in. Every county celebrate their literatures but not all the people know about the literature of others. Sometimes they may share the same history or same culture. To extend further, literature finds its way to broaden its influence through comparative literature which is an academic field that helps to understand literature beyond boundaries. It can also be called as a study of International relations which works with different languages specifically. The field of study integrates literature of different language, time periods, genres and national borders. Basically it's a separate discipline in which the literature is studied in relation to other disciplines example; religious studies, philosophy, ethnic studies and also to other form of art film, digital culture and performance. This research has compared Literature and Film that are totally different in language as well as the other aspects. This study has found the relation between the Sangam poems of South India and a 21st century U.S. film.

The Sangam poetry flourished over two thousand years ago that added glory to the Tamil Literature. It is highly a remarkable contribution made by Tamil poets of both men and women from different classes of the society. These poems are categorized into different books and they are together known as the Eight Anthologies. It has been translated in English by various poets, of which scholars like A.K. Ramanujan, G.U. Pope, George L. Hart has acquired global reputation for their flawless and simpler English. The Sangam poems give the best introduction about the Tinai, meaning land and landscapes belonging to the Sangam period in the history of South India. This Tinai exists within the Akam and Puram. Akam Tinai deals with inner life of human beings more specifically the relationship of the hero and heroine and are very subjective in nature that are linked to five different landscapes, Kurunji, the mountainous region, Mullai, the forest area, Marutham, the agricultural land, Neithal, the seashore and the last is Pallai, the waste land. The Puram Tinai is the poetry of war and is more objective in nature. The richness of these poetic features is recaptured in the movie The Twilight Saga as well. The Twilight Saga explores the fantasy romance between a human and a vampire extending to five parts, Twilight, New Moon, Eclipse, Breaking dawn- Part one, Breaking Dawn Part two. This film series is from summit Entertainment based on four novels which are named the same as the movie written by the author Stephen Meyer. The five parts are directed by different directors and the series is first released in the U.S. This series has been translated into thirty eight different languages and released around the globe. The story is about a human girl, Bella and a vampire, Edward who develops unconditional love for each other and they experience different life aspects that include both their love relationship and war matters.

The comparative study of the Sangam poems and The Twilight Saga establishes that they reflect the same concepts from the following research. The Sangam poems based on akam and puram, deals with life aspects that covers the emotional and material topics such as love, marriage, war and governance which is similar in the twilight series that focuses on love relationship, complications of marriage and war. The mental and emotional attitudes of the individual and the situations of the poem are linked to the exterior landscapes. The objects of Nature mentioned in the Tinai poems serve as a background setting to the human emotions such as lover's meeting, patient waiting, lovers' quarrel, separation and the anxiously awaited return. Similarly the circumstances of the story are linked to the different titles of the movie The Twilight Saga and they are related to nature. Twilight means time after sunset which means Bella enters the night symbolizing Edward's life. New Moon means the darkest part of a lunar cycle which means Bella's moon that is Edward disappears from the night. Eclipse means the moon crosses over the sun depicting Bella chooses Edward over Jacob. Breaking Dawn means the beginning of a new day where Bella enters another life. The similitude between the poems and the stories also lies in how they are revealed. The poems are in the form of Dramatic Monologue. In the story it is portrayed from Bella's point of view where Bella is been the narrator in most of the places. There are a lot of similes and references to nature given in the poem to expound their unconditional love or their feelings about their situation which is also inspected in this study.

The five landscapes of the Tinai or the Sangam poems are excessively related to the five parts of The Twilight Saga. Beginning with the poems of Kurunji Tinai, the theme is lover's meeting. The details of the locale of the heroine and the hero are revealed through each other's description. The poem describes the girl meeting his Man and showers their love for each other. The Man belongs to the mountainous region, where the beauty of the place depends on the beautiful Kurunji flowers. The main occupation of the people is bee hiving. The description of their love is revealed through references to nature. The love is limitless that even the Earth's size is smaller and cannot be measured with sky and is as pure and clear than water. It also unveils their emotional state when they meet each other. As they describe they also unpacks their culture and customs. This poem is found in the book, Kurunthokai, poem 3, written by the poet The vakulathar and translated by A.K. Ramanujan. The same theme of Lover's union is mirrored in the first part of the series, Twilight. The love is narrated by Bella, the heroine. As she begins, the whereabouts of the man she loves is also disclosed including her emotional state when she sees him. The first part is Bella getting to know Edward and eventually fall in love with each other. Their love is also given references to nature objects like metaphors. Their love is similar to lion falling in love with the lamb. This is because he is a Vampire and she is a human. And they also share how they mean to each other that they cannot be separated at all. Adding to it, the narrator divulges the customs and culture of her Man in the first part. Bella, to identify Edward's unusual behaviors she searches the internet to know about vampires and their customs which matches her lover's characteristics.

The next part of the series is the New Moon, where Edward leaves Bella due to unavoidable situation for the sake of Bella. The movie focuses mainly on how Bella waits for her Edward throughout the story. The seasons change but she lives in idle waiting and thinking about Edward. Bella feels hard to sleep as the thoughts of him come as a nightmare in her dreams so she is mostly awake. There is a song of hope for Bella in this movie which symbolizes her patient waiting. The movie portrays patient waiting which is a resemblance to the theme of Mullai Tinai. The poem referred is a translation of A.K. Ramanujan who has taken Kurunthokai, poem 221, written by Uraiur Mutukotran. The heroine seems to be upset all the time as her man does not come back after the separation. The poem indicates the change of time by referring the flowering Jasmine and daily chores of the people. Everything keeps changing and the time passes but the hero has not arrived yet. The heroine craves for her lover to come back just like how Bella is in the movie. Her feelings are portrayed through her lamentation to her friend. Similarly in the movie Bella attempts to spend time with her friends to divert her grief. But nothing seems to help her out. Then she also shares her feelings to Jacob about her lover, Edward. Eventually in both the Mullai poem and the movie, the hero comes back and rejoins with the heroine. They also share how they missed each other.

The Marutham Tinai is associated with marriage and Lover's quarrelling. A.K. Ramanujan's translation in English of Kurunthokaipoem 15, written by the poet, Auviyar helped to understand theme of Mullai poem. In this the mother of the heroine feels happy that her daughter is married to the person she loves and at the same time, Marutham Tinai also deals with the fight and mental conflict between the lovers. The poetic lines are styled with metaphors. The Mother describes her daughter's wedding day that is blooming with thunder sounds of the drums. She also talks about her beautiful bridal make up. The other theme is the fight, which arises due to the hero's affair with a concubine. The heroine is hurt and sad. The Marutham Tinai is evident in the third and fourth part of the movie, Eclipse and Breaking Dawn- Part one. In both the parts, there are conflicts and marriage incidents. The wedding proposal by Edward makes Bella happy in the third part, Eclipse and the wedding part is continued in the next movie, Breaking Dawn- Part one which also includes the happiness of Bella's mother on her daughter's wedding. Bella's mother adds more beauty to her Bridal form by giving her an ancestral accessory to wear. She also tears up due to over joy as she sees her in her wedding dress. The mother wishes her for a very good life with Edward. The other theme is the lover's quarrel. In both the movie parts, though the reason for the fight differs from the Marutham Tinai, still the theme of lover's conflict is shown in the movie. In Eclipse, Bella gives equal importance for Edward and Jacob, a werewolf, her friend which Edward dislikes it. In spite of knowing the fact that Jacob loves Bella, Bella was happened to kiss Jacob to calm him down in a situation. Here Edward is hurt and sad. Even in the Breaking Dawn- Part one, there is conflict between Edward and Bella after their marriage. The reason is Bella is pregnant and the baby is a half vampire and a half human which could

kill Bella as she is just a human. Edward forces Bella to abort it but she is all excited about carrying her. This leads to Edward and Bella gets into quarrel, misunderstanding, and lack of communication and the expression of their love also become unexpressed in this. This fight is out of love not other reasons as it is in Marutham Tinai. In Marutham Tinai, the heroine is hurt due to the unusual attitude of her companion. The conflict between the couples arises due to hero's unfaithfulness in love.

The anxious waiting is the theme of Neithal Tinai and Breaking dawn- Part 2. The reasons are different but the theme remains the same. The theme of Neithal Tinai, deals with the heroine anxiously waiting for her hero who has gone far away from her whereas in Breaking Dawn- part two, the hero anxiously waits for the heroine. During the delivery of the baby of Edward and Bella, Bella loses her life and about to become a vampire but her life does not return. In the beginning of the movie, Edward anxiously waits for her life to come back. Edward is tensed and anxious. The family also anxiously expecting her returns of her new form. The theme of separation after marriage is the characteristics of Pallai Tinai, which is similar to that of Breaking Dawn- part one. In Pallai Tinai, the separation is not only between the couples but also the mother who is separated from her daughter after she is eloped. The poem describes how the mother is waiting for her daughter's come back with her lover. Also there is a long separation of the hero from the heroine in Pallai Tinai poems. Both the characteristics can be witnessed in this movie. In the movie, Bella's father awaits for her daughter's safe return with her husband after their honeymoon. Bella's father fears that something would happen to them. He hopes that her daughter should return safely and healthy. The movie focuses on the father and his waiting for his daughter. In the poem, it focus on the mother is tensed and waiting everyday for her daughter's arrival. Similarly, the mother wanted the daughter to come home healthy and happy. Another aspect is there is a long separation between the couples. In the movie Bella is separated from Edward permanently as a human later she returns to her life as a vampire and gets united.

The akam concepts of the Sangam poems are well reflected in the five parts of the film series The Twilight Saga. The puram concept is also witnessed in the series. There are scenes of war in the series. There is governance and public life in the movie which refers the werewolf Tribes and the Vampire clan, their rules and conditions, their customs which matches the puram concept of the Sangam poems. The Puram poems often deal with songs about bravery and kingship and battles of specific landscapes. George L. Hart's translation in English of Purananoru poem 102, written by Auviyar stands as a example for understanding the characteristics of Puram poems. The poem explains about the heroic qualities of the hero, about his manliness that nobody can equal his bravery and strength, his fearless attitude and his responsibilities. In this poem also the stylistic

devices are well used to form the poetic lines to set the richness of the poem. The hero's is referred to young bull for his strength like the bull and also about the capability and his successful kingdom is depicted through various references. In the film series, Edward's physique is and his powers are exposed. Each character's are capable of something or the other in executing their battle skills which are also revealed in the series. The theme of battle is evident in the movie, Eclipse and Breaking Dawn- Part Two. The clans of werewolf who have a myth for being a natural enemy of the vampires, joins the good vampires to support them in the war against the bad vampires. There are laws and regulations for both the vampires and the werewolf. The Volturi is the ruling class of the vampire who will wage war against the Cullen's family in which Edward belongs to. A complete heroic performance is set out in the final part, Breaking Dawn- Part two and indeed this part also specifies each member's super powers, their valor skills and their practice and plans for the war. Hence, the puram concept is also established in the movie.

The akam and puram concepts of Sangam or Tinai poems coincide with the film series, The Twilight Saga. The film reflects the Sangam poems. The highly remarkable aspect is that the Sangam age is suitable for all ages irrespective of language, culture and country. This study was possible only because of the comparative literature, which gives an immense knowledge to know about different literatures, their history, their culture and their language. One important feature that helps the comparative study easier is the translation, which is both the merits and the demerits. It depends on the translation that a literature of other languages becomes a global success and vice versa. Sangam poetry has gained its merits worldwide because of its translation mainly by the great scholar, A.K. Ramanujan. The comparative study thus helped to feel the ancient love poems of the Sangam age, the period of 300 B.C. in the 21st Century American film, The Twilight saga.

References

Ramanujan, A.K. (1985). *poems of love and war: from the eight anthologies and the long poems of classical Tamil*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hart L, George. Heifetz, Hank. (1985). *The four hundred songs of war and wisdom: an anthology of poems from classical Tamil, the purananooru*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Godfrey, Wyck. Mooradian, Greg. Morgan, Mark. (Producer), & Hardwicke, Catherine. (Director). (2008). *Twilight*. United States: summit Enteratainment.

Godfrey, Wyck. Rosenfelt, Karen. (Producer), & Weitz, Chris. (Director). (2009). *New moon*. United States: Summit Enteratainment.

Godfrey, Wyck. Rosenfelt, Karen. (Producer), & Slade, David. (Director). (2010). *Eclipse*. United States: Summit Entertainment.

Godfrey, Wyck. Rosenfelt, Karen. Meyer, Stephenie. (Producer), & Condon, Bill. (Director). (2011). *Breaking Dawn- Part one*. United States: Summit Entertainment.

Godfrey, Wyck. Rosenfelt, Karen. Meyer, Stephenie. (Producer) & Weitz, Chris. (Director). (2012). *Breaking Dawn- Part Two*. United States: Summit Entertainment.

Comparative literature. In Wikipedia. Retrieved Feb 2, 2020, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparative_literature