

Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and Nazrul's "My Love" (Original: Mor priya hobe esho rani): A Comparative Study of Romantic Love

Comparison and analysis are the chief tools of the critic. --T.S Eliot

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Abstract: Christopher Marlowe and Kazi Nazrul Islam are very much similar in expressing their romantic love in their two songs "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and "My Love" respectively. In both songs, romantic zeal is used to reveal the speakers' indomitable passions for two maidens—presumably young and pretty girls. In the two songs, the speakers express their 'passionate' appeal to their beloveds to come and live with them. The intense love they feel inside bursts out in the way they offer a series of attractive gifts to their lady loves to move their hearts in their favour. The speaker in Marlowe's song tries to persuade his beloved with beautiful objects from nature whereas the speaker in Nazrul's song with bewitching objects from the sky. The speakers are promising the impossible, but, no doubt, they are representatives of any eager lovers who hyperbolize their love to entice their beloveds. The focal point of this article is to make a comparative study of romantic love.

Keywords: Marlowe, Nazrul, Similarities, Love, Invitation

I. Introduction

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was one of the most influential modern dramatists and poets of England of the Elizabethan period and Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) is the national poet of Bangladesh. Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" shows the idyllic state of romantic love as seen through the eyes of a passionate shepherd wooing a maiden. The song begins with an amorous call, an invitation to his beloved "Come live with me and be my love"¹. "It is not a marriage proposal but an overt appeal by the shepherd requesting her to spend some time with him so that he can use her as a means of satisfying his desire for passionate sex with her."² In the song, however, the addressee neither appears nor responds to the shepherd's pleas and "the poetic blazon of the lover's beauties, typical for Petrarchan sonnet, here is replaced by a description of pastoral pleasures that form a progression"³. Poet Nazrul's song "My Love" also starts with a proposal and merry invitation to a maiden "Come darling and be my love"⁴. In this song too, the girl's response is never heard and she is not present in any way except as the object of the speaker's desire. Undoubtedly, Nazrul's imagination about his dream girl is very young romantic imagination. Actually, these two songs are full of "cumulative details"⁵ and "romantic wish-fulfilment"⁶. "Cumulative details" refer to a series of gifts or temptations which together make a very powerful influence. The speakers fervently wish to win the beloveds by offering a lot of impressive gifts and softly encourage them to come and live with them. All these are "cumulative details". Again, "romantic wish-fulfilment" is our wish to have in imagination what we cannot get in reality. The speaker's proposal in Marlowe's song is attached to beautiful aspects of nature that are depicted in a very sensuous, fanciful, and attractive way while the speaker in Nazrul's song goes on to embellish his beloved with objects from the sky. For persuasion, both the speakers use rhetorical components, such as images, similes, metaphors, personifications, hyperboles and so on. These components are associated with agreeable and pleasant tone, so that they can attract their beloveds.

¹Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 989

²<http://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-rhe-message-passionate-shepherd-his-love-102205>

³<http://ubr.rev.unibuc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/11-Ioanna-Zlateva-1-2012.pdf>

⁴Sadruddin Ahmed (tran), 'My Love', *Morning Tea*, The weekend magazine from daily sun (22 April 2016) Vol.6, Issue 16, 21

⁵Sadruddin Ahmed, "Marlowe o Nazrul er Duti Gaan: Akti Tulanamulok Somalochona (Two Songs of Marlowe & Nazrul: A Comparative Criticism)", Prekhan, Dhaka: Baitul Aman Housing Society, 2010, 18

⁶Sadruddin Ahmed, "Marlowe o Nazrul er Duti Gaan: Akti Tulanamulok Somalochona (Two Songs of Marlowe & Nazrul: A Comparative Criticism)", Prekhan, Dhaka: Baitul Aman Housing Society, 2010, 18

"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" deals with the adoring appeal of a young passionate shepherd, the speaker of the song, to his sweetheart to come live with him and be his love which reflects the shepherd's romantic propositions. Throughout the song, we see his intense emotional state of mind through the emotional persuasive language he uses to allure his beloved to pass time with him warmly. At the beginning of the song, the speaker states his intention that "we will all the pleasures prove"⁷, creating a basis upon which all his promises are centered. "This immediate reference to 'pleasure' gives a sexual tone to this song"⁸ as we see in the use of the word 'passionate' in the title which "suggests strong emotions, but may also refer to an ardent desire to possess the woman sexually"⁹. So, to induce the girl to be close to him, the shepherd offers her gifts one after another. Sometimes, he proffers her simple charms, sometimes he makes grandiose promises. Firstly, the speaker draws her attention to the simplicity and other blessings of the countryside which she will enjoy if she comes and lives with him. He uses nature as a romantic background for her entertainment. To impress her, he only focuses on the bright sides, only the pleasures and delights and not the drawbacks or the real dangers of a pastoral life. He then proposes her a life free from the worries and issues of a crowded city life. So, to give pleasure, he tries to persuade her to come to the lap of nature full of the varied, undulating features of the rustic landscape. In the following lines, the speaker describes a variety of spectacular locations where they could make love:

"That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields."¹⁰

The use of the image of 'steepy mountain' is metaphorical. He compares the 'steepy mountain' to the troubles and difficulties of life. He brings this image to show that any kind of complexity will come to an end and everything in nature will yield to them only if she comes and accompanies him. Again, depicting an amazing image of the rusticity and plainness of the English countryside, the speaker is trying to make his beloved believe how leisurely and wonderful their lives would be together if she is just with him. He says that they will 'sit upon the rocks' to see the shepherds feed their flocks by the shallow rivers and they will listen to waterfalls and sweet songs of birds as superbly expressed in the lines below:

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals¹¹

Here, the word 'rivers' implies the beautiful sounds which are heard in nature. "Moreover, in 'birds sing', the poet personifies birds as human beings who sing happy songs to celebrate the beauty and peace of nature."¹² Besides this, "'madrigal' is a poetic word. It means a short musical lyric. It is always concerned with love and romance. It is used to enchant his beloved to the blessings of nature."¹³ Thus, the shepherd's inclusion of the madrigal provides a promise of romantic entertainment that completes the image of gaiety and light romance the girl will enjoy if she agrees to accept his proposal.

Now, the shepherd, full of romantic notions, moves to the material gifts to touch the heart of his beloved. So, he passionately says:

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;¹⁴

To express his affection, he wishes to make a lot of things, such as 'bed of roses' decorated with 'a thousand fragrant posies', 'cap of flowers', and a kirtle, or skirt embroidered with myrtle leaves. It is worth noting that "Elizabethans often composed short epigrams that were also known as 'posies'. These short poems were often used as tokens of love."¹⁵ If Marlowe's shepherd is using 'posies' to refer to short poems and not a floral tribute, then decorating the bed for the girl with love poems is a romantic idea, although still an impractical one. However, with this description the speaker represents the beauty of the place, the place where perfumes are smelt everywhere. He offers her these things only to win her over.

⁷Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 989

⁸<http://www.slideshare.net/ismailabukhadra3/the-passionate-shepherd-to-his-love-15432044>

⁹<http://www.nuoweitech.com/passionate-shepherd.html>

¹⁰Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 989

¹¹Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 989

¹²<http://educationcing.blogspot.com/2012/05/christopher-marlowe-passionate-shepherd.html>

¹³<http://educationcing.blogspot.com/2012/05/christopher-marlowe-passionate-shepherd.html>

¹⁴Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 989

¹⁵<http://worldliterature-renz.blogspot.com/2009/08/passionate-shepherd-to-his-love-poem.htm>

Then the shepherd is making increasingly impossible promises. He is so intense in his love that forgetting his capability, he wants to make some fine clothes and accessories in hopes of receiving her love in return. He will make a gown of 'the finest wool' from pretty lambs which will keep his beloved warm. He will also make a pair of high quality slippers with the buckles of the purest gold to protect her from cold. Again, the following promises and pleas reveal the shepherd's wishful thinking and romantic wish-fulfilment more beautifully:

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.¹⁶

Here, the shepherd is asking his beloved to live with him by offering her an intricately decorated beautiful belt of straw and ivy buds with precious stones "corals clasps and amber studs" disregarding his financial constraints as we know that "shepherds were typically poor at the time"¹⁷. If the girl takes his promises quite literally, she would look like a huge floral bush that glitters with gold, coral, and amber. What a fantastic endeavour it is to soften a dream girl's heart!

That the speaker is fully obsessed with the maiden is clear as we observe nowhere in the poem is the speaker consistent. He goes on tempting the girl. In the last stanza, he wishes to provide her with a luxurious life in the pastoral setting. He tells her that she will enjoy the merry atmosphere there. He also assures her that every 'May morning' 'swain' or young shepherds will dance and sing for her delight and romantic entertainment. He chooses 'May' because in this month, nature turns to a realm of overwhelming beauty and aesthetic pleasure. If these 'delights' of the pastoral idyll stir her mind, she may come and live with him and be his love as he reiterates:

The shepherds swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.¹⁸

However, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" could be about any shepherd of any age in any country, for such is the universality of its theme. Infatuated with the girl, the shepherd does nothing, only says: "And we will all..., And we will sit..., And I will make....,"¹⁹ etc. as lovers often are. Throughout the song, out of obsession with the girl, he speaks very unrealistically and fancifully as Sir Walter Raleigh says in his song "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" that Marlowe's shepherd speaks from a position of a 'reason rotten'²⁰. Yet, whatever the shepherd does, he does only to show his beloved how much he loves her.

Like Marlowe's, Nazrul's popular love song "My Love" opens with the same romantic proposal or invitation to a maiden he (N) loves eagerly: "Come darling and be my love!" In the very line, we get the essence of the whole song like the earlier one's. The song is a very lively indication of romantic contrivance of Nazrul who although is known as a rebel poet, is simultaneously a poet full of romantic ardour, rich imagination and intense emotion. In this song, the speaker expresses his passion in an unabated manner. He uses a plethora of exaggerations to show his fondness for his beloved.

"My Love" is extremely romantic, lyrical and appealing. Like a typical traditional romantic poet, Nazrul uses similes and metaphors to adorn it with a flavor. His love finds an artistic expression in this song. The speaker is trying to impress his sweetheart with various types of things. But, its difference from the "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" is that here the gifts are taken not from the practical life, but from the sky. The gifts the speaker wants to give his beloved get a beautiful shape with the touch of colorful imagination. He wishes to prettify her with "earrings of the young spring moon", and around her neck "a necklace wavy as the formation of a flight of ducks" as in the song, the speaker proclaims:

Come darling and be my love!
I will make you earrings of the young spring moon.
Around your neck will I put a necklace wavy as
the formation of a flight of ducks.²¹

The speaker also intends to fashion the girl's "cloud-dark hair into a bun studded with stars" and beautify her body with "sandal with moonlight". This lover again promises to paint her feet with "the scarlet

¹⁶Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 990

¹⁷<http://www.nuoweitech.com/passionate-shepherd.html>

¹⁸Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 990

¹⁹Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh Edition, Vol. 1, USA, 990

²⁰<http://ubr.rev.unibuc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/11-Ioanna-Zlateva-1-2012.pdf>

²¹Sadrudin Ahmed(tran), 'My Love', *Morning Tea*, The weekend magazine from daily sun(22April 2016)Vol.6,Issue16, 21

from the rainbow" and to compose seven tunes of his song for her bridal suite. Lastly, he tells her that for her honour and delight, the Muse of his poetry will sing around her if she would just be with him:

I will fashion your cloud-dark hair into a bun studded with stars.
I will mix sandal with moonlight and rub it over your body
I will sieve the scarlet from the rainbow and paint your feet with it.
I will compose seven tunes of my song for your bridal suite.
And around you will sing the Muse of my poetry.²²

If the similes, metaphors and hyperboles used in the song are taken into account, we see that the speaker is still in blazon mode. He passionately wishes to adorn his beloved again and again. Another point should be mentioned here that the speaker's sexual intentions are masked in his persuasive language throughout the song. Karunamaya Goswami, mentions "The Yellow flower" as chiefly the collection of poems of love and opines that "Nazrul's notion of love was not devoid of physical fascination. The body was never ignored. But sublimity was there. Extra physical considerations were never ignored, the question of eternal cravings for women in the heart of men had always burned there, the sense of love had always mixed up with high sense of beauty, but still the body was recognized as the temple of love".²³ So, it can be propounded that with carnal desire, the speaker pledges to do the impossible to induce the girl to be the queen of his heart.

Clearly, in the expression of romantic love, the two songs are very similar but have a few differences as well. For example, to express ardent desire, the shepherd imagines himself in a certain locality as the speaker in Nazrul's song does not. Again, the imagination of the shepherd is limited to the earth though the gifts he wants to offer his beloved do not go with his real life of pain and weariness whereas the speaker in "My Love" is a dreamer and a completely impractical man whose dreams and desires have no ending. Further, the degree of emotions expressed in "My Love" is more than that in "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" to some extent.

II. Conclusion

Christopher Marlowe and Kazi Nazrul Islam thus very exquisitely represent romantic love in their two songs. To uphold romantic love, the two speakers draw a picture of utopia where everything is perfect. To them nature seems to be idyllic too, as if the world is too safe and nothing goes wrong. Most of the images used in the songs are unrealistic, fanciful and almost dream-like through which the speakers show their tempo of feelings for the girls they love. The wishes they express in the songs will never appear in a material form. The way they long to adorn their beloveds is not possible in reality. Above all, both songs are universal instances of how young men tempt pretty girls with fantastic offers to make them yield to fulfil their desires. Really, the taste of romantic love is always appealing and exciting in man's life.

²²Sadrudin Ahmed(tran), 'My Love', *Morning Tea*, The weekend magazine from daily sun(22April 2016)Vol.6,Issue16, 21

²³<http://www.ijoart.org/docs/Romantic-Par-excellence-Kazi-Nazrul-Islams-Selected-Poems.pdf>

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