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## COMPARISON OF WAR ELEMENTS AND THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE CHARACTERS OF MAHABHARATA AND THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE FROM CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

S.KARTHICK

Student, Department of English, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, India,  
[yeskarthick17@gmail.com](mailto:yeskarthick17@gmail.com)



S.KARTHICK

### ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to trace and compare the commonly shared literary elements between Mahabharata and The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe from Chronicles of Narnia which can be done under the name of comparative literature, a roof under which any kind of comparison is possible. It enables one to get acquainted with the theme and the idea behind the plots of the works and how far both can be studied comparatively even if the authors, genres or even the time-period/age of which these works are produced differ sharply. As comparison could be made with any kind of element present in these works, it enhances one to compare without any restrictions which is one of the main aspect of Comparative Literature. Even minor elements can be compared but goal just does not end there. The true goal is arrived only when a person realizes the true aesthetics behind the comparison and comprehends the value of Literature with a special reference to comparative literature. In this paper, comparison is made with the sources of war elements and the characteristic features of the prominent characters. Comparison, in general might not possess a good value but in Literature, it receives a positive response. Hence, comparative literature has its own significance and deserves literary appreciation.

**Keywords:** Mahabharata, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, comparison, war elements, characteristic features.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Comparative Literature does not need to be embellished more as it has got its own renowned quality with which Literatures across different genre and culture are compared. Comparative Literature is classified into many kinds where all of its kinds gain much prominence. Few of its kinds include National Literature, World Literature etc. It is obvious that it provides no barrier to compare literary works of different Languages. Literary people around the world are proved to be beneficiaries as they could easily come to know the diverse practices that

prevail in the world if they acquaint themselves with the works from Comparative Literature.

“In every battle there comes a time when both sides consider themselves beaten, then he who continues the attack wins” says Ulysses S. Grant. Remembering these words, multitudes of similarities between the Great Indian Epic Mahabharata by Valmiki and The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe from The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis is discussed with respect to the tussles in the battle scenes and characters engrossed in both the works. The comparison has been made based on characters, geographical locations, symbols,

imageries, incidents and also on weapons through which the characters showcase their bravery. Even though the works do not belong to the same era it shares few common traits which are dealt in this article. These works do not even belong to same genre but can be viewed comparatively due to undeniable elements in these works which remains to be a harbinger and proves to stay evergreen in the minds of the readers.

**II.COMMONLY USED SYMBOLS**

In The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe Susan had an ivory horn which was given as a present to her by Father Christmas and it was mentioned that it would be highly helpful for her during the war. "And when you put this horn to your lips, and blow it ,then, wherever you are, I think help of some kind will come to you" says Father Christmas which shows that the horn was given to Susan to use it during the war.

Similarly few major characters in Mahabharata like Krishna, Bhishma and Dharma had conch which were blown up by them to indicate their army men that the war has been started for the day and if a conch blows it means that the soldiers must fight for their cause.

Fig.1&2 shows The picture of Krishna and Arjuna blowing conch from Mahabharata and the picture of Susan from The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe blowing horn



Fig.1

Fig.2

There were references of Reindeers on which the witch from The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe travelled and The White horses on which few soldiers of higher rank in Mahabharata travelled. From the narrative of Mahabharata one could understand that the chariot wheel of Karna had got trapped into the mud during the war. Similarly in The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe it was the sledge of the witch which got trapped into a muddy hole.

One could clearly observe that these both characters got their vehicles trapped into mud at the times of emergency and it is the same reason which led them to their defeat against their opponents as the process of making the vehicle fit to ride back was delayed. The dwarf's conversation with the Witch which goes like "We can't sledge in this thaw" in the chapter "Aslan is nearer" supports the statement that the sledge was unable to move by then.

Fig 3&4 shows the pictures of Karna's chariot wheel and sledge of the Witch:



Fig.3

Fig.4

**III. LOCATION AND TIME REFERENCE OF THE WAR**

Both these works have got very arduous battle scenes where the readers are clueless on which side the war was favorable till the end of the battle. However it is very clear that both these wars had been fought on land and during day time. Reference to Kurukshetra and Fords of Beruna buttresses this statement. One of the characters in Narnia named Aslan tells that "Our day's work is not yet over and if the witch is to be finally defeated before bed-time we must find the battle at once" and similarly in Mahabharata there was no point which states that war was fought after sunset. Thus it is clear that these wars had taken place only during the day time and this marks the first similarity between these two legendary works.

Fig 5&6 shows The atmosphere of war in both the literary works.



Fig.5

Fig.6

**IV.WEAPONS HANDLED AND CONDITIONS OF WAR**

In Mahabharata the bow of Arjuna was created by Brahma and it was passed on to many hands and finally Arjuna received his bow from

Varuna, The God of Rain as a present. Similarly in The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe Susan receives her bow and arrow from Father Christmas as a present. Next, in the chapter titled "What Happened about the Statues" Aslan talks about rules of the war in which he tells "And now! Those who can't keep up – that is children, dwarfs, and small animals – must ride on the backs of those who can – that is Lions, centaurs, Unicorns, Horses, Giants and Eagles" which can be compared with Bhishma's words regarding few rules which has to be followed by the warriors in the battlefield.

These words uttered before the commencement of war in which it is clear that the war which they opted must be fair so that no injustice was done to any warrior. There were also different kinds of musical instruments used by the characters of both the works. In the chapter titled "Peter's First Battle" it was mentioned that "There were Tree-Women and Well-Women who had string instruments, it was they who made the music." Making a perusal on it would enable one to compare it with Sanjaya's words of informing that the war has begun with the huge sound of all the musical instruments which includes "Conch and different varieties of drums like Mathala, Murasu, Kombu and Thaarai".

The common weapons used by the characters of Mahabharata and The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe include the bow and arrow and the sword which shows keenly that the characters had similar maneuver of using these weapons because of which it became their possession.

#### V.SIMILAR CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS

In The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe presence of a gigantic character called Giant Rumblebuffin had been introduced to the readers. Giant Rumblebuffin tells Aslan as follows: "Now! Where's that dratted little witch that was running about on the ground. Somewhere just by my feet it was." This conversation with Aslan shows how huge was his appearance. This particular character can be compared with a gigantic character in Mahabharata called Kadotkaja, Son of Bhima, one among the pandavas.

The appearance of Kadotkaja is acquainted when it had been told that he fell down on the

ground being shot by Karna which made many soldiers of Kaurava army lost their lives as they cannot bear the weight of Kadotkaja.

Fig 7 & 8 shows the Appearance of Giant Rumblebuffin and Kadotkaja.



Fig.7

Fig.8

As a next similarity one could consider in The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe the four Pevensie children were always called as Sons and Daughters of Adam and Eve. It can be supported by the statement "She comes of your father Adam's first wife, her they called Lilith". Thus the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve fought with the offspring of Father Adam's first wife. Similarly in Mahabharata Pandavas fought with their own cousin making ally with other kings of nearby kingdoms.

Dharma in Mahabharata was deeply interested in dice game and lost his most desirable kingdom whereas Edmund in The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe was interested in Kingdom earlier and lost the company of his brothers and sisters for a certain period of time. This can be made clear when one observes how the witch talks to Edmund. "I want a nice boy whom I could bring up as a prince and would be King of Narnia when I am gone."

Further reading tells that Edmund was completely under the spell of the witch because of which he desires for the kingdom. The way in which Arjuna criticizes Dharma for showing much eagerness in dice game and thereby losing the kingdom tells about the similarities in the characteristic features as far as Edmund and Dharma is concerned.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Even though there were disparities in number of the warriors fought in their respective battlefields of Kurukshetra and Beruna, it is not enigmatic and splendid war scenes had got many things to share in common between both literary

works. Most of the characters have their resemblance towards each other when they perform their deeds. When there is such similitude between two works, comparative Literature provides space for analyzing all such literary elements. It allows the readers to examine even the minute similarities between the works which are taken for comparison. One might get well equipped with the facts of different cultures and traditions which have its existence all over the world. Thus through this comparison one could experience how far an epic and a fantasy novel from children's Literature has similar qualities. These similarities might be viewed in different perspectives but the taste of Literature remains to be authentic!

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#### **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

**Mr.Karthick.S** has completed his B.A. English Literature (CA) at Dr.N.G.P Arts and Science College and currently doing his M.A English at PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, India. His research interests are in translation studies and in comparative study.