



## THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE RELATIONSHIP CONFUSION AND THE SOCIETAL CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IN A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM BY SHAKESPEARE AND ZAAATBY SONALLAH IBRAHIM

Ahmed Faiq Almedee

Department of English Language, College of Education, The Islamic University, Najaf, Iraq

**Cite This Article:** Ahmed Faiq Almedee, "The Comparison Between the Relationship Confusion and the Societal Concept of Marriage in a Midsummer Night's Dream by Shakespeare and Zaatby Sonallah Ibrahim",

International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Humanities, Volume 9, Issue 2, July - December, Page Number 117-120, 2024.

**Copy Right:** © DV Publication, 2024 (All Rights Reserved). This is an Open Access Article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium provided the original work is properly cited.

### Abstract:

The research study is majorly focused on the concept of marriage and relationship confusion in selected books. A Midsummer Night's Dream, written by William Shakespeare, and Zaat, which Ibrahim writes, are selected as specific writings in this research study. The first selected writing is a play by Shakespeare that is majorly focused on the concept of love. Along with that, a different perspective toward marriage is also evaluated in this play. There are several characters in this writing, and confusion about relationships among those characters can also be identified.

On the other hand, the concept of another selected book is focused on the life story of a woman. The book's storyline explores the condition of Egypt in society in the early 90s and the end of the 80s. Apart from that, the concept of political and business classes that have impacted the social structure can also be identified. The study has used secondary procedures and searched through Google scholar about both selected books and the concept of relationship confusion and marriage in these writings. The researcher uses the social action theory to understand the concept of the research study appropriately. After that, the theory has helped the researcher understand similarities in both selected books, which are also evaluated in the literature review part of this study.

**Key Words:** Marriage, Relationship Confusion, Writings, Social Concept, Perspective, Society, The Destination of Love

The particular research study sheds light on the concept of marriage and relationship confusion in selected novels. Two books are selected to analyse the authors' perspectives on marriage and relationship confusion in their times. Many novels and books help people in this generation learn about social structure and social conditions in past years. One of the selected books was published in 1600, and another one was published in 2001, and both of the books represent two different social structures. Hence selected books are A Midsummer Night's Dream which William Shakespeare wrote, and another one is Zaat which Sonallah Ibrahim wrote.

The book of Shakespeare explores the concept of love and the perspective of society towards relationships and love at that time. After that, the second selected book by Ibrahim explores a life story of a woman. The work has used different methods and techniques to collect information about both selected books. The researcher has also used a specific theory and applied that theory to both of the books to identify the similarities between the books. Also, comparing relationship confusion and the concept of marriage in the selected novels is another purpose of this research study. The objectives of this research study are,

- To define the concept of marriage and relationship confusion in A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare
- To understand the concept of marriage in Zaatby Sonallah Ibrahim
- To explore the comparison between the concept of marriage and relationship confusion in both the books
- To identify the similarities in both of the selected books

On the other hand, specific methods and materials used by the researcher in this research study are evaluated below, which makes it significant. The specific theory is also evaluated along with the analysis of the importance of the theory in this research study. Apart from that, the researcher has reviewed some previous writings focusing on the concept of marriage and relationship confusion in the selected books. Many authors have explored their perspectives on the story of A Midsummer Night's Dream and Zaat, which have helped the researcher to gain knowledge about both of the books.

The thesis statement shows the conditions of marriage among societies, especially the eastern and western ones that embody the relationship between confusion and the societal concept of marriage in Midsummer Night's Dream by Shakespeare and Zaat by Sonallah Ibrahim. Therefore, it has focused on these two books to identify their comparison and similarities.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of the well-known books written by William Shakespeare which is a romantic comedy. William Shakespeare was famous in the world because of his romantic comedies, and the mentioned book is one of them. The central theme in the book is love which is a constant subject of romantic comedies by Shakespeare. The writer has explored that people only tend to fall in love with a specific person who seems beautiful to them (Choi, 2021, p.460). Several characters are evaluated by the writer in the Play, such as Helena, Hermia, Titania, Oberon, Lysander, Hippolyta, Theseus, Demetrius, and others. The increasing confusion among four Athenian lovers is an exciting part of the play for the readers.

It is identified that Lysander and Hermia are in love with each other, but the father of Hermia is once Demetrius, her husband. On the other hand, Demetrius loves Helena, and Helena also loves him. It can be identified that someone is in love with a person, and that person is in love with another person, which makes this play confusing (Maslova, 2020, p.80). The writer has evaluated a different perspective on love through this comedy. Fights between people for their love are explored in this comedy play which has been one of the most significant plays of Shakespeare throughout these years. It is also evaluated that humans and Aries fight over their loved ones.

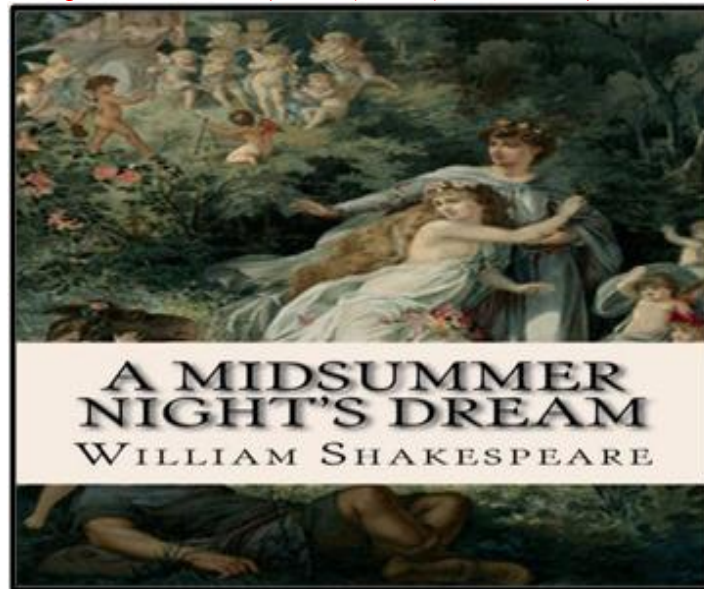


Figure 2.1: A Midsummer Night's Dream

(Source: Maslova, 2020, p.80)

The specific play is not only in the comedy genre but also in fantasy fiction. The writers have evaluated fairy characters and love for other characters in the Play. Lysander is one of the essential characters in the play. He is young and a gentleman. After that, according to the play's storyline, Lysander is in love with Hermia, and she is also in love with him (Kettley, 2020, p.3). All their love is from both sides, but Egeus, the father of Hermia, wants Demetrius to be her husband. Furthermore, it is also evaluated that Hermia and Lysander have decided to run away together and marry, but they have broken up. The writer has evaluated the theme of irrational love and human folly through the characters of Lysander and Hermia.

According to the play's storyline, the fairies have made both male characters fall in love with the same girl who has made more confusion in the Play. At the end of the story, the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta and Demetrius and Helena happens. Lysander and Hermia are also married, and it is shown that the fairies provide blessings to all the couples at the end of the play (Koliassa, 2019, p.151). The concept of relationship confusion in the selected book of William Shakespeare can be noticed. It can also identify the theme of this play where the writer has evaluated the theme as a comedy to the breeders.

Zaat is a book that is the story of a woman who lives in Egypt. The book was written by Sonallah Ibrahim and was initially published in 1992. Anthony Calderbank translated this book into English and published it in 2001 at the American University. This book ensures to gain knowledge about social structure in Egypt and the life of a woman in the city (Salem, 2020, p.20). Apart from that, the book is also helpful in gaining knowledge about the limitations that journalists at the time had to face. There are some alternating chapters of this book that explore the life of a middle-class woman in modern society.

Zaat is the female character who firstly works in a newspaper department. News Monitoring and assessment creation was the work of that woman. At the beginning of the book, it shows the limitations and restrictions for journalists in society at the time. The journalists have restricted the power of any news without the permission of the politician leaders (Ismat, 2019, p.100). After that, the ambitions and hopes of a woman are evaluated through the female character of the book. After that, it is evaluated that her ambitions become helpless after her marriage to Abdel Maguid. Her husband was not interested in completing his degrees, whereas Zaat was a journalist and working woman.



Figure 2.2: Zaat by Ibrahim

(Source: Ismat, 2019, p.100)

After her marriage, she knows about a different social structure in Egypt. Her husband only wanted her to stay at home and focus on "operating the incubator". In simple words, it can be said that all his husband wanted was a son from her. By evaluating the woman's life in Egypt, the writer has explored the condition of females in society at the time (Abdelgawad, 2020, p.6). Women were not respected as men at the time in the society of Egypt, and it was always wanted to have a son instead of a daughter. These analyses provided a different perspective on Egyptian society in the 19th century. After that, the main female character of this book was forced by her husband to produce a son, proving the condition of women in Egyptian society.

On the other hand, the storyline of this book is also about politicians and business classes. Society was divided into two classes where the politicians and people of business classes were the ruling classes. On the contrary, the other people who were the workers of those businesses were the lower classes (Salem, 2020, p.23). After that, marriage is one of the major themes of this book. According to the storyline of this writing, there was a specific social concept about marriage in Egyptian society at that time. Education was not necessary for women because staying at home and producing sons was the whole concept of marriage at the time.

The central theme and focus of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" are the concept of love. Shakespeare has rated the concept of love as an irrational blind beautiful force that can be forgiving and cruel sometimes. Along with the theme of love, the writer has a portrait of the theme of marriage and imagination in the Play with a specific message (Bordonaro, 2018, p.17). As analysed in the play by Shakespeare, love between couples should not be based on their appearance but should be based on their personality. The writer has pot rated marriage as festive happiness for the couples who love each other.

In Acts 4 and 5, the concept of marriage comes when the play's characters marry whom they love. According to the book's storyline, it becomes a spirit of festive happiness for those characters in couples. In simple words, it can be said that marriage is portrayed as the fulfilment of romantic love. Marriage becomes the destination of couples who love each other. To prove this point, the writer has evaluated the character of Lysander and Hermia (Maslova, 2020, p.81). Both of the mentioned characters are in love with each other in this play and want to marry each other, whereas their father of Hermia wants another guy to be her husband. As Hermia's father was not ready for the marriage of Lysander and Hermia therefore, they decided to run away and marry each other. It can be stated that the main focus or destination of the love of Lysander and Hermia is their marriage.

It can be identified that there are some problems in love between Lysander and Hermia because of her father. There are other problems in other relationships, such as Helena and Demetrius have also issued in their relationship, and they have broken up. Apart from that, the fairies have fallen in love with the same boy, creating issues in their love life (Bordonaro, 2018, p.17). Although at the end of the story, these three couples married each other, which was the formal resolution of their problems. Hence, marriage is one of the essential concepts in this play because it is the destination of the love of all the couples. Shakespeare evaluates a few themes in the Play, and among them, love is the most important one, and marriage is the second most crucial thing in this play.

The use of theory is essential in research studies because it helps the researcher to understand the research concept from a different perspective. The social action theory is selected for this research study as per the requirements of the research topic (Hays, 2018, p.370). After that, the selected theory focuses on assuming the actions that humans take according to social context and a theory that also explores the impacts of those actions on people. In simple words, it can be said that when a person takes action, and there is an intention behind that action, then that is called social action theory. According to the social action theory search, specific action contexts are settings, relationship systems, organisational systems, temperament, and biological conditions (Hays, 2018, p.370). On the other hand, the social interaction process, generative capabilities, motivational appraisal, and problem-solving are the parts of the social changing process.

Applying this theory to both selected books help the researcher understand relationship confusion in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Shakespeare has evaluated the relationship between different characters, which is quite confusing in this book, and the theory has helped the researchers understand the writer's perspective (Rogo, 2018, p.15). Apart from that, the social concept of marriage in the 19th and 20thcenturies is evaluated in Zaat. First, it remained like a feminist book, but the uses of the theory helped the researcher understand the writer's perspective about the concept of marriage. In addition to that, the researcher understood the actions taken by the characters in both the books and the significance of those actions through the use of the theory.

The research study examines the concept of relationship confusion and marriage in both of the selected novels. Although it is identified that Zaat is focused on the life story of a woman and Shakespeare has evaluated a specific perspective about marriage in the book, which is not clear in this literature review part, that remains a gap.

Different methods can be used in research studies while the researcher has chosen a specific method for this research article. Primary and secondary are the procedures that are generally used in research studies to gather data. Both of the procedures are used for specific purposes according to the needs of the research study. The primary procedure focuses on collecting some numerical and statistical data, whereas the secondary procedure focuses on collecting some non-numerical information. Although both procedures can provide correct information, the primary procedure can provide the researcher with some original and genuine data.

On the other hand, the secondary procedure helps to gain correct information quickly. As the research study is based on English literature, the researcher used the second procedure to collect this study's information. The use of secondary procedures helps the researcher gain more information about the selected books and the concepts at a low cost and lower time (Sakamoto et al. 2018, p.40). The secondary procedure refers to some resources such as books, journals, articles, and other published resources. There are some criteria that the researcher has maintained during the collection of secondary sources. All the collected articles, books, and journals were published after 2018, indicating that the collected information is current.

The researcher has also used specific techniques for analysing all the collected information. Some information is evaluated in the literature review part, and some information is evaluated in the qualitative technique. Qualitative technique refers to using non-numerical data, which are analysed in a non-statistical process (Sakamoto et al. 2018, p.40). Although the theory has

been defined previously, the researcher has also used a specific theory to understand the study. The information that is found by using secondary procedures is evaluated below.

The researcher has selected two specific pieces of literature in this research study which are “A Midsummer Night's Dream”, and the other one is Zaat. The first selected book is written by Shakespeare, which focuses on the concept of relationship confusion, and the central theme of this book is love (Maslova, 2020). Apart from that, the second selected book is written by Ibrahim, who focuses on the concept of marriage and the social structure of marriage. A comparison between these concepts in both of the books is evaluated in this portion.

In the first book, the writer has presented the concept of love from a different perspective and the relationship among the characters, which becomes confusing for the readers. This is an exciting story with a moral message about love. On the other hand, the second selected book is quite different from the first one, which emphasizes the ambitions and life in Egyptian society (Salem, 2020). The story tells us how a woman's life changes after marriage, impacting her ambitions and thoughts. The first book's story ends with the couple's marriage, whereas the second book's story starts with the marriage of the story's main character.

A comparison between the concepts of the selected books is presented above in the research study, although there are some similarities in both of the books evaluated in this portion. It is identified that both of the books provide some information about the social structure of marriage through similar stories. In the first related book, it can be noticed that Hermia loves a person but is forced to marry another one according to a father's choice. This perception of the first book's story explores that women at that time were not given a chance to choose their spouses; this was restricted.

On the other hand, the second book explores how a woman's life changed after her marriage and how her ambitions became invaluable. In Egyptian society, women are only for looking after a house and producing sons according to the social structure (Abdelgawad, 2020). Hence, both of the books provide some perspective on the social structure of marriage, which is the primary similarity.

It is identified that many writings help readers and students of this time gain knowledge about the society of the 19th century. The selected books efficiently provide information about the concept of love and marriage. A Midsummer Night's Dream is a romantic comedy that provides a different perception of love with a great message. The entire story of the play is focused on the love among the characters, which can funnily confuse the readers. The lovers have expressed and represented the concept of love, their meddling fairies and magical love that have been a forced love to oppose for selecting the love. However, this paper provides a detailed concept of both the book and particular writing for the book. This storyline helps to explore the various situations of the Egyptians in the late 80s and early 90s. The secondary data analysis method has helped identify the concept between relationship confusion and marriage. Therefore, the theory of social action has been justified in this writing to understand the research paper.

Hence, Shakespeare evaluates the concept of marriage differently in the book, which is analysed in the literature review part of the study. Apart from that, Zaat is another significant story that explores the condition of women in Egyptian society at that time. The restrictions for journalism and the impact of business classes on society are also evaluated in this study as analysed in the book. Thus, the specific concept of marriage in society is also explored in the study, which is defined in this research study. The usage of the theory helped the researcher understand the study's concept perfectly.

#### **References:**

1. Abdelgawad, D. N. (2020). Decolonising Subalternity through Effective History in Ishmael Reed's Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down and Sonallah Ibrahim's Zaat. *IJOHNMN (International Journal Online of Humanities)*, 6(1), 57. <https://doi.org/10.24113/ijohmn.v6i1.160>
2. Boram Choi.(2021).A Study of New Posthumanism in Contemporary Shakespeare Performances in Korea: Focusing on the Traditional Adaptations of A Midsummer Night's Dream. *Shakespeare Review*, 57(3), 437-462. <https://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeid=node10664239>
3. Bordonaro, M. (2018). *The Amazonian Queen: Marriage as a Weapon of the Patriarchy in A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Winthrop University.
4. Hays, K. (2018). Reconceptualizing church-based mental health promotion with African Americans: A social action theory approach. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 37(4), 351–372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2018.1502643>
5. Ismat, R. (2019). Son'allah Ibrahim, Fawwaz Haddad & Nawal el-Saadawi. In: *Artists, Writers and The Arab Spring*. Middle East Today. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02668-4\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02668-4_9)
6. Kettle, M. (2020). "All Imagination Compact:" The Ambiguous Relationship between Human Nature and Nonhuman Nature in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. <https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/77923/honors%20essay2020.docx?sequence=1>
7. Koliassa, O., & Zymomyra, M. (2019). The Most Important Motifs from the Play «A Midsummer Night's Dream» By W. Shakespeare. ББК 74.04 Я43 P 64, 151.
8. Maslova, S. (2020). Genre Peculiarities and the System of Characters in the Play a Midsummer Night's Dream by W. Shakespeare. *Polonia University Scientific Journal*, 38(1–2), 76–82. <https://doi.org/10.23856/3850>
9. Rogo, E. J. (2018). Synergy in social action: a dental hygiene theory. *American Dental Hygienists' Association*, 92(4), 6-17. <https://jdh.adha.org/content/jdenthyg/92/4/6.full.pdf>
10. Sakamoto, S., Putalun, W., Vimolmangkang, S., Phoolcharoen, W., Shoyama, Y., Tanaka, H., & Morimoto, S. (2018). Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay for the quantitative/qualitative analysis of plant secondary metabolites. *Journal of Natural Medicines*, 72(1), 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11418-017-1144-z>
11. Salem, S. (2020). Sonallah Ibrahim and Miriam Naoum's Zaat. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 16(1), 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-8016477>