# Personification of Nature in the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa

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***Abstract:*** *Personification is the way of representation through which one can assume a non living object or abstraction as a person. Generally this method of fiction is used in literature or art as an anthropomorphic metaphor. It is regarded as one of the vehicle of poetic expression. In Sanskrit literature, Kālidāsa is known for his fiction and imagination. He is regarded as the poet of Nature who depicts the natural objects as well as natural phenomena in his works in an extraordinary way. He is mastered in the projection of nature and thus nature becomes live in his words. In this context, the personification is regarded as a most important tool of Kālidāsa. So, in this present paper attempt has been made to highlight the depiction of nature and its personification in one of the greatest creations of Kālidāsa i.e. Meghadūta.*

***Key Words:*** *Personification, depiction, metaphor, Kālidāsa, Meghadūta*.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

In the Sanskrit literature, Kālidāsa is regarded as the greatest poet. From the tradition, we come to know that he was one of the *navaratna* i.e. nine gems of the court of king Vikramaditya of Ujjayini. There are two mahākāvyas, two khaṇḍakāvyas and three dramas are attributed to him. Among those the *Meghadūta* is precious one. The *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa is regarded as a *khaṇḍakāvya* and it occupies the popular position among the khaṇḍakāvyas of Sanskrit literature. The story of *Meghadūta* is not a bombastic or a deep one. In the *Meghadūta*, taking a simple love story as a plot, Kālidāsa decorates it with his imaginations and soothing descriptions. Here Kālidāsa describes the pathetic condition of a separated lover Yakṣa who was far away from his beloved wife. Actually, Yakṣa was banished by his master Kubera, due to the negligence in his duty. The uses of *Mandākrāntā* metre in verses of this work makes it more delicate and peaceful.

Kālidāsa is known for his expertness in describing nature and that is why he is called as a poet of nature. He possesses the excellency of expressing all through actions. That is why his works are universally appreciated. The depiction of *upamālaṅkāra* i.e. the figure of speech of comparison is his significance. He always portrays natural description and the human feeling in together. He is mastered in understanding human psychology also. Like the other works of Kālidāsa, in the *Meghadūta* also, he paints the natural objects as well as phenomena through his poetic descriptions and also personifies the natural things.

The technique of personification in literature has been continuing from the Vedic literature. In the *Viśvāmitra-nadī-saṁvāda-sūkta* (3.33) of Ṛgveda, we find the 'rivers' deliver 'their' dialogues like human beings. In classical Sanskrit literature, personification is regarded as a helping hand of the poets in describing the beautiful nature. In Sanskrit literature the *Samāsokti alaṁkāra* is used to establish personification. According to the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanāthakavirāja, *Samāsokti* is that kind of figure of speech where the behavior of a non living thing is superimposed on the basis of a similarity of actions or the gender of the word employed or on account of adjectives.[1] In the *Samāsokti alaṁkāra*, the behavior of the *aprastuta* is attributed to the *prastuta* from similarity of action. In the *Meghadūta*, Kālidāsa also ingeniously uses this *alaṁkāra* to establish personification.

## 2. Methodology:

This paper is basically based on the Primary sources as well as Secondary sources. In this present paper the text of *Meghadūta* is used for Primary datas. References are put as foot notes. The Name of the books and original Sanskrit words and quotations are italicized in main body. The quotations mentioned as endnotes are not italicized.

## 3. Discussion:

The perspective of Kālidāsa towards nature is quite different from the other human beings. He puts liveliness in everywhere. Natural objects and elements become breathable in his writings. In the *Meghadūta*, Kālidāsa mainly personifies a piece of cloud in different human characters. Apart from that, he also personifies certain elements of nature and giving them distinct human attributes. After applying human attributes on the non living things, Kālidāsa also tries to establish different relationships, basically prevailed in human society, between original and personified characters.

**The cloud as a 'Messenger':** In the *Meghadūta*, Kālidāsa personifies a piece of cloud as a messenger. Actually due to the curse of his master, Yakṣa, the hero of this work was far away from his wife and he was feeling lonely and missing his wife a lot. He was banished from his country and had to live in the mountain called Rāmagīri. He had to spend twelve months of isolation from his beloved wife. So, there was no one to carry his massage. So, Kālidāsa personifies a piece of cloud and appointed that piece of cloud as the messenger of the lover Yakṣa, who could send his massages to his wife through that piece of cloud.[2] Appointing the piece of cloud as a messenger, Yakṣa offered flowers to him to make friendship with the piece of cloud.[3]

It is impossible to believe that, a piece of cloud can carry a massage. But here the piece of cloud is personified and treated as a messenger who can carry a massage. Actually, because of the wind of monsoon, the cloud is moving forward from south to north of India. Rāmagīri is a mountain situated in southern India and Alakā is a city situated in northern India. That is why, Kālidāsa very cleverly chooses a piece of cloud for this particular personification.

**The cloud as a 'Brother':** In accomplishing own duty as a messenger, the cloud is portrayed as a younger brother of Yakṣa. Yakṣa said the piece of cloud that- when 'he' i.e. the cloud will reach the city of Yakṣa 'he' will see the faithful wife of Yakṣa, who will be called as sister-in-law of the cloud.[4] So, if the wife of Yakṣa would be the sister-in-law of the cloud, that means Yakṣa definitely tried to establish the relation of brotherhood with the piece of cloud. As a brother, the cloud must be reliable for Yakṣa and therefore, expressed his emotions in front of the cloud and gave him the duty of bringing his massages to his beloved wife.

**The cloud as 'Worshiper':** Kālidāsa is a great devotee of lord Śiva. It is known from the fact that, Kālidāsa eulogised lord Śiva in every benedictory verse of his works. In the *Meghadūta* also, though he does not eulogise lord Śiva in the benedictory verse, he does not skip to pray his lord in this work. Kālidāsa does the worship of lord Śiva by projecting the cloud as a worshiper of Lord Śiva. In the *Meghadūta*, Kālidāsa mentions the temple of Mahākāla in the description of Ujjayīni. When the piece of cloud reached the city of Ujjayīni, Yakṣa requested 'him' to stop and spend sometimes in the Mahākāla temple, where in the evening time, lord Śiva would be worshiped. So, Yakṣa said the cloud to obey the duty of a Drummer and said to make moderate sound with his deep thunder. Actually, Kālidāsa also presents his devotion to lord Śiva through the verse.

> *Apyanyasmiñjaladhara mahākālamāsādya kāle*
>
> *sthātavyaṁ te nayanaviṣayaṁ yāvadatyeti bhānuḥ/*
>
> *kurvansaṁdhyābalipaṭahatāṁ śūlinaḥ ślāghanīyā-*
>
> *māmandrāṇāṁ phalamavikalaṁ lapsyase garjitānām//*[5]

**River as 'Beloved':** In the journey of the cloud, 'he' would stay for sometimes, where his beloved rivers are flowing. The rivers were also become happy to see their lover i.e. the cloud. The logic behind the establishment of relation of lover between the cloud and the rivers is may be that rivers are filled with water when the cloud showers rain on them as *megha* i.e. cloud is the abode of water.[6] In the *Meghadūta*, it is said that, when the cloud would will enter the place called Vidiśā, the capital of Daśārṇa country and find the place where 'his' beloved lover river Vetrāvatī is flowing with 'her' undulating ripples, hearing the thunder of 'her' lover, she will see 'him' with the knitting of 'her' eyebrows.[7] Moreover, the rivers viz. Revā, Narmadā, Nirvindhyā Sarasvatī etc. are also personified as women as well as the beloved of the cloud.

**Mountain as 'Friend':** In the *Meghadūta*, the mountains are personified as the friend of cloud. In the journey of the cloud from Rāmagīri to Alakā, 'he' met so many mountains in his route and embraced them as an intimate friend. Moreover, at the time of their separation, the cloud cried with hot tears. Kālidāsa describes it with a beautiful verse as-

> *āpṛcchasva priyasakhamamuṁ tuṅgamāliṅgya śailaṁ*
>
> *bandyaiḥ puṁsāṁ raghupatidairaṅkitaṁ mekhalāsu/*
>
> *kāle kāle bhavati bhavato yasya saṁyogamesu*
>
> *snehavyaktiściravirahajaṁ muñcato vāṣpamuṣṇam//* [8]

Moreover, there are so many mountains viz. Vindhyā, Āmrakūṭa, Niccai etc. are depicted as the friend of cloud. In the *Meghadūta*, sometimes the cloud was appreciated by the mountains for the shower of rain on them as 'they' were burnt by the wildfire.

**Lighting as spouse:** In the *Meghadūta*, Yakṣa described the overall route from Rāmagīri to Alakā in front of the cloud. After describing the route, Yakṣa delivered his massage in front of the cloud and prayed that the cloud will not be suffered like him and not to separate even for a moment from lightning. Actually here lightning is personified as the wife of cloud. Here the verse of *Meghadūta* is quoted-

> etatkṛtvā priyamanucitaprārthanāvartino me
>
> sauhārdādvā bidhura iti vā mayyanukośabuddhyā/
>
> iṣṭāndeśāñjalada vicara prāvṛṣā saṁbhṛtaśrī-
>
> rmā bhūdevaṁ kṣaṇamapi ca te vidyutā viprayogaḥ//[9]

In the above mentioned verse, Kālidāsa does not mention lightning as the wife of cloud directly. But from the speech of Yakṣa i.e. "not to suffer like him", we can get the idea of the depiction of lightning as the spouse of the cloud.

## 4. CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion we can come to the conclusion that, the personification is a great tool for a poet to establish metaphor. Moreover, portraying various natural phenomena in a poetic way establishes the relation among the natural objects as well as its impact on human life. The *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa is the work of his matured hand. Here he paints very minutely the description of the natural things which attracts the readers' mnd very easily and gives a wonderful experience. It helps the readers' to attain the literature. Moreover, in the pen of Kālidāsa, various aspects of nature become alive, which increases the beauty of his work in a highest position.

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[2] ……saṁdeśaṁ me tadanu jalada śroṣyasi śrotrapeyam…/ *Meghadūta*,1.13

[3] pratyāsanne nabhasi dayitājīvitālambanārthīṁ
  Jīmūtena svakuśalamayīṁ hārayiṣyanpravṛttim/
  sa pratyagraiḥ kuṭajakusumaiḥ kalpitārghāya tasmai
  prītaḥ prītipramukhavacanaṁ svāgataṁ vyājahāra// *Meghadūta*, 1.4

[4] tāṁ cābaśyaṁ divasagaṇanātatparāmekapatnī-
  mavyāpannāmavihatargātardakṣasi bhrātṛjāyām/ *Meghadūta*, 1.10

[5] *Meghadūta*, 1. 37

[6] *Śabdakalpadruma*, p.776

[7] teṣāṁ dikṣu prathitavidiśālakṣaṇāṁ rājadhānīṁ
  gatvā sadyaḥ phalamavikalaṁ kāmukatvasya labdhā/
  tīropāntasnanitasubhagaṁ pāsyasi svādu yasmā-
  tsabhrubhaṅgaṁ mukhamiva payo vetravatyāścalormi// *Meghadūta*, 1.25

[8] *Meghadūta*, 1.12
[9] *Meghadūta*, 2.55

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