

Meghadutha: The Theme Blends Despair, Loneliness, Similes, Metaphors, and Vivid Nature Imagery Skillfully

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Abstract:

This paper aims to explore the issue of lovers' loneliness, despair, and disillusionment in the poem Meghaduta written by Kalidasa. He authored three plays, Abhijnanashakuntalam, Vikramorvashi, and Malavikagnimitram, as well as three poems, including one lyric poem (Meghadutam) and two epic poems, Raghuvamsha and Kumarasambhava. A system of common moral and ethical norms toward nature can be inferred from Kalidasa's works, which reflect the sociocultural structure of ancient India. In Kalidasa's poetry, nature is revered with a deep spiritual fervor. To him, Nature speaks of heavenly harmony, divine balance, and divine symphony.

In this poem, poet presented a variety of geographical information and makes extensive use of similes, metaphors in this poem. The poet uses mythological blend while praising the cloud, even though the prisoner recounts the poetry in a melancholy and disillusioned state. The poet finds solace in equating the cloud with the splendour of nature. He created the inner world by using the flowers and animals of nature. The poem explores Kubera's servant Yaksha's sincere and profound love for his cherished wife. The Hindu deity of wealth, Kubera, is said to reside at Alaka in the Himalayas. Puranas and Hindu philosophy serve as the primary sources of inspiration for his plays and Poems

For example:

Where Ramgiri's shadowy woods extended And those pure streams where SI'TA bathed, descend; Spoiled his glories, severed from his wife, A banished Yaksha passed his lonely life, Doomed by Cuv'era's anger to sustain, Twelve tedious months of solitude and Pain

The Idea states that Kalidasa used the separation of Lord Rama and Sita in epic Ramayana to illustrate the fate of Yaksha's separation from his wife. The opening line of the Meghaduta gives ode to the epic Ramayana, although Yaksha's role is reversed and his situation is portrayed as a melancholy, resembling Lord Rama's and his twelve-year exile to Yaksha's twelve-month (1 year) banishment.

Keywords: Loneliness, Despair, elephant, cloud message, lotus Plant in winter, Priyangu, Hibiscus.

Introduction

Meghaduta is a lyric Poem written by Kalidasa (4th -5th century B.C) considered to be one of the greatest Sanskrit Poets. Meghadutam is not just a romantic poem. It is a wonderful example of an incredible artist who has portrayed his amazing knowledge of nature, human behaviour, and the geography of India through words and Melancholy

The Meghaduta is the lament of an exiled Yaksha (a benevolent nature spirit) who is yearning for his beloved on a lonely mountain peak. When, at the beginning of a monsoon, a cloud perches on the peak, he asks it to deliver a message to his love in the Himalayan city of Alaka. And expresses the pure beauty of his Perceiving nature. The poem consists of a description of the landmarks, cities, and sights on the cloud's journey to Alaka.

It deals with intense love affair between husband and wife even after their separation. The poem presents their typical love affairs which cannot be restrained in any circumstance.

Enomouring in the beauty of his wife

Historical background

During the Gupta period (c. 320–647 C.E., named for the Gupta dynasty) there were tremendous advances in poetry, prose, and drama as well as important discoveries in mathematics and astronomy. This was the age of some of the most celebrated creatives in Indian history, including the fifth century writer Kālidāsa whose works would influence generations of writers. This was also the period in which the fifth century astronomer Aryabhata theorized that the earth rotated on its own axis and calculated the solar year at 365.3586805 days. In 1813, the poem was first translated into English by Horace Hayman Wilson. Since then, it has been translated several times into various languages.

A poem of 120 stanzas, it is one of Kalidasa's most famous works. The work is divided into two parts, Purva-megha and Uttara-megha. It recounts how a Yaksha, a subject of King Kubera (the god of wealth), after being exiled for a year to Central India for neglecting his duties, convinces a passing cloud to take a message to his wife at Alaka on Mount Kailāsa in the Himalayan mountains.

The poet has chosen "Megha," or cloud, as his poetic agent or love messenger. The topic of Kalidasa's "Meghaduta" is love, separation, sorrow, and union. It tells the story of a yaksha and his cherished wife's emotional bonding. The Poet skillfully used nature and its flora-fauna as literary devices like similes and metaphors, moreover imagination and fantasy played the crucial role to form a idealistic Poetry.

The Yaksha accomplishes this by describing the many beautiful sights as(metaphors and similes) the cloud will see on its northward course to the city of Alakā, where his wife awaits his return

Yaksha's emotional collapse is triggered by the poem's opening lines

***To These Drear Hills through circling days confined ,
In dull unvaried grief, the God ripened; And sorrow withering every youthful charm
Had slipped the Golden bracelet from his Arm,
When with A'sharha's gloom the air was hung,
And when one dark Cloud around the Mountain clung;
In form some Elephant , whose sportive range
Rampart , scare equal to it's might, engage***

In poet's fantasy, the Mountain encircled by the dark cloud appears dreary and gloomy during the month of Ashada, (As specified by the Hindu calendar, Ashada is the beginning month of the rainy season.) In the rainy season, the clouds form different shapes that people (observers on the ground) envision with various images, the cloud in this poem visible in the form of elephant and he senses and imagine that the elephant shaped cloud will protect and helps him to get rid of his obstacles and Hard times .

furthermore, in the poet's conscience the God was also been disappointed, Paradoxically, the poet depicts the melancholy state of the main character, whose golden bracelet is dropped off from his thin arm, According to Hindu mythology, Indra, the God of rain and thunder, pour rain every year of Ashada to blossom all the wilted nature, simultaneously by seeing the elephant shaped cloud the narrator hopes that his dreary days will be fade away

Alludes and Praise the cloud to carry his message with Nature objects as metaphors and similes by the Poet

Thus the cloud Passing through the sky will have as fellow travellers Flamingo's carrying the lotus fibre as food, while white chatakas will sing melodious songs and witness a wealth of flowers like Nipa, ketoka, kadamba, kakubha, and jasmine buds that will spread beauty and fragrance all over the scene

The poet tells the cloud that as you travel, the vibrant birds sing and the flowers spread their fragrance to welcome and greet you when you arrive in their region. They also express joy at seeing you in their regimes. After that, they give you a heartfelt "sayonara" and point out the way to your next destination. While carrying the message, later on, some birds and flowers joins and travel along with you moreover, birds like flamingos carry lotus fiber for food, white chatakas sing songs, and a plethora of flowers like nipa, ketoka, kadamba, kakubha, and jasmine buds fill the air with beauty and aroma

The poet uses the bird Chātaka as the metaphor of yearning, patience, resilience, and spiritual and he integrated the fate of this chataka bird's involvement in the mythological stories to his lament The Chātaka bird is mentioned in a number of Hindu texts and works of literature, where poets frequently use its symbolism to express more profound spiritual connotations. The singing of this bird, according to poets, is a hymn of devotion to the holy that reverberates across the heavens.

This bird waits for the divine to quench its thirst. There are stories of the Chātaka bird dying of thirst at the banks of a river because she is waiting for the sacred rains of the monsoon

(Reference of chataka in shanthi parva of Mahabharata in section CCCLX)

Eg: The spouse of the Naga chief said, 'Judging by his simplicity and candour I know that that Brahmana is not any deity who subsists on air. O thou of great wrath, I also know this, viz., that he reveres thee with all his heart. His heart is set upon the accomplishment of some object that depends upon thy aid. "As the bird called Chataka, which is fond of rain, waits in earnest expectation of a shower (for slaking its thirst)". In his poetry, the poet drags the Chātaka bird story of the Mahabharata, which was taken as a reference, into a comparison of nature

The crystal-clear waters of the river Ganga, snowy peaks of the mountain scented with the smell of musk deer, forest teeming with various animals such as the Yak and the Sarabha, resounding bamboo-trees, echoing caves, the white peaks of the Kailasa serving as the mirror of the gods' wives, the lake Manasa abounding in golden lotuses, and the enchanting scenic beauty of Alaka

Kalidasa has depicted the breathtaking Himalayan landscape at Alaka, where the holy Ganga River emerges from Kanakhala city. As the Ganga River flows across the Himalayan Mountains, he explains how the peaks appear pristine and act as mirrors for God's wives. In spite of his depressing mood, the poet praises the stunning Himalayan scenery in order to reminisce about his pleasant times.

Memories and imagination in Melancholy Compared with similes

Ought to be familiar with that woman, who is charming and quiet. Since I am far away and she is my second life (wife), I imagine that young woman is filled with intense longing when she is alone and not with her partner, Chakravaka. (Or whose mental suffering is severe) is transformed in look as their dark (painful from separation) days go by like a lotus plant crushed by winter.

The Protagonist of the Poem express” his wife’s mental suffering

In this verse, the narrator informs about his wife’s despair and loneliness because of being away from her mate so that he senses the severity of her mental suffering. As like..

She is breathtakingly beautiful but also in melancholy. It becomes clear that she was far away from her mate, whose heart is broken by her departure. Pain of Separation from his companion. Like the drooped lotus plant in winter, which would bloom with its beauty and fragrance, their cherished movements of love and affection of togetherness would have been destroyed as their precious days dragged on.

To the moonbeams of former love (Cold like ambrosia that entered through the windows) Covering her eye, like hibiscus Mutabilis in cloudy weather She withdraws wearily with tearful lids — ^Wakes not, sleeps not.

Narrator comments – Moonlight delights in the presence of a lover, but in his absence it excites powerful feelings.

When she was living with her soulmate, she would bow to the moon rays and enjoy the pleasant feeling of the moon beams passing through the window while she slept. However, when she is not with him, she covers her eyes like Hibiscus Mutabilis in cloudy weather and withdraws worn out with teary eyed lids’ ‘wakes not, sleep not

According to Indian belief, The water lily Hibiscus Mutabilis is said to always slumber at night and only awaken or open its blossoms when exposed to sunlight, Like a fairy without her sun—her husband—it is thus half-awake and half-asleep during the day on overcast days

“ In the stalk of the Priyangu, I see thy slender limbs, thy glance, in the eyes of the timid roe, the beauty of the moon in thy cheeks, in the fullness of the peacock’s train thy (luxuriant) hair, in the gentle ripple of the brook thy brow-play, fair one ; but thy parallel is surely nowhere combined (in any of these).

The poet contrasts the beauty of his cherished wife with every aspect of nature in this stanza. Her limbs with the branch of Priyangu In addition to being unusual and beautiful, and he Perceive the moon’s beauty in her glorious face. He visualise her decorative hair in the peacock’s feather, as well as he visualise her serene appearance in the brook’s ripple. And asserts that his wife is a combination of all these lovely aspects of nature.

Conclusion:

This incredible piece of poetry not only makes Kalidasa one of the most important poets (or artists) from India but also puts him amongst the literary giants of the world. Deriving its beauty from the amazing metaphors and depictions of natural beauty, Meghadutam is a story of a Yaksha (divine being) who has been cursed to live for a year in Ramagiri in the Vindhya Mountains of Central India. Longing for his wife, Yaksha feels lovesick and is getting restless to communicate his feelings to Alaka, his wife. So this poem

is his attempt to persuade the clouds (through the pattern we realize that it is monsoon clouds) to give the message to his wife, who lives in the Himalayas, that he will be back home soon.

The Yaksha tries to Influence the cloud by describing the beautiful passage that he will cover whilst reaching the Himalayas. The remarkable point to notice is that Kalidasa (being from either the fourth or fifth century AD) knew the pattern of the monsoon and the areas it covered. What makes it even more incredible is the fact that many of the descriptions are in the form of ‘Top view’ depicting the powerful imagination of the poet from the ancient era. The rivers and tributaries are compared to the braids of beautiful women; the floral becomes the scent of love; the hills form the female body parts; and the stories of Lord Siva are told in this spellbinding poem. In the end, we can sense the pain of the Yaksha, but the poem ends without getting any response from the Cloud.

Glossary:

Priyangu is a type of flower that has a lovely scent, attracts women (IAFA sahil Gupta), and has the ability to treat certain illnesses.

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