

The Use of Symbols and Imagery in Rabindranath Tagor's Selected Short Stories

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Abstract:

The present paper attempts to show in what way Rabindranath Tagore has employed variety of symbolic and mythical imagery and successfully illustrated his ideas through his short stories. Tagore uses symbolic language to present his adopted myths from the Indian culture, traditions and scriptures. The selected stories Sampatti Samarpan, Anadhikar Prabesh and Putrayajna demonstrate how symbolic language heightens the employability of myth in the literary narratives to convey writer's thoughts and ideas. The beliefs and traditions of Indian culture have also been explored in the stories while portraying the characters and actions. The paper argues that the most of the symbolic and mythical images used by Tagore in order to explore the themes (and characters) reflect Indian culture. These said images are heavily drawn from the religious books, Holy Scriptures, myths and local traditions.

Keywords: symbolic and mythical imagery, Indian culture, short stories, narratives, etc.

Introduction:

Imagery in general is employed in order to denote or connote the objects for its peculiar characteristics or qualities. The use of imagery improves the beauty and the suggestive meaning in the works of literature. It provides the picturesque quality and makes the work of literature vivid. Symbolism is the usage of symbols to indicate something else or something more than the literal meaning. A single symbol in the form of a word or an object or an event exhibits a lot of meanings. Symbolic and Mythical images have been part of literary narrative since the evolution, oral or written. Every writer has used different symbols to convey his/ her ideas and they employ different meanings to the symbols according to their context. Like the symbol of 'rose' is generally used to denote true love and beauty, however, W. B. Yeats has use the symbols of 'rose' to indicate Ireland and Maud Gonne in his early poems. In view of the above, W. H. Auden remarks:

A symbol is felt to be such before any possible meaning is consciously recognized, i.e. an object or event which is felt to be more important than the reason can consciously explain is symbolic; secondly, a symbolic correspondence is never one to one but always multiple and different persons perceive different meanings. (Auden: 1967: 164)

Indian author of English literature have employed symbolism in their literary narratives to explore their ideas and they have extracted most of those symbols from Indian culture and its heritage to make their works meaningful to the readers. Indian scriptures, mythology, folklore, fairy tales and landscapes provide variety of material to draw on. For example, the Laxman and