

THE ROLE OF SYMBOLISM AS A LITERARY CATEGORY IN TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

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Abstract. *In literal level of language, symbolism is one of the crucial categories in order to illustrate complicated meanings. With the help of symbols, writers provide artistic richness, polysemy, complex emotions, invisible truths and deep emotions in their works. Symbolism can change simple components into meaningful elements and it brings reflection and interpretation.*

*This writing focuses on symbolism as a literary category and examines its significant interpretive functions in literary works. The study depicts that how symbolism describes psychological states, abstract concepts, transmit cultural values and simplify major interpretations of literary works. This work also highlights literary works that describe a number of major representations of symbolism such as faith, survival in *Life of Pi* and hopes, unattainable American dream in *The Great Gatsby*.*

Key words: *Symbolism, interpretive functions, *Life of Pi*, *The Great Gatsby*.*

Introduction.

It is obvious that writers can not describe some feelings by their direct expression. At this time, symbolic literary devices is of paramount importance for conveying such kind of meanings in literature. Symbolism can change simple elements into expressive signs and it leads reflection and interpretation. A symbol is characterized as an image, object or event that depicts meanings beyond its literary context. It comes helpful to unite abstract concepts and exact meanings.

Symbolism not only transforms abstract thoughts but also overcome to represent semantic complexity. That's why, most writers utilize symbols in order to give literary colour to their writings. Literary scholars have frequently emphasized that symbols differ from ordinary signs because they are characterized by multiplicity rather than fixedness of meaning. Whereas a sign generally points to a single and predetermined referent, a symbol generates a network of possible interpretations. This interpretive openness explains why symbolic texts often remain relevant across different historical periods and cultural contexts. Readers from diverse backgrounds may derive different meanings from the same symbol while still remaining grounded in the textual framework established by the author. Thus, symbolism transforms reading into an active process of meaning construction rather than passive reception¹.

Analysis of symbols in *Life of Pi* and *The Great Gatsby* novels. *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel and *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald are one of the most famous works in which symbolism can describe the real thematic development of them. Despite their differences about cultural background, historical and literary style, both of them convey symbolic structure in terms of faith, identity, morality, the search for meaning and hope.

¹ Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press. - 1996. - P. 1–168.

With the help of symbolism, the authors enable to express emotional experiences, abstract ideas and philosophical questions in their works.

In *Life of Pi*, the author invites readers to question about human resilience, the construction of truth and an exploration of faith through symbolic representation. Yann Martel's "Life of Pi" serves as a poignant exploration of spiritual growth, seamlessly blending elements of Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam in Pi Patel's journey. Through adversity, surreal experiences, and conflicts, Pi's story becomes a testament to the transformative power of faith. This novel challenges conventional notions of religious exclusivity, encouraging readers to reflect on the universal quest for meaning and connection with the divine². Symbols such as Richard Parker, lifeboat, carnivorous island, religion and the alternative narratives, the author determines vital questions about identity, faith, the nature of truth and survival. Through these linked symbols, the novel possess not simple adventure story but conveys a philosophical exploration of the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring power of belief.

In *The Great Gatsby*, symbolism operates on multiple levels, including moral, social and economic realities of the American Jazz Age. In this novel symbols can illustrate social injustice, materialism and the decline of the American Dream. Green is closely associated with the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. It symbolizes Gatsby's deep love to Daisy and his American Dream. But as the green light is always feeble and far away, it also indicates the disillusionment of his dream³. *The Great Gatsby* is one of the best novels in the 20th century. Symbols in the novel play an important role in giving the reader an idea about the 1920s and make the reader understand how concrete things stand for abstract ideas. The novel succeeds to combine imagination and vitality in an analysis of the American culture via using important symbols. It is a remarkable novel because it emphasizes the glittering surface of America that fascinated people but came to be superficial expressions. Nick's first-person narration makes the narrative gorgeous. He adds radiant brilliant images to show the effects of Gatsby's destructive love that is so sentimental but leads to his tragic end. The contextual symbols used by Fitzgerald in this novel evoke the reader's imagination due to the fact that they carry different interpretations. They are an integral part of this literary work that make the reader go beyond this world and reach far horizons to discover their hidden meanings⁴.

Conclusion. To conclude, symbolism is considered one of the most compelling literary categories for describing sophisticated and the deeper meanings embedded within literary works.

Martel and Fitzgerald utilized symbolic elements in order to demonstrate the thematic and structural organization of their novels. All in all, symbolism enhances textual interpretation and functions as an crucial tool for illustrating the relationship between meaning, language and human experiences.

² Li, Yangyang. The Spiritual Odyssey of Pi Patel in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* . International Journal of Literature Studies . – 2024 .- No 4. P.48-52.

³ Zhang, H. Symbolic Meanings of Colors in *The Great Gatsby*. Semantic scholar. – 2015. – No 8.

⁴ Atika, Ismael. Symbolism in the *Great Gatsby*. An International Peer – reviewed Journal. – 2018. – No 45. P.42- 45.

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