

WWJMRD 2017; 3(4): 77-80
www.wwjmr.com
Impact Factor MJIF: 4.25
e-ISSN: 2454-6615

Gulistan Khan

M.Phil English Language and
Literature Department of
English Language and
Literature Chenab College of
Advance Studies, Mianwali,
Pakistan

Zafar Ullah khan

M.Phil English Language and
Literature Department of
English Language and
Literature Chenab College of
Advance Studies, Mianwali,
Pakistan

Symbolism in “The Fog” of “Dreams in the Desert”, by Lehr Niazi

Gulistan Khan, Zafar Ullah khan

Abstract

Symbolism is one of the important figures of speech. It is the way to describe the inner feelings by the poet. Every poet has deep insight in his society, so he uses his first-hand knowledge and experience through symbolism in his writings. The poet conveys his message to the readers by the help of symbolism. Symbols used in “The Fog” of “Dreams in the Desert”, by Lehr Niazi are personal as well as universal. These symbols can be of many types. Every writer selects his symbols, keeping in view of the main idea behind his writings. These symbols always create attraction and charm in the writings.

Through symbolism, it is very easy to convey the message to the reader. The use of symbols creates variety and beauty in the piece of literature. It is very easy to convey the hidden message to the reader within a few lines by the help of symbolism. Through the analysis of symbols used in “The Fog” of “Dreams in the Desert”, by Lehr Niazi, the researcher would try to highlight the real meanings and beauty of the poem, so that the reader can get easily the real message and enjoyment out of the symbols used in it.

Keywords: Symbolism, symbols, The Fog, Dreams in the Desert, Beauty, Message and Enjoyment

Introduction

This research is to analyze the use of symbols in “The Fog” of “Dreams in the Desert”. This poem is analyzed from the perspective of the message given by the help of symbolism in it. This research article observes the research questions, objectives, research methodologies and literature review in the field of symbolism. After the analysis of symbols used in the poem and main idea of the poem, findings are given. This poem is written in lyrical couplets. The words used in this poem are very simple and attractive. The use of symbols in this poem, gives it attraction and beauty.

The use of fresh symbols in the poem highlights the message as well as beauty of the poem. The poet’s real name is Gulistan Khan and pen-name is Lehr Niazi. He was born on 28th April 1977 in a village named “Mochh” in district Mianwali, Punjab (Pakistan). His first poetry book “Dreams in the Desert”, a collection of 24 poems, was published in 2015. The poet used common and personal images as well as simple words in it. The hidden message of all his poems is to give the importance to the human values and humanity. He himself wrote in the Preface of the book as “When someone is lost in the desert of the world, one wishes to be home. We are living in the global world where we have lost ourselves and ignore the human values. I hope we all give the value to the human values (07 March 2015)”.

Research Questions:

What are the effects of symbols used by the poet?

What is relation between symbols and message?

What are the symbols used in “The Fog”?

Objectives:

Literature is divided into prose and poetry. In poetry every poet tries to convey his message through figures of speech. Symbolism is one of them. Symbolism in “The Fog” had personal as well as universal touch.

The main target of the analytical study of symbols used in “The Fog” of “Dreams in the Desert” is to highlight the mentioned aspects of the poem. So that readers would get the benefits from the study of this poem.

Correspondence:

Gulistan Khan

M.Phil English Language and
Literature Department of
English Language and
Literature Chenab College of
Advance Studies, Mianwali,
Pakistan

Methodology:

This research article focuses on the use of symbols in “The Fog” of “Dreams in the Desert”. This research is qualitative, analytical and descriptive in nature. The researcher utilized the above mentioned approach to get the effective results through supporting published material for this study.

Literature Review:

Symbolism is one of the popular figures of speech, which gives a new touch to the common objects of everyday life. Every poet gets originality and freshness in his piece of writings through his use of symbols. In this way the poet decorates his piece of poetry with symbolic meanings. Every symbol adds its own novelty as well as quality to the poem and universality is achieved.

Ashbury, John (1927-) used symbol of journey to highlight the stages of life. Every poet creates beauty in his verses by using simple and common objects for his symbolism.

“It’s as though a visible chorus called up the different Stages of the journey, singing about them and being them:”

Australian Oxford Dictionary (1994) defines symbol as “A thing conventionally regarded as typifying, representing, or recalling something, especially an idea or quality”. It is the quality of best symbols to recall the idea or image which the poet plans to create in the minds of the readers.

Black, William (1757-1827) took the “sunflower” as a symbol for human being and the “sun” as a symbol of life in his poem, “Ah! Sun flower.” He selected common objects for his symbolism and created uniqueness in his poetry to convey the message.

“Ah sunflower! Weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun.
Seaking after that sweat golden clime,
Where the traveler’s journey is done.”

The Cambridge Guide to English Usage (2004) explains that “A symbol stands for something beyond itself.” “The symbols created by writers are different altogether. They are focal images which carry significance beyond themselves by being developed steadily through the language and substance of a literary work. Symbols often begin unobtrusively in a poem or the narrative of a novel, grounded in its physical world. But they reappear in successively different contexts and take on a complexity of values which help to give the original physical image its greater power.”

Frost, Robert (1874-1963) used beautiful symbols in his poem “The Road not Taken.” Every symbol adds meanings to the main idea. These symbols create a sense of freshness in a piece of poetry.

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both...”
In another poem “Fire and Ice” he highlighted two different sides of human-nature (passionate and rational) by using the symbols of “fire” and “ice”.
“Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice”.

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1998) defines symbol as “(of something) an image, object, etc that suggests or refers to something else.” Symbolism is the shortest way to convey the hidden meanings to the reader. Every poet selects common objects to create specific results in his poetry. Here the poet utilizes the suggestive quality of the words or phrases.

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (1989) explains symbolism as “Use of symbols to represent things, especially in art and literature.” when the poets use symbols in a specific way in literature, they enrich the common objects with particular meanings.

Oxford Essential Dictionary for Elementary and Pre-intermediate Learners of English (2012) defines the symbol as “a mark, sign or picture that has a special meaning: o is the symbol for oxygen. A dove is the symbol of peace”. Symbols can be of many types, but they all serve the same purpose. They create special meanings in the writing and add depth as well as interest to the writing.

The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (1999) explains that “The word symbol derives from the Greek verb *symballein*, ‘to throw together’, and its noun *symbolon*, ‘mark’, emblem’, ‘token’ or ‘sign’. It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or ‘stands for’ something else.” It further defines symbolism as, “A literary symbol combines an image with a concept (words themselves are a kind of symbol). It may be public or private, universal or local.” “As for as particular objects are concerned, this kind of symbolism is often private and personal. Another kind of symbolism is known as the ‘transcendental’. In this kind, concrete images are used as symbols to represent a general or universal ideal world of which the real world is a shadow”.

Rich, Adrienne (1929-) selected the tigers as symbol of freedom of spirit in “Aunt Jennifer’s tigers” as she wrote:
“Aunt Jennifer’s tigers prance across a screen,
Bright topaz denizens of a world of green.
They do not fear the men beneath the tree;

Shelley, P.B. (1792-1822) used symbols very beautifully in his poems. He, in a poem, “Time” used symbols of ‘deep sea’ for time and ‘waves’ for years.

“Unfathomable sea! whose waves are years,
Ocean of time, whose waters of deep woe
Brackish with the salt of human tears!
Thou shore less flood, which in thy ebb and flow.”

Stallworthy, Jon (1935-2014) used fruits (common objects) in a new sense in the poem, “In the Street of the Fruit stalls.” The piled fruits become symbols of weapons of war. It is the quality of symbols to add something new in the main idea.

“Wicks balance flame, a dark dew falls
In the street of the fruit stalls
Melon, guava, mandarin,
Pyramin-piled like cannon balls,
Glow red-hot, gold-hot, from within.”

The Sterling Dictionary of Literary Terms (1998) defines symbolism as “A set of related symbols to represent objects or ideas, by giving them an associated or symbolic character and meaning”. In poetry ideas are the main focus of every poet. It is very easy to convey ideas through related symbols.

Teasdale, Sara Trevor (1884-1933) highlighted the theme of her poem, “Wild Asters”, by selecting the symbols from the nature. In this poem words “spring” and “daisies” symbolize the “youth”, and further “brown” and “barren” are used as symbols of transition from “youth to old age”. “Bitter autumn” is the symbol of death here.

“In the spring I asked the daisies
If his words were true,
And the clever, clear-eyed daisies
Always knew.
Now the fields’ one brown and barren
Bitter autumn blows,
And of all the stupid asters
Not one knows.”

Webster’s New World College Dictionary (1997) explains symbol as “An object used to represent something abstract; emblem.” Whenever the poet tries to express his emotions or feelings through his poetry, he selects some objects to represent them in words. Then these objects become symbols for those specific emotions. These symbols signify an idea in a work of literature.

Data Analysis:

The poet utilized very common objects for his symbolism in his poetry and created new sense in them. By the use of these symbols he created the attraction and beauty in this poem. He very successfully made his symbols to suggest layers of meanings to add depth and interest to the writing. As in first line, ‘fog’ symbolizes harsh conditions created by the capitalists for the poor labors. In the same line ‘big cat’ symbolizes capitalists, who depend upon the poor labor but never try to facilitate them anyway. In the second line ‘winter-rat’ symbolizes poor labor, which lives on the piece of bread left by the rich.

“Fog, like the big cat,
Always chasing winter-rat.”

The poet satirized the capitalist in these lines. In the third and fourth line, ‘winter’ and ‘cold’ symbolize the hardships in life. These are the hurdles on the way of poor labors. In these lines ‘sun’ and ‘sunlight’ symbolize the main source of comfort for everyone especially for the poor. But it is also in the grip of fog.

“In the winter sun is old,
No sunlight, just cold.”

In the following lines ‘snow’ symbolizes the capitalist who tries to capture the easy source of food for the poor. ‘Trees’ and ‘branches’ symbolize the common source of food and shelter for the poor. The capitalist always tries to get the more benefits out of the available sources and does not care for the poor and needy people.

“With snow, trees are lowered,
All branches are covered.

The symbol of ‘sparrows’ is used for the people who have limited sources. They are deprived people who can’t enjoy life by their own.

“Under the leaves are lying,

Sparrows are not flying.”

In the second last stanza of the poem, the poet focused on the whole society which is starved to death because of the greediness of the capitalists. ‘Yellow and red’ colors’ are the symbols of death and destruction. ‘Dead leaves’ symbolized the starved society. Such conditions were recently seen in Baluchistan (Pakistan) where “Wad eras” keep under control all the sources and ignore the poverty of their people, so majority of the people starve to death.

“With cold, yellow and red,
Leaves are everywhere dead.”

The last stanza of the poem showed the helplessness of the poor, who needs rescue but nobody comes to help in such crisis hour. ‘Sound of bleat’ symbolized the cry for help and helplessness.

“No one is out in the street,
There is only sound of bleat.”

Through symbolism the whole poem got freshness and attraction. Symbolism used in “The Fog” had personal as well as universal touch. The relation between symbols and message was very close. Every symbol added variety of meanings to the theme of the poem. In this way the poet very successfully conveyed his message to the readers.

Message of the poem

The message of the poem is that this world is full of difficulties, but those who have the upper hand (sources), they must help the needy and poor, especially the labors who live hand to mouth. Always give the value to your subordinates and never ignore their basic needs.

Delimitations of the Study

The researcher tried to highlight the symbolism used in “The Fog” of “Dreams in the Desert” and the message given in it. This research included the analysis of only one poem selected from “Dreams in the Desert”.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests the stylistic analysis of this poem for new researchers.

Conclusion

“The Fog” is very symbolic poem. The symbols used here, were common but the poet gave them a universal touch. The poet achieved all his objectives through these fresh symbols. He created beauty and attraction in his poetry and highlighted moral and aesthetic aspects of the poem very easily. In this poem, he very successfully gave the very important message to the world. “Giving the priority to the basic needs of the poor, especially the labor community”, was the central theme of this poem. The poem was simple but had a unique charm. Aesthetic sense was beautifully served by the use of symbolism in this poem. All the symbols were quite appropriate to the every aspect of this poem. He very successfully connected the main idea of the poem to the symbols and created unique charm in it. He developed the thought with the help of suitable symbols. He gave these symbols personal as well as universal touch.

Appendix

“The Fog”

Fog, like the big cat,
Always chasing winter-rat.

In the winter sun is old,
No sunlight, just cold.
With snow, trees are lowered,
All branches are covered.
Under the leaves are lying,
Sparrows are not flying.
With cold, yellow and red,
Leaves are everywhere dead.
No one is out in the street,
There is only sound of bleat.

References

1. Ashbury, John (1927-) 'Melodic Trains'. Lines no. 44-45.
2. 'Australian Oxford Dictionary' (1994) p.no.658. ISBN: 0195507932.edit.Bruce Moore
3. Blake, William (1757-1827), "Ah! Sunflower", (Song of experience 1794) no.29
4. 'The Cambridge Guide to English Usage' (2004) Cambridge University Press U.K. ISBN: 052162181XHardback.p.527.
5. Frost, Robert (1874-1963), 'The Road not Taken'. Line no.1-5 and "Fire and Ice" L. no. 1-2
6. 'Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary' (1998) 5th edition. Editor Crowther, Jonathan. p.1211.
7. 'Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English' (1989) low priced 4th edition. Editor Hornby A.S. ISBN: 0194311678. p.1304
8. 'Oxford Essential Dictionary for Elementary and Pre-intermediate Learners of English' (Govt. of the Punjab Education Department 2012) ISBN: 9780194711364.p.410
9. 'The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory' (1999). Edition 4th Cuddon, J.A. (revised by C.E.Preston)
10. Rich, Adrienne, (1929-) 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers'. Lines no. 1-3.
11. Shelley, P.B. (1792-1822) "Time". L. 1-4.
12. Stallworthy, Jon (1935-2014) 'In the street of the Fruitstalls' line no.1-5
13. 'The Sterling Dictionary of Literary Terms' (1998) 'SIT-Reference series. Published by Sterling Publishers private limited, India. Editor: Sharma, Amrita. ISBN: 8173590699
14. Teasdale, Sara Trevor (1884-1933) 'Wild Asters'.
15. 'Webster's New World College Dictionary' (1997 Ed.3rd. completely updated) Editor in chief: Victoria Neufeldt. p.1356.