

Study of Symbolism in Franz Kafka's *The Castle*

1. Saddam ul Islam 2. Rakhshanda Sartaj 3. Abdul shakoor 4. Marina Khan

1. Lecturer, Department of English & Applied Linguistics, University of LakkiMarwat, Pakistan
(Saddamulislam999@gmail.com)

2. Lecturer, Department of English, Hazara University, Mansehra, ,
Pakistan Rakhshi.syed@gmail.com

3. Assistant Professor, Department of English, Hazara university, mansehra,
Pakistan adshakoor@hu.edu.pk

4. Lecturer, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Pakistan.

Abstract

The main goal of this research is to analyse and investigate the symbols used by Kafka in *The Castle*. The roots of symbolism could be found in poetry but later on it expand its prospects to almost every genre of literature. Although it originated in late-nineteenth-century in France and Belgium, but it was later recognised by the rest of the world as a revolt against realism. In this study, literary symbolism is applied to Kafka's *The Castle* in order to comprehend the symbols utilised to overcome reading difficulties. This independent study is dealing with different symbols used in the short story as a research gap. There are various types of symbols that are used for various purposes. Persons, places, things, or ideas are sometimes employed as symbols to communicate meaning beyond exact translation. Kafka uses words and places as symbols in *The Castle* to communicate a message to the readers.

Keywords: *Symbolism, The Castle, Kafka, Realism, Revolt*

Introduction

The use of an object, activity, or event to represent something other than and beyond itself is known as symbolism. Symbols are frequently used throughout the work to offer a richer depth of significance beyond the more basic aspects of a story. But we also employ symbols in everyday life, such as red hearts to represent love or white doves to represent peace. In this study, several symbols are used to convey the true meaning of the text rather than the literal meaning.

Charles Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé, two influential figures in French symbolism theory and practise, developed Edgar Allan Poe's central claim about the poetic principle, that poetry is the summoning of illimitable states through the distinct image or symbol, into a strategy for purging poetry of non-poetic. Villiers de Lisle Adam, a dramatist, and J. K. Huysmans, a novelist, were among the Symbolists, a group of artists who aimed to cleanse their work of any extraneous aspects. For example, symbolist poets such as Verlaine and Rimbaud rejected both the flimsy rhetoric of argument and discussion and the dense notation of description and narration, all of which had concealed the fundamental character of poetry, in favour of the stark purity of a symbolic lyricism. The poetry of the Symbolists had to be succinct, expressive, and mysterious. Arthur Symons, a friend of Verlaine's, introduced symbolism to the English-speaking world (1865-1945). Symons (1899) argues that symbolism is the fundamental component of language and writing in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. The aspects indicated in the research questions collected from the short tale were found by the researcher by using the method of textual analysis to extract the data. When an educated prediction is established regarding some of the most likely readings of that text (McKee, 2001).

1.1. This type of analysis is extremely useful in qualitative research. To support this claim, a text does not have a single proper interpretation; rather, a text may have multiple viable readings.

1.2. Research Objectives

- 1- To highlight different literary symbols used in Kafka's *The Castle*.
- 2- To explore the reasons behind the different symbols used in Kafka's *The Castle*.

1.3. Research Questions

- 1- What are the different symbols used in Kafka's *The Castle*?
- 2- How can these symbols be interpreted in terms of literary symbolism?

Literature Review

IbnArabi is credited with developing the Wahdat al-Wujud concept, which claims that all living things blend with the essence of God. IbnArabi frequently employs poems with natural symbols to explain his beliefs and concepts about Sufism. In this study, the question "What symbols are in IbnArabi's poetry?" is raised. What do these glyphs mean? Is there a link between the environmental imagery he employs in his poems and the concept of wahdat al-wujud? To address those three subjects, the author adopts a qualitative methodology and performs library research using a mix of primary and secondary sources. The symbols, particularly bayan, are analysed using Arabic rhetorical science. The sun, moon, star, earth, and sky were among the symbols utilised by IbnArabi, according to the study. The sun represents God as the creator of the creation, the moon represents God's tajalli in His beings, the sky represents God's loftiest qualities, the earth represents humanity's base nature, and the stars that connect the sky and earth reflect the spirit that God has bestowed on humans. As a result, natural symbols alone reject the notion of wahdat al-wujud as it has been proposed by scholars thus far (Arabi, 2017).

This article examines the significance of the sun in Kanafani's writings, particularly *Men in the Sun* (original writing and publications is in Arabic under the title *Rijal fi al-Shams*). The sun, according to the essay, is a natural emblem that depicts the difficult circumstances that Palestinian refugees face. As a result, it is used as a political allegory to symbolise Palestinian exiles' "hellish" condition. Kanafani's post-colonial resistance literature serves the protest message in this way by utilising the sun motif figuratively. It is part of a larger endeavour to confront a bleak world of misery, loneliness, despair, and helplessness with raw, harsh realism.

In contrast to the hope, light, and regeneration that are commonly depicted in literary and mythical pictures, Kanafani's writings directly express suffering, estrangement, and sorrow. In Kanafani's fantasy world, the sun symbolises death and loss rather than brightness and birth. When read as a whole, Kanafani's literature has a mythological air to it. At the individual piece level, the sun accentuates the ideological, political, and historical importance of such pieces, emphasising its realistic weight. The sun shines out as a strong symbol in *Men in the Sun* in contrast to the abstract imagery, providing the reader with a more direct, immediate, and intimate experience of the harsh reality of exile and suffering. As a result, rather than the typical optimistic sign for kanafani, it is now utilised to paint realistic depictions of Palestinian reality (Kanafani, 2017).

This paper investigates Johannine symbolism in the context of Jesus' relationship with the Father. The study demonstrates how fundamental the Son-Father (SFR) relationship is to the network of christological symbols in John's Gospel after demonstrating that the Gospel narrative symbolically presents Jesus as the Son of God who is relatedly inseparable from his Father. This book demonstrates the imaginative and symbolic introduction of the SFR in the prologue by employing a new narrative framework (Johannine, 2014).

RK Narayan's works' language has been investigated and analysed in terms of symbols and their impact on readers' brains. In his basic yet highly impressive writing style, Narayan used symbols to explain intricacies. His style's technique elicits emotions in his work. Furthermore, the use of symbolism is critical, allowing Narayan to not only narrate but also call the reader's attention to the story. Symbolism is thoroughly researched in Narayan's great works, and it was chosen as a subject for this study. The novels *The Bachelor of Arts*, *The English Teacher*, *Swami and Friends*, *The Dark Room*, *The Vendor of Sweets*, *The Financial Expert*, *Mr. Sampath*, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, and *The Guide* are among his significant works. Narayan's style was described as a blend of simplicity, irony, symbolism, and imagery. In his works, he used symbolism to reflect irony on corrupt society and people's foibles and shortcomings. He unobtrusively exposed the flaws, with no desire to correct them. He not only entertains his readers, but he also informs them about the status of the difficulties. Its symbolism is pure mockery of corrupt society. Narayan, who was not particularly fashionable, wrote English spontaneously, simply, and pleasantly, with vivacity and simplicity. He has imbued his words with transitory poetic qualities. Furthermore, he used symbolism to express nature, abstract objects, and people, such as man's vulnerability, malgudi, fasting, women, villains, characters, and temples. According to this, Narayan improvised symbolism in his work and so remarked on bigger social themes without being cynical. Thus, his novels are earning international acclaim for his view of the country's symbol-based exacerbation of problems in society and culture (Narayan, 2019).

The history of one of Europe's most important symbols is being studied in order to better comprehend the relationship between Plato's theories and symbolism. Plato employs symbols frequently to illustrate his understanding of the essence of life. Although Plato's ideal technique, dialectic, does not use symbols, the philosopher frequently employs symbolism when direct knowledge is not possible. Plato provides the best explanation of how symbols work in cognition. Thoughts, by definition, are symbolic. When insight understands a concept, it conveys it through the written word, which is an image of mind, because language itself is symbolic. As a result, Tapvota is inferior to V6o'nas, who advance through understanding initial principles directly, in that they arrive at knowledge through supersymbols. Plato says of tapvota's mathematical technique and the mathematicians who "dream of being," "the things they shape and sketch... These items are viewed by them as their true objectives rather than only as images. Imagine the realities that can only be perceived mentally" (Notopoulos, 1944). The term "symbol" has been employed with many meanings and objectives in semantics, religion, and the arts. It is defined in literary criticism as "any unit of a literary work that can be isolated for critical consideration." Words have a mystical element to them, a fragrant force to them, and when utilised as symbols, they reveal what lies underneath the surface meaning. A literary symbol is defined as "a parallelism for something unsaid, embodying and representing a complex of feelings and thoughts." Symbols give insight into the unspeakable in human thought and magnify desired emotions by making them great. They are the consequence of a psychic development process, not rational cognition, according to CG Jung. Sigmund Freud referred to symbols as "unconscious notions." Symbols communicate by including a sign or customary association and, in certain ways, unite author and reader. Anita Desai employs nature, atmosphere, memory, and action linkages in a recurring pattern to extract a sequence of symbols and images that form a web of interconnected meanings (Ram & Bande, 1984).

Analysis and Discussion

The Castle is a short story by Franz Kafka that contains numerous symbols. As a result, we might claim that this short story is an allegory as well.

In this short narrative, the narrator is in the third person and describes various events and activities of characters. This short narrative centres around protagonist K, who has been summoned to the village as a land surveyor by the Castle's higher authority. However, he later discovered that no one had called him to complete this work, resulting in a bureaucratic tangle in the system. The Castle controls the entire hamlet, and no one has the freedom to live their lives free of instructions.

To begin with, the title of this short story, The Castle, is a symbol. This is an unapproachable, frightening, and imposing symbol of power.

"The Castle hill was hidden, veiled in mist and darkness, nor was there even a glimmer of light to show that a castle was there".(P-1)

This is one of the first sentences, and it clearly reveals the state of the community and the castle. Mist and gloom here represent the castle's conditions, as there is no apparent authoritative system in this community.

"The village belongs to the Castle, and whoever lives here or passes the night here does so in a manner of speaking in the Castle itself."(P-3)

These sentences refer to the village people's restraints, such as the fact that they have no right to do anything on their own and cannot even allow someone to stay in the village without the permission of authorities.

"None of your guttersnipe manners" .(P-17)

This is the discourse of one of the under-sons, castellan's who was exceedingly harsh to the lower-class folks. These lower-class individuals, he believes, do not deserve to exist in this world.

"There is no difference between the peasantry and the Castle." (P-19)

This is the teacher's conversation with K during which they discussed the village's and the authorities' situation. This discussion implies that both the villagers and the authorities are incompetent. They both serve no purpose.

"At every turn K. expected the road to double back to the Castle."(P-30)

In this fable, the Castle represents those in positions of authority who are unworthy of their positions. They are inaccessible to the average member of society. This line plainly shows that attempting to reach them will result in failure.

"You are a difficult problem."(P-35)

Higher authorities assigned the protagonist K. two aides, Jeremiah and Arthur, to assist him, but they both did nothing but increase his workload.

"You're as like as two snakes."(P-36)

This statement also refers to K.'s two aides, who were assigned by authorities. They appeared to be there to assist him, but they were actually spies for the authorities, informing them of every action taken by K.

“The Castle, whose contours were already beginning to dissolve, lay still as ever, K. had never seen the slightest sign of life up there, perhaps it wasn't possible to distinguish anything from this distance”(P-40)

These lines mean that when we look at something from the far, it seems beautiful and interesting unless and until we notice them. So is the case with K, he is very curious about knowing the life and people of the Castle.

“The tower above him here—the only one visible—the tower of a house, as was now evident, perhaps of the main building, was uniformly round, part of it graciously mantled with ivy, pierced by small windows that glittered in the sun—with a somewhat maniacal glitter—and topped by what looked like an attic, with battlements that were irregular, broken, fumbling, as if designed by the trembling or careless hand of a child, clearly outlined against the blue. It was as if a melancholy-mad tenant who ought to have been kept locked in the topmost chamber of his house had burst through the roof and lifted himself up to the gaze of the world”(P-66)

The tower in this incredible line begins reasonably innocently, even promisingly, with "ivy" that "graciously mantled" the "uniformly circular" tower; yet, at the end of the section, we are confronted with a structure built haphazardly and unable to conceal the madman inside any longer. The sacred is no longer contained inside set limits; it has escaped with disastrous consequences. The parallel to a bygone period depicts a fallen world, but in a current, alienated form—a world in which the sacred's awful force has been liberated from the mediaeval cosmos's benevolent conduits.

“It's because I'm by myself,” Jeremiah explains. “When I'm by myself, then all my youthful spirits are gone” (P-74)

Jeremiah and Arthur appear to mimic one another when they are together. The remarkable ageing of Jeremiah, on the other hand, cannot be explained just by this. Jeremiah's realisation in this scene that he is a serious contender for Frieda's affection is the true catalyst for his transformation. Jeremiah's significance is suddenly revealed at this point, and he delivers his own story of what transpired. In contrast to how K. regarded the assistants to be tormenting him, Jeremiah believes K. is the one who unjustly and cruelly persecutes Arthur and Jeremiah, almost murdering them. Jeremiah is older and more helpless because he portrays himself as a victim.

“You're not even capable of seeing Klamm as he really is; that's not merely an exaggeration, for I myself am not capable of it either” (P-80)

Despite Klamm's awesomeness, the landlady is accurate. Any objective perception is impossible because rivalry and desire drastically alter his image. Although he was familiar with Klamm's appearance in the village, Barnabas initially failed to recognize Klamm when he was pointed out to him at the castle. For a long time after that, he struggled to accept that it was Klamm.

“That was the morning that decided our fate. I say 'decided,' but every minute of the previous afternoon was just as decisive” (P-90)

To understand Amalia's rejection, we must examine the previous afternoon's celebration of the Fire Brigade's new fire engine. On this particular day, she is the centre of her family's attention. Olga was first envious of the nice new clothes her mother had given her. On the wedding day, Olga overcomes her envious disposition, recognises Amalia's incomparable beauty, and even presents her with a one-of-a-kind garnet necklace.

Conclusion

The Castle by Franz Kafka has a lot of theories and works to be considered but among them, symbolism is widely used. These symbols are employed to teach readers about the true sense and meaning of the text that the author wants them to get. Because symbolism was a reaction to realism, individuals preferred to acquire literary taste in order to obtain the same knowledge through the use of something different. Kafka has used these symbols in his works. He started with using the very title as symbol in order to get attention of the readers. Hence in the light of the above discussion, it is concluded that Kafka has used elements of symbolism in his work *The Castle*.

References

- Parel, A. (1969). The political symbolism of the cow in India. *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 7(3), 179-203.
- Carley, K. M., & Kaufer, D. S. (1993). Semantic connectivity: An approach for analyzing symbols in semantic networks. *Communication Theory*, 3(3), 183-213.

- Walzer, M. (1967). On the role of symbolism in political thought. *Political Science Quarterly*, 82(2), 191-204.
- Svensson, C. (1987). The construction of poetic meaning: A developmental study of symbolic and non-symbolic strategies in the interpretation of contemporary poetry. *Poetics*, 16(6), 471-503.
- Ismail, W. N. W., Arabi, F., Husini, E. M., Zolkifly, F. N. S., Darus, Z. M., Jaafar, N. H. A., & Manaf, A. A. (2017). The establishment of Islamic dwelling principles for the Malaysian communities. *Advanced Science Letters*, 23(7), 6289-6293.
- Cazamian, L. (1936). Symbolism and Poetry. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 5(4), 520-543.
- Webster, P. D. (1951). A Critical Examination of Franz Kafka's "The Castle". *American Imago*, 8(1), 35-60.
- Kafka, F., & Muir, W. (1992). *The castle* (No. 127). Everyman's Library.