

Locating Archetypal Patterns in Rabindranath Tagore's Short Stories

Ms . Ruchi Gor

Research Scholar

BKNMU Junagadh

ABSTRACT

Literature grows out of the primitive verbal culture which contains a mythology and it can grow out from any mythology. Every verbal culture has some stories which are called myths, and they provide, a network of shared allusions and experiences. The structural principles of painting and music can be studied only with reference to their internal analogies. Similarly the structural principles of literature 'are closely related to archetypal and anagogic studies which in turn are mythology and comparative religion.

Key Words : Indianism , Myths , Cultural Archetypes

Rabindranath Tagore, the renowned Indian poet, philosopher, and polymath, was not primarily known for his short stories, but he did indeed write many short stories throughout his literary career. Tagore's short stories are characterized by their lyrical prose, deep philosophical insights, and exploration of human emotions and relationships. One of Tagore's most famous collections of short stories is titled "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings), for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. While "Gitanjali" is more well-known for its poetic verses, Tagore's short stories also reflect his poetic sensibilities.

Archetypes are universal symbols, themes, or characters that are present in the mythology, literature, and art of diverse cultures throughout history. They represent fundamental human experiences and evoke deep emotional responses in readers. When it comes to short stories, authors often use archetypes to create meaningful and relatable narratives.

Tagore's short stories often revolve around the lives of common people in rural Bengal, exploring themes such as love, family, tradition, and societal norms. His storytelling is marked by a deep understanding of human nature and a profound empathy for his characters. Some of his notable short story collections include "Kabuliwala," "Muktadhara," and "Galpaguchchha" (The Home and the World). In his short stories, Tagore delves into the complexities of human relationships and often challenges societal norms and prejudices. His narratives are rich in symbolism and allegory, making them timeless and universally relevant. While Tagore is primarily celebrated as a poet, his contributions to the genre of short stories are also highly regarded, and his works continue to be studied and appreciated by readers and scholars around the world.

"Kabuliwala" - This story revolves around the friendship between a young girl named Mini and a Kabuliwala (a trader from Kabul) who sells dry fruits in Kolkata. The story delves into the emotional bond between the two characters. "The Postmaster" - This story tells the tale of a young postmaster who is sent to a remote village to work. The narrative explores his loneliness and his relationship with a young girl named Ratan. "The Home and the World" - While this is technically a novella, it is often considered a part of Tagore's short story collection. It explores the intricacies of love, nationalism, and the conflict between tradition and modernity. "Punishment" - This story portrays the inner turmoil of a woman named Chandara, who is torn between her duty as a wife and her love for another man. The story delves into the

complexities of human emotions and societal expectations."The Hungry Stones" - This supernatural short story revolves around a man who becomes obsessed with the tales of a Mughal prince and his harem, leading to unexpected consequences."The Conclusion" - This story explores the theme of fate and destiny. It revolves around a man named Annapurna's husband, who becomes obsessed with finding the meaning of his life and fate."The Renunciation" - This story deals with the conflict between materialism and spirituality. It follows the journey of a man named Chandranath, who renounces his wealth and possessions in search of spiritual fulfillment.

These are just a few examples of Rabindranath Tagore's short stories. His works continue to be celebrated for their profound insights into the human psyche and societal norms. Indian short stories, like stories from any other culture, often reflect archetypal patterns that are universal and deeply rooted in human experience. Archetypes are recurring symbols, themes, or motifs found in literature, mythology, and folklore across different cultures and time periods. They represent fundamental human experiences and evoke strong emotional responses.

Rabindranath Tagore is known for his deeply insightful and thought-provoking short stories that often delve into archetypal patterns and universal themes. His works, including his short stories, are rich in symbolism and explore the complexities of human nature, relationships, and society. Here are a few archetypal patterns commonly found in Tagore's short stories:

The Seeker: Many of Tagore's protagonists are seekers on a spiritual or philosophical quest. They often question societal norms, the meaning of life, and their own purpose. These characters embody the archetype of the seeker, representing the human desire for knowledge and self-discovery.

The Lover: Love, in its various forms, is a central theme in Tagore's stories. The lover archetype represents the deep emotional connections and romantic relationships explored in his narratives. Tagore's lovers often face societal barriers and personal dilemmas, highlighting the complexities of human relationships.

The Sage/Mentor: Tagore frequently includes wise and knowledgeable characters who guide the protagonists, imparting valuable life lessons and moral wisdom. These

sage figures serve as mentors, helping the main characters navigate their journeys and providing philosophical insights.

The Rebel: Tagore's stories often feature characters who challenge established norms and rebel against societal injustices. These rebels embody the archetype of defiance, symbolizing the human spirit's resilience and determination to fight against oppression and injustice.

The Innocent: Innocent characters, often children, are prevalent in Tagore's stories. They symbolize purity, honesty, and the untainted nature of the human soul. Through these characters, Tagore explores themes of innocence lost, the impact of society on individuals, and the loss of childhood ideals.

The Trickster: Tagore occasionally incorporates trickster figures, characters known for their cunning and cleverness. The trickster archetype represents the dual nature of human behavior, showcasing both positive and negative traits. These characters challenge societal norms through their unconventional methods.

The Sacrificer: Sacrifice is a recurring theme in Tagore's stories. Characters who embody the sacrificial archetype willingly give up their desires or well-being for the greater good, highlighting themes of selflessness, duty, and the moral dilemmas associated with making personal sacrifices. Tagore's ability to skillfully weave these archetypal patterns into his short stories adds depth and universality to his narratives. Readers can relate to these timeless themes, making his works resonate across cultures and generations.

Archetypal patterns play a significant role in short stories, as they provide universal symbols and themes that resonate with readers on a deep, psychological level. Here are several reasons why archetypal patterns are important in short stories:

Universal Appeal: Archetypes are symbols or themes that are found across different cultures and time periods. Incorporating archetypal patterns in short stories ensures that the narrative has a universal appeal, making it relatable to a wide range of readers.

Emotional Resonance: Archetypes tap into fundamental human experiences and emotions. By utilizing these patterns, short stories can evoke powerful emotional responses from readers. For example, the archetype of the hero's journey often involves challenges and personal growth, which many readers can relate to and find inspiring.

Character Development: Archetypal characters, such as the hero, mentor, or trickster, provide a foundation upon which authors can build complex and multidimensional characters. Readers are familiar with these archetypes and their associated traits, which allows for efficient character development within the constraints of a short story.

Symbolism and Allegory: Archetypes often carry symbolic meanings. By incorporating these symbols into short stories, authors can create layers of meaning and depth. Readers may interpret these symbols in various ways, adding richness to the narrative and encouraging deeper analysis.

Cultural Significance: Archetypes are deeply rooted in cultural myths, legends, and traditions. Incorporating these patterns can provide insights into cultural beliefs and values, allowing readers to explore different perspectives and worldviews through the medium of short stories.

Structural Framework: Archetypal patterns often follow specific structures, such as the hero's journey or the quest. These structures provide a framework for organizing the plot and pacing of the short story. Writers can use these patterns to create engaging narratives that captivate readers from beginning to end.

Exploration of Human Nature: Archetypes explore fundamental aspects of human nature, such as the struggle between good and evil, the quest for identity, or the journey toward self-discovery. Short stories that incorporate these patterns can delve into profound philosophical and existential themes, prompting readers to reflect on their own lives and experiences.

Cognitive Engagement: Archetypal patterns stimulate readers' cognitive processes by inviting them to recognize familiar themes and symbols. This engagement can enhance the overall reading experience, encouraging readers to actively participate in the interpretation of the story. In summary, archetypal patterns in short stories provide a timeless and cross-cultural framework that enhances the depth, emotional impact, and cultural significance of the narrative.

By drawing on these universal themes and symbols, writers can create compelling and resonant stories that continue to captivate readers across generations and cultures.

In many of Tagore's stories, there are characters who embody wisdom and serve as guides or mentors to the protagonist. They provide valuable advice and help the protagonist navigate challenges and dilemmas. Tagore often depicted characters who rebel against societal norms and conventions. These characters challenge the established order and question traditions, reflecting the archetype of the rebel. Tagore's stories sometimes feature innocent and pure-hearted characters, often children, who symbolize purity, goodness, and hope. They are untouched by the complexities of the adult world and represent the innocence archetype. Tagore's ability to capture these archetypal patterns in his works contributes to their timeless appeal and universal relevance. His exploration of these themes continues to resonate with readers and scholars worldwide, making his writings a rich source for the study of archetypal patterns in literature and human experience.

Tagore's plays try to restore to us a humanity 'which values the primitive oneness in human nature, Northrop Frye's archetypal approach seeks to establish the Universality of man's imagination. The approach has rendered the deepest meanings to the plays, meanings which extend beyond the single play to what the whole tradition it belongs to. By studying the similar mythos, ethos and dianoia of the four plays the secret meanings of the four plays are discovered and decoded.

References

Selected Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore , Maple Classics

Tagore, Rabindranath. *Chitra*. 1914. Madras: Macmillan, 1985.

The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, (3 volume set), ed. Sisir, Kumar Das, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2002

Sadhana The Realisation of Life. Macmillan: London, 1946.

Tagore, Rabindranath . *Glimpses of Bengal*, Calcutta: Macmillan, 1960

----- My Boyhood Days, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2005