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MOTIF AND ITS TYPES IN LITERATURE

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Abstract: In literature, motifs are recurring elements, images, symbols, or ideas that contribute to the overall theme or message of a work. They add depth and meaning to the text by creating patterns and connections. This article discusses the types of motifs that develop the plot of a literary work and their other functions throughout the work.

Keywords: motif, motive, plot, recurring images, symbolism, structural framework, character development, reinforcing themes.

Introduction

Every researcher who intends to analyze any literary work, first of all, need to know the parts that create the whole. In this sense, it is difficult to understand the essence of works without knowing the motifs forming the basis of the plot.

Motifs are repeating images, words, or thoughts that take on a metaphorical or symbolic significance throughout the text. Motifs are used to bind readers into the plot and assist them comprehend some of the key themes in a work. In "Russian-Uzbek explanatory dictionary of literary terms" motif is explained as one of the rings in the composition of plot.

Moreover, in literature, the term "motive" often used to describe recurring elements within a text, but "motif" and "motive" have distinct meanings and functions. A motive refers to the underlying reason or driving force behind a character's actions, thoughts, or emotions. It delves into the psychological and emotional aspects of a character, shedding light on their intentions and desires.

On the other hand, a motif serves as a unifying element that adds depth and complexity to the text. Motifs can be objects, colors, events, or even abstract concepts that reappear consistently, often carrying symbolic or thematic significance. They contribute to the overall meaning of the work, enhancing its coherence and resonance. motifs are not tied exclusively to character psychology but encompass broader patterns and symbols that contribute to the overall narrative structure.

Main part

Specialist scholars have different opinions about the plot and motif of the works of art. However, most scientists rely on the opinions of the Russian scientist A. N. Veselovsky as a basis. This scientist emphasizes that motif is the main link that creates a plot, and says, "Motifs unite and create a plot loop." He analyzes motifs as the smallest integral part of the plot.

V. Propp and B. Putilov develop the views of A. N. Veselovsky and pay attention to the fact that the motifs are always changing, that they are a small part of the plot and that it itself is made up of pieces and parts. "The motif is the core of the plot," says B. Putilov. According to H. Porter Abbott, motif is "a discrete thing, image, or phrase that is repeated in a narrative... ."

Literary criticism has established a synthesis of motif-understanding methods in recent years. The writings of Y. Shcheglov, A. Zholkovsky, and R. Jacobson had a significant influence on this movement. A motif is no longer thought to be a component of a narrative or storyline.

Here are some common types of motifs found in literature:

Symbolic Motifs: These motifs involve the use of symbols that represent abstract ideas or concepts. For example, a recurring symbol of a dove might represent peace or innocence, while a symbol of a rose might represent love or beauty. These symbols often carry deeper meaning and contribute to the thematic development of the work.

Motifs of Nature: Nature motifs involve the use of elements from the natural world to convey certain ideas or emotions. For instance, the motif of a storm might represent turmoil or conflict, while the motif of a sunrise might symbolize new beginnings or hope. Nature motifs can evoke specific moods and reflect the inner states of characters.

Motifs of Light and Darkness: This motif explores the contrast between light and darkness, often symbolizing good and evil, truth and ignorance, or knowledge and ignorance. The use of light and darkness motifs can create a sense of duality and highlight moral or philosophical themes within a work. The character, Shakespeare's Juliet can be example to the motif of light.

Motifs of Journeys and Quests: Journeys and quests are common motifs that involve physical or metaphorical journeys undertaken by characters. These motifs represent personal growth, self-discovery, and the pursuit of a goal or truth. They often involve challenges, obstacles, and transformation along the way. We can observe this type of motif in "Travels with Charley: In search of America" by John Steinbeck.

Motifs of Death and Rebirth: This motif explores the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. It can symbolize the passage of time, the inevitability of change, or the transformative power of new beginnings. The motif of death and rebirth often serves as a metaphor for personal growth, spiritual awakening, or societal renewal. For example, "Beloved" by Toni Morrison explores the haunting legacy of slavery and the motif of death and rebirth. Or "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" by Leo Tolstoy. Through Ivan's illness and eventual death, Tolstoy examines the emptiness and superficiality of his life, leading to a spiritual awakening and a transformative understanding of the true meaning of life.

Motifs of Dreams and Illusions: Dreams and illusions motifs involve the exploration of the boundary between reality and fantasy. They can represent the inner desires, fears, or subconscious thoughts of characters. These motifs often raise questions about the nature of truth, perception, and the human experience.

Motifs of Time: Time motifs explore the concept of time and its passage. They can symbolize mortality, the fleeting nature of human existence, or the cyclical nature of life. Time motifs often contribute to a deeper understanding of the work's themes and characters' experiences. "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell, is a classic example of the motif of time in literature. "Mrs. Dalloway" by Virginia Woolf explores the theme of time through the experiences of its characters.

Motifs of Water: Water motifs often symbolize purification, rebirth, or emotional depth. They can represent the ebb and flow of life, the subconscious mind, or the transformative power of nature. Water motifs can evoke a sense of tranquility, but they can also signify danger or uncertainty.

Motifs of Masks and Deception: Masks and deception motifs revolve around the theme of hidden identities, secrets, or deception. They can represent the disparity between appearance and reality, the complexity of human nature, or the ways in which individuals hide their true selves. These motifs often explore themes of authenticity, trust, and the consequences of deceit. Here are a few examples: "Hamlet" by William Shakespeare: This tragedy features the motif of masks and deception throughout the play. Characters like Hamlet and Claudius wear metaphorical masks, concealing their true intentions and manipulating others. "The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde: In this novel, the motif of masks and deception is explored through Dorian's hidden sins and the dichotomy between his outward appearance and inner corruption.

Motifs of War and Conflict: War and conflict motifs explore the impact of violence, warfare, or social unrest on individual characters or societies. They can symbolize the struggle between opposing forces, the destruction of innocence, or the consequences of power dynamics. War and conflict motifs often delve into themes of morality, justice, and the human capacity for violence.

These motifs, along with the previously mentioned ones, are commonly utilized in literature to convey deeper meanings, emphasize themes, and create connections within the text. It's worth noting that motifs can vary in their significance and interpretation depending on the context of the specific work and the reader's own understanding and perspectives.

Moreover, motifs serve several important functions in literary works. Here are the key functions of motifs:

Reinforcing Themes: Motifs help reinforce and emphasize the central themes of a literary work. They provide recurring images, symbols, or ideas that contribute to the overall message or meaning of the story. By repeating motifs throughout the narrative, authors create patterns that deepen the thematic exploration and enhance the reader's understanding of the work.

Enhancing Symbolism: Motifs often function as symbolic elements in literature. They carry deeper meaning and represent abstract concepts or ideas. By using motifs, authors can imbue their work with layers of symbolism, allowing for richer interpretations and adding depth to the story. Motifs can evoke emotional responses and create connections between different elements of the narrative.

Building Coherence: Motifs help create coherence and unity within a literary work. By recurring throughout the story, motifs provide a sense of structure and continuity. They establish a pattern that ties different parts of the narrative together, creating a cohesive and interconnected whole. Motifs contribute to the overall aesthetic and artistic vision of the work.

Character Development: Motifs can contribute to the development of characters. By associating certain motifs with specific characters, authors can provide insights into their personalities, desires, or internal conflicts. Motifs can serve as a reflection of a character's journey, growth, or transformation, adding depth and complexity to their portrayal. Abbott notes that a motif can reveal something about a work's characters, setting, or theses and themes. For instance, in "David Copperfield" the repeated phrase "Barkis is willin'" signifies Barkis's devotion to Clara Peggotty.

Providing Structural Framework: Motifs can serve as a structural framework for a literary work. They can be used to divide the story into distinct sections or to mark transitions between different narrative elements. Motifs can help guide the reader through the story's progression and provide a sense of pacing and rhythm.

Engaging the Reader: Motifs can captivate readers and engage them on an intellectual and emotional level. By creating patterns and connections, motifs invite readers to actively participate in the interpretation and analysis of the work. They encourage readers to look for meaning beyond the surface level and to explore the deeper layers of the narrative.

Conclusion

Motifs in literature are powerful tools that contribute to the richness, complexity, and depth of a literary work. Unlike motives, motifs are not tied exclusively to character psychology but encompass broader patterns and symbols that contribute to the overall narrative structure. It can be noted several common types of motifs in literature such as Motifs of Nature, Motifs of Light and Darkness, Motifs of Journeys and Quests, Motifs of Death and Rebirth, Motifs of Dreams and Illusions, Motifs of Time, Motifs of

Water, Motifs of Masks and Deception, Motifs of War and Conflict. They help convey meaning, enhance symbolism and coherence of the text, develop characters and engage readers on an intellectual and emotional level. Literary works can use motifs as a structural foundation. They can be employed to indicate the changes between various narrative parts or to split the story into discrete portions. Motifs may provide the reader a feeling of rhythm and flow as well as help them navigate the story's evolution.

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