

“The Golden Boat” by Tagore Short Summary

Introduction

“The Golden Boat” by famous Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore is the title poem of the collection with the same title. It was written in the 90th years of 19th century. This poem is almost unique in the Tagore’s poetry because the absence of clear subject or idea. However “The Golden Boat” perfectly fits to the literature peculiarities of the poetry of Romanticism. The thesis of this literary analysis is the following: the poem “The Golden boat” was written by Tagore as the imitation of English Romantic poetry.

A piece of biography

“The Golden Boat” was written in the most fruitful period of Tagore’s life. After finishing the school and the further education in England young Tagore returned to India and started working in family business. In 1891 he was sent to East Bengal and it was the first experience of village life for city-bred young man. According his biographers, his duties on the family indigo factory were light, there was no company of friends for him and young poet had a lot of spare time to practice in verse making. Thus he began to sing of village romance and nature beauty.

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“Trees on the far bank; smear shadows like ink
On a village painted on deep morning grey.”

“The Golden boat”

The poem “The Golden boat” is one of the best in early poetry of Tagore, and it gave a name to the whole collection. It is the perfect example of Romantic lyrics: the thoughts and feelings of the author combined with the description of beautiful nature.

“Clouds rumbling in the sky; teeming rain.
I sit on the river bank, sad and alone.”

The specific feature of Tagore’s early poetry was, with terms of his biographer Radhakrishnan, the absence of the poems which could be described the really obscure, though some of his poems weren’t completely clear in meaning and allowed different interpretation. “The Golden Boat” is the exclusion. The vogue images, scrappy thoughts and indistinct sorrow fill the poem leaving no place for any distinct idea and making it similar to the poetry of English Romanticists, which was familiar to Tagore.

“Across the rain-sky clouds heave to and fro,
On the bare river-bank, I remain alone –
What had has gone...”

The image of golden boat and a woman in it, which passes by and can't take the author on the board, is also typical for romantic poetry. However the interpretation of this image in the poem of Tagore can be different. And vary from the sorrow for love, which wasn't found yet, to the thoughts about the meaning of life in the traditions of national poetry. Some researchers consider the image of golden boat, which takes off the all the “paddy”, as the symbol of human life in the flow of time. However, the idea about the Golden Boat as the attempt to describe in the style of Romantic poetry the author's melancholy at the beginning of the autumn seems to be reasonable.

Conclusion

The melancholic mood in the poem “The Golden Boat” has many in common with the lyrics of English poetry of Romanticism. The reasons of using the romantic style were the influence of English education, the melancholy mood of young city-bred man in the village, and a lot of spare time to practice in verse-making.

References

- Rabindranath Tagore A Centenary, Volumes 1861-1961. By Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, others. 1992.