

Symbolic stories: Traditional narratives of the family drama in English literature



This book explains the underlying structure of many narratives from ancient to modern times. After a short theoretical introduction, there follows chapters on fairy tales, medieval romance, Shakespeare, Mansfield park and Great expectations, with reference to many other stories. The underlying structures of many narratives are shown to be based on the struggle towards maturity of the young hero or heroine who represents us all. Modern naturalism, however, often distorts the reception of these stories which are then dismissed as absurd, escapist or trivial. This work aims to clarify the intentions and methods of these stories, thus enabling them to be further understood and enjoyed.

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