

Symbolism of the 'Whirlpool' and the 'Lamp': A Psychoanalytic Reading

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ABSTRACT

This study critically analyses the symbolic implication of the 'lamp' and the 'whirlpool' in the novel *Lamps in the Whirlpool* by Rajam Krishnan, through a psychoanalytic framework. Girija, the protagonist, is engulfed in psychological suppression, emotional conflict, and patriarchal control. Here the whirlpool is used as a strong metaphor that represents all these struggles. Girija is caught within rigid domestic expectations and orthodox rituals while her emotional, psychological, and inner needs get subdued under layers of silence and suppressed desire. The lamp, in contrast, stands as a symbol of resilience, consciousness and awakening. Despite all the oppression, the precarious yet enduring light of self-awareness survives beyond all odds. Based on the Freudian concept of repression, and the Jungian ideas

of individuation, this paper interprets the whirlpool to be an unconscious space in which all unexpressed thoughts, yearnings, and frustrations are amassed. The narrative brings to light the psychological journey of Girija, which reveals a gradual transition from internalized submission to emerging self-recognition, highlighting that the light of self-hood continues to linger even in the midst of the chaotic whirlpool.

Keywords: Lamps, Whirlpool, Psychoanalytical, Suppression, Self-awareness, Identity.
