

Self Promotion

DISCUSSION FROM LAST MEETING

Your Challenge for the this meeting was to:

Work on your elevator pitch AND your artist statement with regards to your own writing.

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Symbolism

YOU ARE A WRITER

What is a symbol?

Symbolism is a kind of shorthand – not just in literature but in the world around us. All road signs, for example, are symbolic, e.g. a **RED STOP** sign

The signs that motorists give to each other are symbolic, too...

- If a driver waves at you, they are thanking you for your consideration – for letting them pull out in front of you, perhaps.
- If you failed to let them pull out in front of you, you are liable to receive a different kind of hand gesture altogether.
- Symbolism, then, is a kind of shorthand – not just in literature but in the world around us. Symbolism in literature, however, tends to be less obvious and more open to interpretation.

Discussion: Why use symbolism in your writing?

- Symbolism can be used through reference to something visual (*Stop sign, a red rose*), or any word or thought that has meaning connected to it:
 - (*say quack on page 4*)
 - (*the voice of the turtle*).
- Many authors use symbolism to **foreshadow events** in the story or to capture the important elements of the story.
- It is also good for the readers because symbolism gives them the idea about what the **theme** is all about without the author directly telling it in the story.
- Sometimes a symbolic reference gives a **deeper level of meaning** that is more significant to those who have knowledge of the symbol (*a meadow where the voice of the turtle sings harmony with the silent wings of the hawk*).
- Symbols add **emotional resonance** to a story, which can create a lasting impression on a reader. Think of Shakespeare, the guilt-ridden Lady Macbeth is tortured by a spot of blood on her hands that will not wash clean after she kills King Duncan.

- Symbols can **express character attributes**. Harry Potter's lightning bolt-shaped scar symbolizes the attempt on his life by Lord Voldemort and the love that saved him
- In literature, symbolism is used to **produce an impact**, which it accomplishes by attaching additional meaning to an action, object, or name.
- Symbolism will make your narrative all the more **vivid and meaningful**, without overrunning it with cosmetic detail. It allows a writer to convey abstract concepts far more concisely, and perhaps far more powerfully, than a literal approach would allow them to do.

Is it important for a reader to understand the significance of the symbol?

No. Your story or poem should hold up in its own right. Understand a symbol that you've inserted into your writing simply provides an opportunity for the reader to enter into the story to a deeper level.

- The more serious-minded readers will pick the novel apart with zeal, and quite likely find things in it that you, the writer, were not even aware that it contained.
- The "amateur" readers may absorb the symbolic and thematic meaning without particularly being aware of it. The novel will enrich them in some small or large way, as all good novels do, though not at the expense of their enjoyment.
- Some of the symbolism may be apparent to only those who know the culture in which the symbolism exists.

Discussion: examples of symbolism in literature that make sense to you.

- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
- facial expressions = reading inner thoughts
- black knight on a black horse vs. white knight on white horse

Your Challenge for the next meeting:

Write a story or poem about anything that uses symbols. (**One potential scenario:** a man, or woman, is driving home from an event. It's an emotional drive because she's just found out that a significant old girlfriend/boyfriend whom she hasn't seen for 30 or 40 years has passed away, unexpectedly, two years ago, and she's only now found out.)Come to the meeting prepared to talk about the symbolism you chose to use in case people didn't pick up on them.

Ideas on where or how to use symbols:

- Colours, numbers, objects, and names can all be literary symbols.
- Repetition of your symbol make it stand out (the ghost **always** appears at night),
- A dramatic shift in the tone or plot is a good place to insert symbols to help make it memorable,

You're free to create your own symbolic ideas but some Commonly Used Literary Symbols are:

70 Common Literary Symbols

and what they represent

Kibin

Animals

Bee: *hardworking, citizenship*
Bird (caged): *imprisonment*
Bird (wild): *freedom*
Donkey: *hardworking, stupidity, patience*
Dove: *peace, purity*
Fox: *intelligence, slyness*
Lamb: *sacrifice, innocence*
Lion: *nobility, strength, pride*
Owl: *wisdom*
Peacock: *pride, vanity*
Rat: *secretiveness, filth*
Raven: *destruction, death*
Reptiles: *deceit*
Vulture: *death*



Colors

Black: *death, depression, loneliness, evil*
Blue: *calmness, truth, integrity, peace*
Brown: *earth, decay, poverty*
Gold: *richness, sacredness*
Gray: *sickness, industry, aging, dying*
Green: *nature, growth, envy, rebirth, youth*
Purple: *royalty, magic, spirituality*
Red: *passion, anger, love, emotion*
White: *purity, peace, wisdom, innocence*



Daily Cycles

Dawn: *birth, new beginnings*
Morning: *optimism, youth*
Night: *mystery, fear, death*



Directions

Up: *hope, progression toward a goal*
Down: *failure, obstacles*
North: *wilderness, purity*
South: *antiquity, freedom*
East: *beginning*
West: *adventure, expansion*



Landscapes

Cave: *protection, subconscious, history*
Cliff: *inaccessibility, danger*
Desert: *sterility, isolation, death*
Forest: *freedom, spontaneity*
Mountain: *obstacle, adventure*
Ocean: *infinite, obstacle, adventure*
Running water: *life, purity*



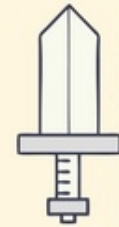
Light and Darkness

Light: *reason, knowledge, life, truth, safety, goodness*
Darkness: *ignorance, death, mystery*



Objects

Apple: *temptation*
Candle: *passion, illumination, knowledge*
Circle: *wholeness, perfection*
Cloak: *trickery*
Crown: *wealth, power*
Door: *opportunity*
Flowers: *beauty, youth, life*
Mask: *mystery, deceit*
Sword: *strength, protection*
Table: *negotiation, family*
Window: *new perspective, freedom, lack of freedom*



Settings

City: *busyness, order, advancement*
Crossroads: *change of direction, decision-making*
Road: *journey, decision-making, uncertainty*



Seasons

Spring: *birth, fertility, rejuvenation*
Summer: *freedom, knowledge, maturity*
Autumn: *aging, nearing death, decline*
Winter: *death, emptiness, hardship, stagnation*



Space

Sun: *life, enlightenment, energy*
Meteors: *disaster, unnaturalness*
Sky: *freedom, hope*



Weather

Fog: *uncertainty, mystery, confusion*
Ice: *death, rigidity*
Rain: *cleansing, transformation, danger, sadness*
Rainbows: *promise, optimism, hope*
Snow: *purity, transformation, isolation*
Storm clouds: *hostility, danger*
Storms: *violent emotions*
Wind: *power, inspiration, change*

