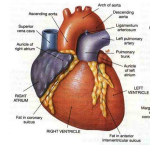


Symbolism in *The Odyssey*

**Symbolism** - A concrete representation of abstract ideas that makes those ideas clearer and more accessible to readers

**Context:** The American flag is a symbol of the United States and its democratic ideals.



Literary Symbols

As English poetry has developed over hundreds of years, certain symbolic meanings have attached themselves to such things as colors, places, times, and animals. A list of these common symbols and their meanings follows.

Sleep is often related to death. Dreams are linked to the future or fate.

Seasons often represent ages: spring--youth, summer--prime of life, autumn--middle age, winter--old age or death.

Water is sometimes linked to the idea of birth or purification.

Colors are often linked to emotions: red--anger, blue--happiness, green--jealousy. They are also used to represent states of being: black--death or evil, white--purity or innocence, green--growth.

Snakes and guns are often phallic; caves and underwater images often womb-like; nature imagery, in general, is often associated with the mother or the female.

The cycle of natural growth--birth, degeneration, death--often suggests the cycle of love. For example, a poem may trace a rose from bud to bloom to withered vine.

Animals have various associations: horse--phallic sexuality, doves, lambs, sleeping animals--peace, felines, birds of prey--dissension, war, danger; snakes, serpents--evil, phallic sexuality, fall from virtue, magic.

Forests are often places of testing or challenge.

Light--as the sun, the moon, stars, candles--often symbolizes good, hope, freedom.

Darkness is associated with evil, magic or the unknown.

Jan 19-10:51 AM

Jan 19-11:12 AM

Read the excerpt where Odysseus meets the Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis.

1. These monsters are often viewed as symbols. What do they symbolize? Explain with detail and use quotes from the story to support your answer.

2. If you were to modernize or personalize what the Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis represent, what symbol would you use or create?

Draw the symbol and write an explanation of what it symbolizes and why you chose that particular symbol.

Jan 19-11:08 AM