

THE USE OF SYMBOLISM IN ART

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Abstract

Symbolism is the practice of assigning symbolic meanings to concrete objects. Symbolism emerged in the late 19th century as a literary movement critical of the prevailing rationalism and materialism in Western society. Oysters in artworks often heighten feelings of chastity, physical love, and sexuality. Genre paintings from the Dutch Golden Age of the 17th and 18th centuries show their sensual influence. The purpose of this study is to decipher the nuances of legal symbology. Symbolism in art is a meeting of objective reality and the artist's subjective experience. Symbolism is the practice of incorporating meaningful symbols into creative works. The use of symbolism is crucial to our ability to comprehend and appreciate art. Symbolism is a powerful tool for artists to bring attention to pressing social concerns.

Keywords: Symbolism, Art, Western culture, movement, symbol

INTRODUCTION

As a response to naturalism and realism, the French and Belgian poets and artists of the late 19th century created a literary and artistic movement known as symbolism. The literary movement began with the release of *Les Fleurs du mal* by Charles Baudelaire in 1857. Baudelaire's writing was heavily influenced by Edgar Allan Poe, whose works he translated into French and adored profoundly. Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine created the style in the 1860s and 1870s. A generation of authors was drawn to the aesthetic when it was defined in a series of manifestos published in the 1880s. The critic Jean Moréas used the name "symbolist" to differentiate the Symbolists from the associated Decadents of literature and art.

Symbolism emerged as a literary movement in 1880s France and gained widespread acceptance when Jean Moréas' manifesto was published in *Le Figaro* that same year. By emphasizing the importance of an idea above a factual representation of the natural world, Moréas was a reaction to the prevailing rationalism and materialism in Western European society. Poet Stéphane Mallarmé's belief that poetry best conveyed reality because it mirrored nature rather than replicated it would be included into this philosophy.

The literary movement known as Symbolism eventually became synonymous with the work of a new generation of artists who were rebelling against the norms of Naturalism in their own practice. Instead of representing the natural world in the objective, quasi-scientific style shown by Realism and Impressionism, Symbolist artists felt that art should convey an emotion or concept. They returned to the Romantic ideal of individual expression, believing that a piece of art's symbolic worth or meaning was derived from the viewer's own emotional experiences that were evoked by the use of color, line, and composition. Symbolism in art is a meeting of objective reality and the artist's subjective experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Westley, Frances & Folke, Carl (2018) Both art and science share and contrast with one another. The importance of iconic pictures is discussed as a link between the artistic and scientific worlds. We contend that iconic pictures serve the same purposes in both science and art since they are the touchstone symbols of both. We argue that these iconic pictures encourage us to be more receptive and open to our most primal emotional capabilities and to make that link to the dynamics of the larger social-ecological systems in which we participate. Iconic pictures may operate as magnets, drawing in like-minded individuals and inspiring them to form new communities around shared interests in the arts, sciences, and technology on a personal and societal scale. Last but not least, famous pictures may aid in change thanks to their ability to attract and unite people.

Khan, Umaira (2020) This study explores Sadequain, a renowned Pakistani artist, and his use of the crow as a symbolic motif. This study examines the crow's symbolic importance in light of the artist's perspective as both a painter and a human being. The sign can only be understood in the vision's specific context. It has been stated that Sadequain was a revolutionary artist with a goal for transforming both individuals and society. The emotional and mental stagnation that affected the majority of people in his culture was something he was well aware of. It has been suggested that Sadequain, like the Malamattya lineage of Sufism, had a split personality and, by placing himself in his works, conveyed the conversations between the two selves. The research finds that Sadequain's use of the crow as a symbol is meaningless apart from the positive context in which it appears.

Abdul Hadi, Hamidi & Harun, Zahirah & Ismail, Issarezal & Ramli, Ishak (2022) As a form of self-expression, visual art reflects the evolution of human culture and civilization. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore, comprehend, and analyze the symbolism inside Daud Rahim's artworks in the context of social and cultural transformation. This research makes use of a conceptual model based on notions deemed significant to serve as the framework for the analysis, which is a qualitative approach typical of art studies. The study and debate led to the conclusion that Daud Rahim's visual artworks merged personal symbols derived from the natural world with those of the mechanical world. The unique symbols he designed shed light on the human side of a contemporary culture that has become too materialistic to retain its spiritual essence. Modern society has become complacent and unable to cultivate spiritual aspects that are very important to their inner life as a result of the materialism culture, individualistic attitudes, secularistic process, and crisis of spiritual crisis.

Makarevičs, Valērijs (2017) Artists have always cared about how their creations are received by the public. Aesthetic concerns are not the only ones this issue raises. The image doesn't do justice to the text. However, the author's intended message may be conveyed via the use of color, objects, and their placement in space. The meanings of works of art may be learned. The analysis is metaphorical in nature. We used this technique to examine works by the Russian artist Repin. We believe that the underlying meaning of the author's work may be understood via an examination of the space objects and colors in a number of their works.

Luo, X.-C. (2016) The folk-art style is a uniquely American cultural expression since it so accurately depicts ordinary people's lives. Folk-art patterns are distinctive in aesthetic quality, cultural implication, and mode of expression. Therefore, its application to contemporary design has become a popular study issue in the domestic and worldwide design industry via the investigation of the symbolic significance of folk-art patterns. To begin, this presentation provided a quick overview of the current state of study on folk-art motifs. This research uses this framework to examine the categorization, symbolic meaning, and growing popularity of folk-art motifs in contemporary design. The presentation concluded by analyzing many different examples of how folk-art patterns may be used in contemporary design. According to the findings, the folk-art patterns are a reflection of the rich symbolic culture of the Chinese country and are imbued with a number of different forms of good fortune. Contemporary designers have also found considerable motivation for innovation in this art form. As a result, contemporary design efforts may be vastly improved.

SYMBOLS AND SYMBOLISM

Symbols are physical objects that stand in for abstract concepts, ideas, deeds, or messages. It's malleable and open to a variety of expressions. Words, music, and pictures are all valid mediums for symbol expression. All of these mediums are vehicles for the author's thoughts and feelings, which the author gives great weight to. Symbolism refers to the practice of using symbols as a means of expressing and representing ideas in fields as diverse as literature, art, and science. Their original intent may have changed. Symbolism is the practice of assigning non-literal interpretations to symbols in order to represent concepts and qualities. From the beginning of time, humans have been inserting meaning into symbols. The very nature of symbolism makes it special. There is a distinct meaning attached to each sign since it represents a unique idea or concept. Throughout history and around the globe, people have utilized a wide variety of symbols to communicate. By reflecting or expanding upon the literal meaning of a phrase or picture, a symbol is converted into an effective tool. Religious, historical, political, legal, and artistic symbols all play significant roles in modern society. To put it

simply, legal symbolism is a way of thinking that makes use of and expands upon legal symbols. A legal symbol is a concrete emblem of the abstract nature and practical significance of law.

Legal Art and Symbolism

Understanding the significance of symbols and codes within the context of various art movements allows us to better interpret the intended meaning and message of works of art. We may learn more about this fascinating world, which is thrilling and eternally rich in surprises and new discoveries, by delving into the symbolism of artworks and the iconographic sources that inspired and drove artists to produce works of art. Hidden meanings, essential or secret messages related to issues that were socially taboo at the time of their creation, but the artist believed them vital and necessary to pass on to future generations, may be expressed via the use of symbols in artistic representations. Kant's critical philosophy, as developed by Weber and Habermas, expresses the contemporary perspective of law, which holds that law is autonomous and distinct from aesthetic evaluation. This perspective originated with the early philosophical beliefs of Plato, who distinguished between art and poetry in his *Politeia*. The poet or painter, he said, is a complex individual who might have conflicting feelings about his work. However, legislators can never have more than one valid viewpoint. An even more stringent view of art and imagery was offered by religious viewpoints according to Jewish tradition or biblical law.

Censorship and restrictions were imposed on the arts. Once secular and ecclesiastical authority were combined during the reformation, iconophobic notions formed the bedrock of the common law. However, iconography was still inspired and conditioned by sacral or secular themes even after the reformation. The current understanding of the connection between art and law is complicated. The profound and close relationship between these two spheres is, nevertheless, undeniable, despite all the logical disparities. Over time, political authorities and the legal system have refined extensive norms regarding aesthetic appearance. Artists use allusions to and hidden meanings of the law via the use of legal symbols in their works. The author expresses himself to his readers via these codes and their symbolic implications. Using legal symbols as a means of communication may be quite useful. The legal and political climate of a state at the time a work of art was created or to which it alludes may be inferred from the work's depiction of tense or trivial legal occurrences. Based on the findings of the study, symbolism remains an integral aspect of both the legal and artistic fields, despite being often disregarded. Visual stimuli are often processed more quickly and readily by the human brain than other forms of communication in the modern world.⁶⁰ Symbolic behavior and thought are fundamental to every culture. The ability to recognize it and decipher it is a vital aspect of the human capability to assimilate new information and make sense of data transmissions. Symbols and symbols influence people all around the world in similar ways.

EVOLUTION OF SYMBOLISM

Naturalism and realism, two anti-idealistic styles that sought to depict reality in all its gritty particularity and to give due respect to the commonplace and unremarkable, were major influences on the development of symbolism. Symbolism developed as a backlash in support of metaphysics, fantasy, and dreams. Some authors, like Joris-Karl Huysmans, start out as naturalists but eventually shift to symbolist modes of writing to reflect their growing interest in the spiritual and religious aspects of life. Some of the Decadents' signature themes reflect the naturalist interest in sexuality and forbidden matters, but the Decadents' blend of Byronic romanticism and the world-weariness of the *fin de siècle* made these themes uniquely their own.

The link between Symbolism and Parnassianism, the preceding French literary movement, is more complicated for the poets of that movement. Although it was inspired by hermeticism, permitted freer versification, and rejected Parnassian clarity and objectivity, it maintained Parnassianism's love of word play and care for the melodic aspects of poetry. The Symbolists maintained a fondness for Théophile Gautier's "art for art's sake" philosophy and adopted a tone of sardonic detachment from Parnassianism, but they did so in their own way. *Le Parnasse contemporain*, a series of poetry anthologies, is where several prominent Symbolist writers, including French Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine, made their first appearances. However, in *L'Album Zutique*, Arthur Rimbaud misrepresented François Coppée as the creator of scatological parodies of other notable Parnassians, such as himself. Art and literary critic (and occultist) Joséphin Péladan founded the Salon de la Rose

plus Croix, one of Symbolism's most colorful Parisian boosters. Throughout the 1890s, the Salon sponsored a series of six exhibitions of avant-garde painting, poetry, and music, providing a platform for creatives whose work embraced spiritualism, mysticism, and idealism. The Salon was connected to a number of Symbolists.

Symbolism's Facts

Instead of representing things as they really were, symbolists represented abstract concepts like emotions, ideas, and dreams. The symbolists sought an escape from the everyday. They found safety in their myths, legends, and sacred texts as well as their own unique set of beliefs. Symbolist works often include themes of sexuality, love, eroticism, horror, decadence, death, and the occult. The majority of Symbolists painted with flat, unmodulated color fields and sweeping brushstrokes. Puvis de Chavannes popularized it by utilizing these very simple models to communicate complex ideas. German philosopher von Schelling and Sigmund Freud had major influences on the development of a newfound fascination with the unconscious. Characters' inner lives were commonly described by symbolists, who were inspired by psychoanalysis. In the artwork "Oedipus and the Sphinx," for instance, the figures' reciprocal gaze is a hint of reflection, the urge to look inside. The majority of emotional expression nowadays centers on female characters. Women were given two distinct types of portrayal: femme fatales and capricious virgins. Gustave Moreau usually portrayed women in his works as murderous sphinxes. He was so moved by Salome, the lady who had John the Baptist killed, that he painted a series of works on her. It was a common literary and artistic trope throughout the Symbolist period to feature alluring yet deadly ladies.

Symbolism Art Movement

Symbolism emerged in the late 19th century as a literary movement critical of the prevailing rationalism and materialism in Western society. The classic Symbolist Manifesto, written by Jean Moreas in 1886, marks the commencement of the movement. According to the manifesto, everything—including people, animals, and plants—should stand in for a more abstract concept or feeling. Instead of depicting actual life, Moreas thought artists should imply it via symbols. Although Symbolism was first a literary movement, a number of young visual painters immediately started to embrace its principles.

Unmodified hues, bold strokes, and simplified, flat shapes characterize symbolist painting. It's worth noting that the Symbolists didn't form a tight collective; rather, they represented a wide variety of aesthetic approaches. But they were all Symbolists because they prioritized the imaginative and emotional above the realistic and logical. Odilon Redon was a surrealist who created black and white sketches of body parts, whereas Gustave Moreau made ornate, elaborate paintings based on mythology. James Ensor developed his own distinctive aesthetic by depicting horribly disfigured human beings. Symbolism, Art Nouveau, and Expressionism all came together in the works of Gustav Klimt and Edvard Munch.



The Symbolists, rather than representing their immediate world, represented their inner worlds of ideas and feelings. The symbolists sought a departure from reality. They sought solace in the tales of religion, myth, and the Bible. Some common themes in the works of the Symbolists include love, eroticism, sex, but also terror, decadence, death, and the occult. Most Symbolists used broad, unmodulated brushstrokes of color to portray two-dimensional abstractions. Puvis de Chavannes popularized the method by using very basic shapes to convey complex concepts clearly and concisely.

SYMBOLISM OF THE OYSTER IN THE ART OF PAINTING

Since the Neolithic Period, oysters have been consumed by humans. Oysters have long been prized by Mediterranean foragers. Due to their association with female fertility and the value of the pearl they contain, oysters have been employed ceremonially throughout human history. Oysters were a popular delicacy among ancient Greeks and Romans. According to Varro, the Romans developed a system for raising oysters as a sign of the opulence and sophistication that even an ancient culture could desire. The Romans laid the groundwork for many modern oyster farms. Oysters and other shellfish were highly prized by the Romans. Although they ate more modestly on a daily basis, the Romans—famous for their food obsession—used oysters and sea urchin at private feasts to demonstrate their love for good flavors. It is said that the Romans used this seeming inconsistency as an alibi for their habitual gluttony and crudeness. Many foods (such as potatoes, artichokes, pistachios, sage, etc.) were thought to have aphrodisiac properties from ancient times into the twentieth century. First defined as "medicines to increase the quantity of seed" in the first edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica (1771), the word "aphrodisiac" was narrowed to "a substance which excites sexual desire" in the 1990s

version. Whether it's used to increase fertility or heighten sexual desire, the phrase always refers to some kind of physical intimacy. Aphrodisiacs were often used as sexual stimulants in ancient medicine.

Oysters, unlike many historical aphrodisiacs, have maintained their association with sexuality and sensuality. The fact that it looks like a woman's pudenda has led to widespread belief that it has these qualities. Its reputation as a symbol of feminine traits is enhanced by its capacity to produce a large number of eggs each spawning and to undergo sexual dimorphism throughout the reproductive season. In one of his satires on the liberated behavior of modern women, the Roman poet Juvenal attributed a woman's loss of sexual control to wine drunkenness and the consumption of enormous oysters at midnight. However, oysters were seldom mentioned as an aphrodisiac in traditional medical writings. Their aphrodisiac qualities, in particular, have been more often discussed in literary works. In one 1611 farce by London writer George Chapman, for instance, a "lover" is instructed to feast on oyster pies, potatoes, skirt roots, and eringoes before attempting a seduction. Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), a forerunner British sexologist, connected the medical idea that an aphrodisiac must first and foremost be nourishing with modern sex research in the twentieth century. He theorized that the satiating and stimulating characteristics of oysters and other shellfish would affect libido. Ellis said that "because of the slimy and moist texture of oyster it doesn't require much energy to digest and that more energy could be saved for other activities including sexual activity."

CONCLUSION

Artistic expression in the Symbolist movement of the late 19th century was characterized by the use of symbols rather than realistic depictions. It arose in response to realism art styles like Impressionism, Realism, and Naturalism, which sought to portray the world as it really is. Symbolism was often employed in the past, and its significance and influence are still felt now. Symbolism is an uncommon method of transmitting knowledge that has been adopted by society. It's a highly developed mode of communication that allows for the progressive processing of the real meaning of the depicted symbol via a variety of human connections. Oysters are shown in the examined artworks, and their interpretations range from pleasure to sin to sex to gluttony to desire to monetary ardor. Instead of representing things as they really were, symbolists represented abstract concepts like emotions, ideas, and dreams. The symbolists sought an escape from the everyday. To put it simply, symbolists thought art could convey more universal truths inaccessible via direct means, such as metaphorical imagery and suggestive designs carrying symbolic significance. Naturalism and realism, two anti-idealistic styles that sought to depict reality in all its gritty particularity and to give due respect to the commonplace and unremarkable, were major influences on the development of symbolism.

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