



SYMBOLISM AND ALLEGORY IN CLASSIC LITERATURE: IN THE REVIEW OF WORKS "THE GREAT GATSBY" AND "ANIMAL FARM".

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Abstract: This study aims to delve into the world of symbolism and allegory in classic literature, examining their various forms in the example of works as F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" and George Orwell's "Animal Farm" and the impact they have on readers' understanding and interpretation of them. These literary devices provide readers with a richer and more complex understanding of the themes and messages in a story.

Key words: symbolism, allegory, "Animal Farm", "The Great Gatsby", literary devices

Symbolism is an important literary device that aids in the interpretation of underlying themes and ideas in a text by representing them through symbols. Symbols can be objects, actions, or even characters that stand for something beyond their literal meaning. Allegory, on the other hand, is a narrative technique in which characters and events are used to represent abstract ideas or moral qualities. According to Abrams, allegories are extended metaphors that can be interpreted on both literal and figurative levels, allowing authors to comment on social, political, or philosophical issues in a subtle manner¹. Both symbolism and allegory are common techniques employed by authors to convey profound meanings and explore complex themes in works of classic literature. Symbolism in classic literature serves the purpose of enriching the text by adding depth and meaning. For instance, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" employs the green light at the end of Daisy's dock as a symbol of Gatsby's unattainable dreams and desires. The use of symbolism in classic literature allows authors to convey complex ideas and emotions in a subtle and thought-provoking manner². Similarly, Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" utilizes the symbol of the scarlet letter 'A' to represent various themes such as sin, guilt, and redemption.

In Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the Valley of Ashes serves as a potent symbol of moral decay and social inequality. Located between West Egg and New York City, this desolate wasteland represents the consequences of the pursuit of wealth and the disregard for ethical behavior. As Fitzgerald describes it, the

¹ Abrams, M. H. (1953). *The mirror and the lamp: Romantic theory and the critical tradition*. New York : Oxford University Press.

² F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*. 1925





valley is a place "where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys", highlighting the futility and emptiness of the American Dream in the 1920s. Additionally, the Valley of Ashes acts as a stark contrast to the opulence and extravagance of the West Egg and East Egg, thereby emphasizing the immense gap between the rich and the poor in society³. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg serve as a prominent symbol of God's judgment and the deterioration of moral values in society. These larger-than-life eyes looming over the desolate Valley of Ashes act as a constant reminder of the loss of spiritual values in the pursuit of material wealth and personal desires. The eyes, originally intended to promote good morality, have become a witness to the corruption and immorality prevalent in the lives of the characters, reinforcing the novel's theme of the hollowness of the American Dream⁴.

Symbolism and allegory are powerful literary devices that enhance the depth and meaning of classic literature. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's "*The Great Gatsby*," the green light at the end of Daisy's dock symbolizes Jay Gatsby's unrestrained optimism and unattainable dream. Additionally, in George Orwell's "*Animal Farm*," the pigs represent the corrupt leaders of the Soviet Union, while the other animals symbolize the proletariat. These works not only entertain readers, but also serve as a critique of society and offer insight into human nature.

In "*Animal Farm*" by George Orwell, animals are used as symbols to represent different social classes and political ideologies. The pigs, led by Napoleon, symbolize the ruling class and represent the elite in society. The horses symbolize the working class, constantly exploited by the ruling class. The sheep symbolize the masses who blindly follow the ruling class without questioning their actions⁵. These animal symbols effectively illustrate the inequalities and power dynamics that exist within society.

The farm, in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, serves as a powerful symbol of a totalitarian regime. As the animals overthrow their human oppressors and establish a society based on equality and freedom, the farm becomes a microcosm of a utopian state. However, the gradual corruption of the pigs and their subsequent rise to power mirrors the power dynamics of totalitarian regimes. The farm's transformation from a symbol of hope and progress to a symbol of oppression and inequality is a stark reminder of the dangers of concentrated power.

³ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*. 1925

⁴ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*. 1925

⁵ Orwell, G. (1954). *Animal farm*. London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.





The pigs in George Orwell's "Animal Farm" serve as clear symbols of corrupt leaders. As the novel progresses, the pigs, led by Napoleon, gradually assume more power and privilege, ultimately becoming indistinguishable from the oppressive human farmers they initially rebel against. Their gradual transformation highlights the corrupting influence of power and the dangers of unchecked authority⁶.

Allegory plays a crucial role in George Orwell's "Animal Farm", as it conveys deeper political messages by utilizing animal characters to represent key figures and events from the Russian Revolution. For instance, Napoleon, the power-hungry pig, symbolizes Joseph Stalin, while Old Major represents Karl Marx. The farm itself serves as a symbol for Russia, and the transformation from a democracy to a totalitarian regime is represented by the animals' journey from idealism to corruption. Overall, the allegorical nature of "Animal Farm" allows Orwell to expose the flaws of communist ideologies and the dangers of autocratic leadership⁷.

Symbolism and allegory are crucial elements in classic literature, as they enable writers to convey deeper meanings and messages beyond the surface level. For example, in George Orwell's famous allegorical novel, "Animal Farm," the animals represent various political factions during the Russian Revolution. Through this symbolic representation, Orwell criticizes the corrupt nature of power and the dangers of totalitarianism⁸.

Symbolism and allegory play a vital role in classic literature, as they enhance the depth and meaning of a text. They allow authors to convey complex ideas and emotions in a more accessible and relatable manner. According to Hart, these literary devices can imbue objects, actions, or characters with deeper significance, enabling readers to interpret and analyze the underlying themes and messages⁹. Furthermore, Schofield asserts that symbolism and allegory encourage critical thinking and engage readers in a thought-provoking exploration of abstract concepts and societal issues. Thus, the significance of these literary elements cannot be understated in classic literature¹⁰.

Symbolism and allegory play a significant role in shaping readers' understanding and interpretation of classic literature. The deliberate use of symbols and allegorical elements by authors creates layers of meaning that engage readers

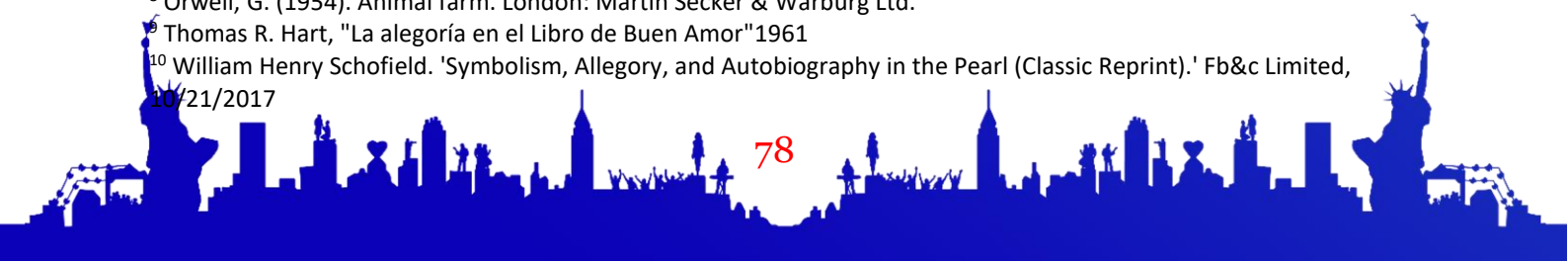
⁶ Orwell, G. (1954). Animal farm. London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.

⁷ Michael Alexander, Macmillan Foundations Ser.: A History of English Literature.2013

⁸ Orwell, G. (1954). Animal farm. London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.

⁹ Thomas R. Hart, "La alegoría en el Libro de Buen Amor"1961

¹⁰ William Henry Schofield. 'Symbolism, Allegory, and Autobiography in the Pearl (Classic Reprint).' Fb&c Limited, 10/21/2017





intellectually and emotionally. As stated by literary critic Harold Bloom, symbolism and allegory serve as "the means by which the human and the divine, the natural and the supernatural, the conscious and the unconscious, coalesce into true literary power"¹¹. The profound impact of these literary devices lies in their ability to tap into universal truths and provoke readers' introspection, fostering a deeper appreciation for the complexities of the human experience.

In conclusion, the use of symbolism and allegory in classic literature serves to enhance the deeper meaning and understanding of the text. By utilizing various symbols, authors are able to convey complex ideas and themes that resonate with readers. For example, in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the use of animals as symbols represents different social classes and political ideologies, making the allegorical representation all the more impactful. Similarly, in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "*The Great Gatsby*," the green light at the end of Daisy's dock symbolizes Jay Gatsby's unrestrained optimism and unattainable dream.

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