

A tale of two cities symbolism

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



An example of symbolism AND imagery is the broken wine cask. As Dickens describes the scene outside of Defarge's wine shop and all the scrambled people, he is able to create a symbol of hunger. I think this hunger is not only the peasant's starvation, but also metaphorically for political freedoms. For instance, the narrative directly associates the wine with blood, noting that some of the peasants have acquired "a tigerish smear about the mouth" and portraying a drunken figure scrawling the word "blood" on the wall with a wine-dipped finger.

As he shows such a strong symbol, the imagery is what makes the readers feel like they are actually in the book. The way he describes the setting is horrifying, yet intriguing, which is one of many ways he makes the symbol stand out. "The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes.

The hands of the man who sawed the wood, left red marks on the billets; and the forehead of the woman who nursed her baby, was stained with the stain of the old rag she wound about her head again. Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had acquired a tigerish smear about the mouth; and one tall joker so besmirched, his head more out of a long squalid bag of a night-cap than in it, scrawled upon a wall with his finger dipped in muddy wine-lees—blood." (Dickens, 29-30) Because of Dickens' use of personification, it helps readers really get a feel for the book.

For example, the concept of hunger is described in Chapter 5, as staring down from the chimneys of the poor and rattling its dry bones. "Hunger. It

was prevailed everywhere. Hunger was pushed out of the tall house, in the wretched clothing that hung upon poles and lines; hunger was patched into them with straw and rag and wood and paper. Hunger was repeated in every fragment of the small modicum of firewood that man sawed off; hunger started down from the smokeless chimneys and started up from the filthy street that had no official, among its refuse, of anything to eat. " (Dickens, 32)