

Sweat zora neale hurston

[Religion](#), [God](#)



"Sweat" by Zora Neale Hurston is filled with many religious symbolism. Good versus evil plays a large role in the development of Delia and Sykes Jones, as characters. The story is about Delia, an African American woman who is a washwoman for whites. Delia consistently looks to her religion for guidance and support as she endures the many hardships that she faces because, which are caused by her abusive husband and unfaithful husband, Sykes. Delia and Sykes Jones is a couple that have opposite moral values, but yet they are tied together through marital vows, that no longer have much importance or value.

Delia Jones is portrayed as the Protagonist and a very modest woman of weakness who later gains the strength to stand up to her abusive husband Sykes. Delia looks to God and her religion to help her build the strength she needs, so she can continue to be protected from her husband who is both physically and emotionally abusive to her. However, Sykes Jones, is every bit the opposite of Delia Jones. He has neither religious values nor any important moral standards. He is an adulterous, who takes Delia's hard working money, and spends not on his wife but on his mistress Bertha.

Delia who relies solely on her faith and continues to stay contempt, no matter how her husband treats her, but Delia warned him that in the end, Sykes "sometime or ruther, Sykes, like everybody else, is gointer reap his sowing (par. 26)." The white clothes that Delia washes are a symbol of Delia's character, as being humble and having a humble spirit through all of Sykes emotional torment. While the white clothes are symbols of purity and humbleness, Delia is a symbol of a God (Christian) like figure. The snake and whip are symbols in the story that represent evil.

A snake is generally recognized as evil religiously, because of the biblical story Adam and Eve, when Satan turns into a snake. There were two instances in the story when Sykes decides to scare Delia; the first instance is when he rubs the whip on Delia and makes her think it's an actual snake, the other instance is when Sykes decides to place a box outside the front door with a rattlesnake inside. Since Sykes is the one creating these scare tactics to Delia, he can also be seen as a symbol of evil, which he becomes the evil antagonist of the story.

These two instances could also be seen in the religious aspect with Adam and Eve. Another symbol that was present in the story was the dark grey sky. The dark grey sky symbolically means evil, remorse, and sadness. The dark grey sky came about when the snake Sykes used to scare Delia with, bites and kills him. While Sykes was dying, he was now feeling remorse for all his evil doings that he has done to Delia, so we think because he was calling out for her after the snake had bitten him. As the sky clears the story brings about another last symbol. Eventually, at the end of the story is when the reader can really see the Good vs.

Evil. Sykes soon begins to "reap is sowing" (par26), when he comes home and is killed by the snake, the one thing that he had used to scare Delia with so bad that she would leave, or die even. As Sykes is dying the sky begins to clear and the sun begins to rise. The clear, light sky and the sun represents freedom, purity, and peace, and the clear sky can also represent the Delia's character as well as the white clothes that were mentioned in the beginning of the story. In all the symbols that were present in the story, the most

important symbol was Delia's sweat. Delia's work-worn knees crawled over the earth in Gethsemane and up to the rocks of Calvary (par. 58)" Delia worked constantly just so she could provide for her family; however, Sykes was not appreciative at all. The sweat was a symbol of Delia's hard work, pain, and tears; because through out the story Delia worked, cried many tears, put up with Sykes antics, but she still remained contempt through all his mess. All in all Delia's sweat represents how she work through to those trying times to take care of her family, there was a lot of pain and tears as well. Within the story there were certain things that really stood out religiously.

The white clothes that Delia washes represent her character as humble, sanity, and how she remained contempt through Sykes torment and antics. The snake is show a couple of times within the story as well, when Sykes rubbed the bull-whip over her shoulder, the other is when he brought a real snake he had caught and placed it in the soap box. The snake ties into the Adam and Eve story when Satan took the form of a snake. The snake can also represent Sykes character as the antagonist. Zora Neale Hurston uses a lot of symbols and images that allowed the readers to actually visualize the story.

Her short story also revealed how no matter how much a person is in love with someone, if the other person does not love them then, not even marital vows can hold an importance. This story also shows the times. This story shows that back then some men just did not care enough for their wives to help them take care of the home. Some may have felt as though they call all

the shots and when things did not go their way then they get upset.

However, it shows that no matter what everybody will one day have to reap their sowing just as Sykes had to, when his own antics caused him his life.