

"in the heat of the night" by john ball – symbols and imagery notes essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



“ In the Heat of the Night” by John Ball – Symbols and Imagery Notes Essay Sample

The symbols in “ In the Heat of the Night” are heat, night, wallet, murder weapon and the colours black and white. The strongest and most significant symbols are heat and night. The heat represents the features of anxiety, nervousness, and tension. It also suggests to the overall mood of characters. The heat has been repeated several times in the duration of the novel. This symbol is showcased on page one, stating “ The heat of the Carolinas in August hung thick and heavy in the air.” On page two saying, “ No coffee for me, Ralph. The heat is too unbearable.” I believe that “ heat” combined with “ night”, enhances the feelings of suspense in this novel. Heat is also a symbol of rage and hatred as Mr. Mantoli was murdered during a time of great heat.

The night is closely related to heat. As stated before, “ heat” and “ night” are used in a combination to enhance feelings of suspense. However, “ night” itself represents fear and death because it is in humans to be afraid of the dark (unknown). It is used to represent suspicion at night, and that anything can happen at anytime without any body expecting it. Enrico Mantoli’s death is a perfect example because it occurred at night. These two symbols have symbolic meanings to help the reader understand the theme and the messages of the author.

The wallet is significant to the outlook of the story because the wallet represents money. Money is a representation of desperation and the harmful effects caused by it. During this novel, money makes people do dangerous

actions without considering the consequences. For example, as explained on page 178, to pay for Delores' abortion, Ralph attacked and killed Mr. Mantoli for his money. Ralph's shortage of money suggests his desperation and frustration between him and Delores. Money played a huge part of "In the Heat of the Night" as it began the whole murder investigation. It also represents inequality and that blacks should not make lost of money. (pg. 15)

The colours black and white represents the incorrect nature of racism. This is because when Virgil meets people, such as Sam on page 15 and Gillespie page 18, they depreciated him because of his race. They used racial stereotypes which caused the people to believe that he lacked intelligence. However, while the story progresses, he shows the people in Wells that their racial stereotypes are incorrect and that the African American people are very similar to white people. As you can see, the symbols in "In the Heat of the Night," enhances the story's depth and adds suspense to the novel.

The most significant and effective visual imagery is the handshake. It has a powerful effect on the reader and the handshake shows how the two races come together and show equality. The author's initial presentation of the character's details creates an image stay in your mind. For example, Virgil's descriptions are on page 14 and 15 and people can clearly see that he is very well self sufficient. An example of sight imagery is on page 37, "... panoramic view of the Great Smokies. Long rows of serrated mountains lifted their peaks all the way to the distant horizon." An example of sound imagery

is on page one, "...its steady throb purring against the silence of the night."
An example of smell imagery is on page 14, " Sam sniffled the air...no fresh cigarette smoke, only the habitual aroma of all such railroad stations..." An example of taste imagery is on page 34, " Tibbs answered and bit into his sandwich."