

Example of art and symbols essay

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



[Class Title]

The world is full of symbols and images that, in one way or another, impact our visual experience. However, most of these images and symbols are not original creation but rather a reflection of past cultures that have influenced contemporary art. The ancient Egyptians, for example, are well known for their pyramids. These pyramids primarily serve as a graveyard as well as a grave monument for pharaohs and their families. Ancient Egyptians believe that after death, their pharaohs would traverse the underworld. For the same reason, the pyramids were built because of the belief that the deceased need sustenance even in after life. In contemporary art, the pyramid is still being used to convey message although it differs from the depiction of the pyramid in ancient Egyptian culture. Today, the pyramid is used to convey strong foundation. The United States dollar bill, for example, has a picture of a pyramid in it. Accordingly, the symbol of the pyramid in the United States dollar bill represents “ Strength and Duration”. Some people, however, are suggesting that such symbols are reminiscent of the pagan religion of ancient Egypt, which can be interpreted as a symbol of Satanism. It should be noted though that symbols have many interpretations and the pyramid symbol today is one particular example of how symbols can be variedly interpreted. Another ancient symbol that has influenced modern art and symbolism is the cross. The cross is the principal symbol of the Christian religion that may have originated in the 4th century. Before, the early Christians are extremely reserved in portraying the cross as a symbol in fear of persecution and ridicule. It is not clear though if the primary objective of the cross as a symbol is for identification or as a religious relic or object.

Even so, the cross was adopted extensively by the early Christians after the religion was made the official religion of the Roman Empire by the emperor Constantine. Today, the cross is extensively used as a symbol in all art works. However, the most interesting and controversial use of the cross symbol is in the German swastika symbol that was used by Nazis as their own symbol for identification. The broken cross symbol of the Nazi regime in Germany was in fact an ancient symbol that can be traced to ancient India, which according to the early Sanskrit texts, is a symbol of ' Well Being', ' Good Existence, and ' Good Luck'. Perhaps, the people behind the ' swastika' symbol of the Nazi party were thinking about this meaning when they chose to make it their identifying symbol. Unfortunately, what was once known as a symbol of good luck became a symbol of evil because of the Nazi's notorious reputation. On the other hand, the hammer and sickle symbol that is a popular symbol for communist parties and is still being used today is a representation of worker-peasant alliance. Accordingly, " the hammer is a traditional symbol of proletariat and the sickle is a traditional symbol for the peasantry". Although the hammer and sickle became a popular representation of the communist movement, the symbol can be traced back to ancient Greece wherein the hammer is associated as a symbol of aggressive male force as in the hammer of the blacksmith Hephaestus. The hammer and sickle symbol has also been compared to the use of the masonic symbol the hammer and chisel, which is a symbol of clear goal for the chisel and firm manifestation for the hammer. Evidently, a lot of contemporary symbols today have their ancient counterparts. In one way or another, modern symbols have been influenced by ancient culture and

traditions that have been passed on to generations. Some retain their meaning while others have completely lost their meaning or have been replaced by contemporary meanings suitable for its present use.

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