

Water and symbolism in art, fiction, science fiction, science, religion

WATER IN LITERATURE

Most civilizations were created and developed around water. Specifically, the most important civilizations are found in the Mediterranean area (Minoans, Greeks, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Arabs, Romans).

For these civilizations, water was very important: it gave life, it was necessary for agriculture and trade, and it helped cultural exchange.



THE WORD 'WATER'

Since ancient times, the word 'water' is used in our daily life. But, do we know where this word comes from?

In Greek, 'νερό' (water) comes from the ancient Greek word 'νηρός', which means 'fresh'. The word was later made more simple.

Aqua

(Λατινικά)

Υδωρ

(Αρχαία Ελληνικά)

Water

(Αγγλικά)

Wasser

(Γερμανικά)

Vesi

(Φιλανδικά)

νερό

(Νέα Ελληνικά)

eau

(Γαλλικά)

Acqua

(Ιταλικά)

WATER SYMBOLISM

In literature, water symbolizes:

- Dreams
- Love
- birth or death
- the journey of life
- desire for justice, beauty, freedom
- fears
- source of life
- disaster

The water element in literature often plays an important role, either in the form of the sea or the river. It is an archetypal symbol that depicts one of the most powerful bipolars of human existence: life and death.



WATER SYMBOLISM

Water symbolizes *love* and *source of life*. Usually, it is not just a scenery where the story takes place, but it also has its own power, which guides and unites the heroes of the story.

Sometimes, it can also act as a strong death trap. For example, the sea has always been the element that easily gives and takes life.



WATER CUSTOMS IN LITERATURE

On New Year's Day, people used to go to public water fountains to fill up their pitchers with fresh water. Fairies were said to live around these fountains, so they offered them sweets and seeds to make the water sweeter. Then, water was spilled on the 4 corners of the house, so that 'good would flow like water all year round'.



In many parts of Greece, they used to spill water in front of him before he left, so that his way would be free like the water.

PHRASES WITH WATER

The word 'water' appears in many phrases, as a metaphor. Here are some of them:

- *'make a hole in the water'*: fail
- *'put the water in the gutter'*: lead an affair to the right way
- *'lose my waters'*: feel awkward due to a change
- *'be out of my waters'*: I do not know something I am dealing with
- *'like cold waters'*: of excellent beauty



WATER IN RELIGION

In most religious traditions, water is basic to physical and spiritual life, symbolizing purification, rebirth, and fertility. In most religions, the world is thought to have been created through water. American Indians believe that breath, wind (thought), and water connect all living things. Water is associated with cleansing and purification of body and spirit. There are also many legends about sacred healing rivers and wells all over the world.



WATER IN RELIGION

In ancient times, people worshipped water gods and goddesses. Out of 44 different cultures, there are around 270 water Gods and Goddesses. They have been important for civilizations where seas and rivers held great significance.

For example, the sea-god Poseidon (Neptune in Roman mythology) has always been related to all things involving water. He has been depicted in many artistic forms, and also gave his name to the 8th planet of our solar system.



WATER IN RELIGION

The clear water is closely related with Orthodox Christianity. It is the holy water used to bless students at the beginning of the school year, and to bless our homes every month. It is the water from the river Jordan, where Christ was baptized by John the Baptist. It is also the water in the baptistery, where sins are washed away. In the Orthodox Church, on Theofania Day, water plays an important role in the ceremony for the sanctification of waters. In addition, all people present at someone's funeral wash their hands after the service.



WATER IN RELIGION



The person to be baptized is immersed in the water 3 times, in the name of the Holy Trinity. The water is a symbol of life and cleans the body and the spirit. The original sin dies, and the new Christian emerges. The 3 immersions symbolize the 3 days that Jesus was buried, before His resurrection.

WATER IN RELIGION

For the early Christians, the water of rivers and streams was preferred for baptism. By the 4th century the still waters of the baptismal font or pool were exorcised and blessed with the sign of the cross. Water was blessed as a means of keeping off the unclean spirit and against sickness and disease. In the course of time this blessed, or holy, water was used in sprinkling the congregation before Sunday masses.

WATER IN RELIGION

In Islam: Muslims wash their hands, face and feet before they pray.

In India: Hindus believe the river Ganges has healing powers.

In Japan: The Japanese believe that the world was created when a drop of water fell onto the earth.

In Central America: The Mayas worshipped water as a god.

In ancient Egypt: The river Nile was considered the way to enter heaven.



WATER IN ART

Water is a source of inspiration for many artists, and a primary theme for their work. Artists tried to present its importance, its power as a source of life and death. Even composers tried to express with music their feelings about the water.



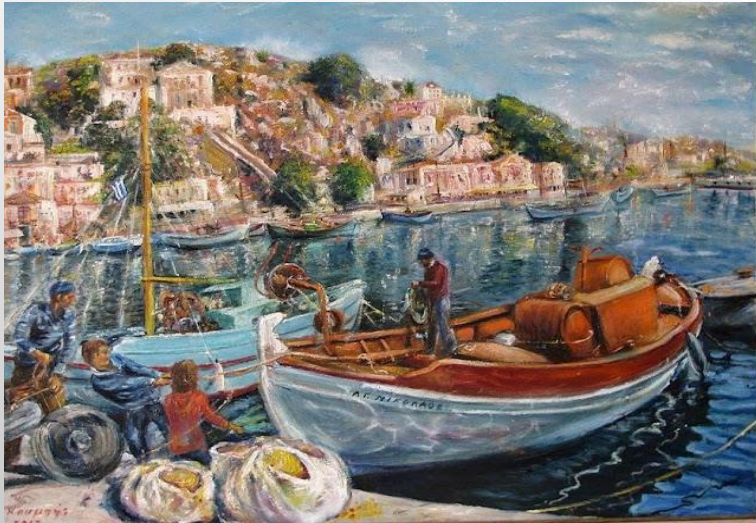
K. Hokusai 'The Great Wave of Kanawaga'



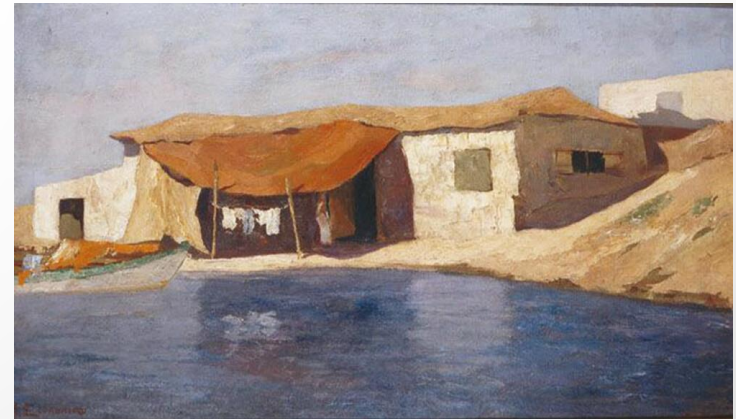
C. Monet 'Water Lillies'

WATER IN PAINTING

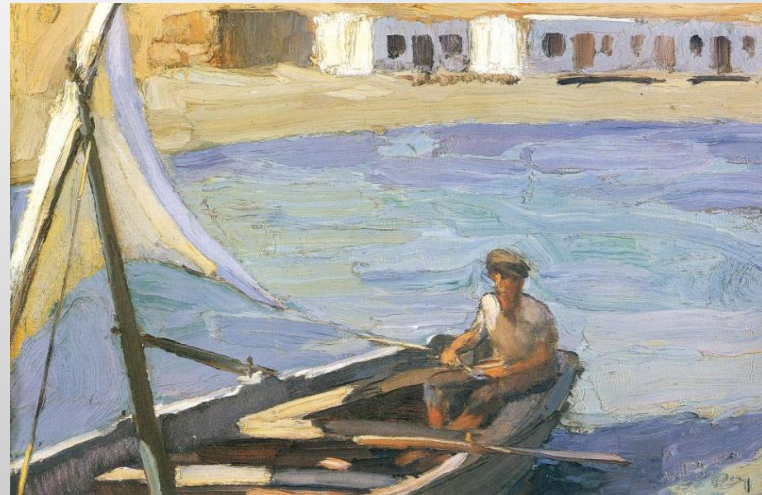
Water is used to show the daily way of life...



E. Koumbis *'Aegean Island Port'*



M. Oikonomou *'Fisherman's House'*



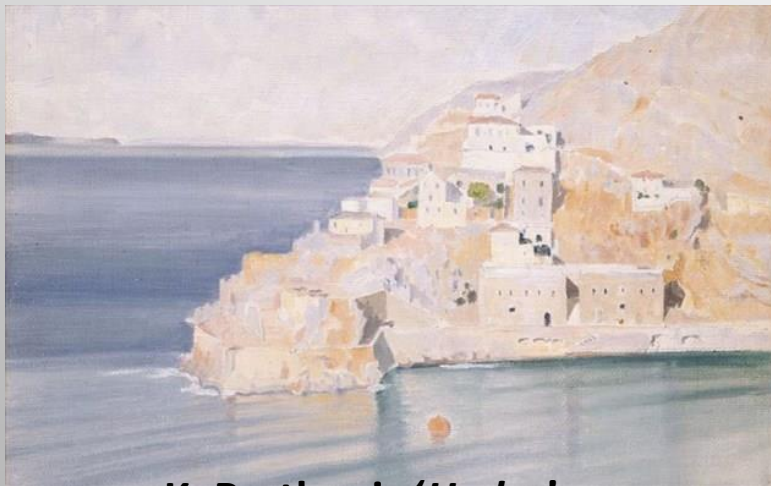
N. Lytras *'Boat with Sail'*

WATER IN PAINTING

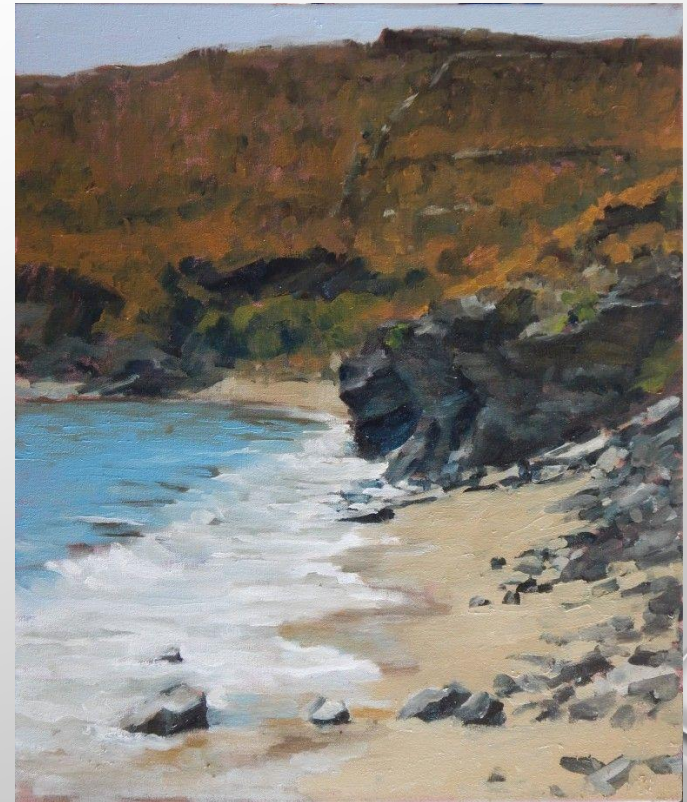
It serves as a means of expressing love and nostalgia for one's country or homeland...



D. Tsitouras *'Santorini'*



K. Parthenis *'Hydra'*



V. Tsokopoulos *'The Island'*

WATER IN PAINTING



N. Volanakis *'The Battleship of Lissa'*



N. Volanakis *'The Battle of Navarino'*

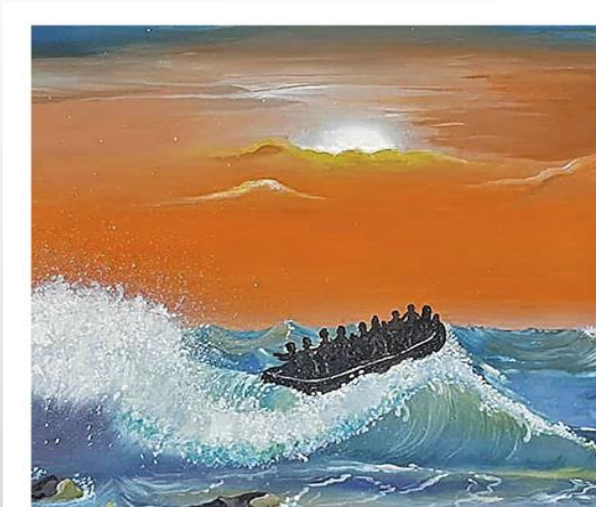
It is also closely related to historic events..



I. Altamouras *'The Battle of Lepanto'*

WATER IN PAINTING

Water in art nowadays also depicts the current socio-political situation ...



Cyprián Majerník *'Refugees'*



Banksy *'Mediterranean Sea View'*

THANK YOU !!!