

## The Images in *The Odor of Chrysanthemum* under Ecocriticism

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*The Odor of Chrysanthemum* depicts the destruction of the natural ecology by capitalist industrialization and machine civilization, the imbalance of social ecology and the crisis of human spiritual ecology caused by it. Lawrence expressed great concern about the impact of industrialization on the human world. Lawrence deeply deplores the destruction of nature by industrial civilization, the alienation of relations between people, and the spiritual crisis caused by mankind. The works not only appealed to and warned the people at that time, but also had a significance that could not be ignored in today's highly developed scientific and technological civilization, which aroused people's sense of distress about the deterioration of the natural environment.

*Keywords:* image, ecocriticism, alienation

This short story is Lawrence's early masterpiece. The work depicts the family of miner Walter and exposes the devastation of industrialization on nature and the human beings who live in it. The novel begins with a depiction of the daily life of Elizabeth, the miner's wife, and from her verbal and ideological activities, the reader sees the estrangement and potential contradictions between her and her husband. Later, while waiting for her husband to come home, she was filled with anger. In the end, the result she waited for was very unexpected, Walter was not drunk, but had died in the mining accident. Previous reviews of the novel have mostly been analytical use of symbolism in the novel, or criticism of the destruction of the working class by industrial civilization. This article intends to analyze the destruction of nature by industrial civilization, the alienation of husband and wife relations, and the inner spiritual crisis of human beings from a new perspective of ecocriticism. *The odor of Chrysanthemum* revealed the relationship between man and nature: Man and nature are both victims of the invasion of industrial machinery. My essay will illustrate this point from three aspects: Industrial Image, Natural Image and Human Image.

### **The Images in *The Odor of Chrysanthemum***

From the first paragraph of the short story, the images can be divided into three groups and summarized as the chart below:

*The odor of Chrysanthemum* is a fine product among writer's short stories. The full text of Chrysanthemum has both a straight view, a physical picture, and an intriguing variety of images. The successful application of symbolic techniques has effectively depicted the environment and produced the basic conflicts and thematic ideas of the full text. The following is a specific analysis of the basic theme of "The odor of Chrysanthemum" and

the role of various images on the theme. The main theme of *The odor of Chrysanthemum* is the opposition between the industrialized society and the traditional rural economy. Ecocriticism, a new perspective of criticism that began in North America in the 1990s and quickly spread to the rest of the world, has also attracted the attention of many writers and critics. Ecological criticism is the study of the interrelationship between literature and the natural environment. It analyzes how the image of “nature” is reproduced by looking for the absence of “nature” in literary works, criticizing human beings’ blindness and wanton destruction of nature, and by rediscovering, rethinking, and reinterpreting natural writing to awaken people’s understanding, perception, respect, and human beings and our awareness of ecological protection. D. H. Lawrence, with his untamed passion for life and exquisite artistic creation, became one of the most powerful writers in the literary world of the 20th century. In Lawrence’s works, one can see the ruins of the broken walls that have been corrupted by modern civilization, but more than that, the original meaning of life contained in the sunshine forest and the original passion poured out by the flowers and birds, which show the essence and vitality of the Garden of Eden in Lawrence’s heart. So nature, the sacred carrier of cosmic life, became a place where Lawrence could pour out his emotions, and it was an important part of Lawrence’s literary and artistic thought, and it was also an important embodiment of his artistic style. The short story “chrysanthemum” was written in 1913 and can be described as Lawrence’s early pioneering work. Previous literary criticisms of this article have focused on analyzing the symbolism in the text and studying the connotations that Lawrence wants to express in the text by accusing the bourgeois industrial revolution of destroying the humanity of the working class. This article intends to explain Lawrence’s love for nature embodied in “chrysanthemum” from the perspective of ecological criticism, and the idea of concern about the harsh natural environment and the twists and alienations of human nature caused by industrial civilization. Moreover, Lawrence’s reflection on the relationship between man and nature embodied in the text is also the core problem that ecocriticism wants to think about and explore.

### **The Relation Between Natural Image and Industrialized Image**

As in his novels Such as *Son and Lover*, Lawrence relied on the background in this *The odor of Chrysanthemum*, which he was familiar with the English coal mines of his home town after the mid-19th century. At that time, the coal mine, described the traditional pastoral life which is being gradually rising machinery industry erosion, pollution. Those accustomed to calm country life are bewildered by the huge and roaring machine monsters, as described in the opening article of *The odor of Chrysanthemum*, the mine machine with slow and irresistible movement, moving from face to side, making a noise. The woman was trapped between the shaking black car skins and hedges, and looked so slightly helpless. The train roared, put on a rolling frame, and to the end was thrown off by the horse. Although the coal mining area is thick with smoke, the forest fields on the other side are still green. The contrast between the industrialized society and the traditional rural economy is clearly visible. Industrialization, on the one hand, has brought great material wealth and industrial products to the society, and on the other hand has destroyed the psychological balance of people, especially the lower-level figures, such as miners, who have become slaves to machines, and can no longer have any freedom to speak of.

In the novel, Lawrence also shows his sympathy for Bates. Bates appeared in the novel after his death. He lay there calmly, as serene as he was in his sleep, as his mother said, “He is as white as milk, as pure as a baby”. No one knows how he felt in the moments before he died. Marrying a woman who is more educated than himself

is a blessing and his misfortune. Did he ever do his best to fill his wife's quest to know his wife when he was alive, if he knew it under the spring, and if he knew that after his death, his wife saw him as a stranger, and their relationship was no trace, and the original name of the husband and wife was also thin, he would be sad, or not feeling.

### **The Symbols in "Chrysanthemum"**

Symbolism is to express abstract things and meanings with the help of concrete images, and then induce the reader's imagination and associations, so as to achieve the purpose of expressing an intriguing thought and feeling. There are usually two kinds of symbols, one symbol has common use and universality; The other is that the author gives him a unique meaning to something, a symbol that has a special meaning in a certain writer or a certain work. Lawrence uses not only the former symbol, but also the latter in large quantities. Lawrence was adept at using symbolist methods of expression on the basis of absorbing the tradition of realism.

There are many images of "shadow" and "darkness" in the novel which also have intriguing signs of meaning, it is like a sign of the cold society, the darkness of the environment. Lawrence succeeded in rendering the atmosphere and expressing the theme. The whole tone of *Chrysanthemum* is low, and the color is bleak. The time of story is dusk and evening. The miners who had worked at the bottom of the well all day, when they came back to the ground, were already down the hill, the miners had chosen to go home like shadows, and the shadows of the yellow faint had been caged in the silent fields and climbed up the towering chimney. The miners worked in the early days, and the only thing fate gave them was darkness, and they could not see sunlight, just as they felt hopeless for the present suffering. When the protagonist was looking forward to her husband's return, her son was playing, and almost all of them were hidden in the dark when the woman added coal to the fire, and the walls were covered with shadows, and the whole room was dark. She came in through the door, as if like a shadow, and even when she set off a coal fire, there was still a faint shadow floating on the ground. In short, the "shadow" and "darkness" covered everything, as the industrial society's text was still like a shadow cage in people's hearts.

In fiction, "shadow" and "darkness" are also symbols of the incomprehension that exists between husband and wife and the mystery of the birth of life. Elizabeth and Bates were, though a couple, but he and she were just channels and had, and life flowed out of this channel, creating children. Out of some mysterious cause, the children derived from them. In contrast, children appear as shadows and live like shadows. As Lawrence describes in his novel, "They sat down for tea, and the man sitting at the other end of the door was all dark, and they couldn't see each other's faces". Mrs. Bates wanted to fight her husband, but they just throbbed in the dark and didn't even know who they were fighting against. The estrangement of the couple's feelings and the conflict within them were shown clearly through the description of the image of "darkness".

"Death" in the novel is like a sign of a true experience, a return to the great nature under the shadow of industrialization, although the return is so tragic. Bates died although he was enslaved by the industrialization machine, and his death was the result of the industrialization process, he finally died, finding the final natural quiet home of every man. He died, so serene and quiet, and it was only in front of the dead Bates that Eliza White suddenly realized that she had "made unrealistic accusations" against her husband, and thought she knew him well. Eliza is white, and what she has been fighting against in the dark may be just an imaginary enemy or another side of herself. She was grateful for death, for death had returned to reality, and she was clear that she could only

give in to life, for life was her “dominant force in the eyelashes”, and despite the hardships of life she knew that she would eventually return to that natural purity, and that a complete release from death would be her ultimate master.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Lawrence successfully expressed the theme using a variety of symbolic techniques in the short story, *The Odor of Chrysanthemum*. And there is no doubt that Man and nature are both victims of the invasion of industrial machinery. Industrial Image, Natural Image and Human Image are the creating skills for Lawrence to depict the truth of our society in a complicated way. Ecocriticism is the latest trend and perspective of literary criticism in the West. It can be said that ecocriticism is the study of the interrelationship between literature and the natural environment because it tries to explore the relationship between humans and nature from the cultural field. In today's era of worsening ecological crisis, it is particularly important to interpret Lawrence's ecological criticism consciousness embodied in his novel *Chrysanthemum* from a unique and new perspective of ecological literary criticism.

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