



Lawrence Essay

Imagery is often used by writers to give readers a visual sense in an abbreviated fashion. Another way that imagery works is as an analog for characters, their emotions, and their emotional states. Such is the case with D. H. Lawrence's *Odour of Chrysanthemums*. In this paradigm of short fiction writing, Lawrence uses many image patterns to help readers understand Elizabeth, her husband, and their children--and, by extension, all humans. The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of hot/cold and light/dark imagery in *Odour of Chrysanthemums*. Thus, there is a need to analyze how the setting is used in literature to deepen the reader's understanding of characters and their emotions, with particular emphasis on its use of the use of hot/cold and light/dark imagery in *Odour of Chrysanthemums* by D. H. Lawrence.

The use of setting in literature is an essential tool for conveying plot, atmosphere, and character development. Setting can be used to create a mood or to establish the context of the story. Through setting, authors can establish their characters' relationships with each other, their physical environment, and even their own psychological state. For instance, Shi-zhi says that "The environment becomes the ground for shaping the characters' image, and readers can understand the author's profound theme in his descriptions of the environment" (Shi-zhi). In D.H Lawrence's "*Odour of Chrysanthemums*," the setting is used to explore the complex emotions surrounding a family living in poverty. Lawrence uses hot/cold and light/dark imagery to create a sense of anguish and hopelessness that pervades the story, as well as to illustrate the

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psychological state of his characters. For example, the phrase "like shadows" or "like a shadow" is often used to describe miners in the text (Lawrence). This is reiterated by Shi-zhi, who says, "Miners are described as shadows and grey somber groups" (Shi-zhi). These themes are explored through careful descriptions of the setting, and they create an atmosphere that heightens the tension in the story. By combining physical elements such as light and temperature with psychological nuances, Lawrence creates a vivid scene that evokes both emotional resonance and contemplation. He writes, "The darkness of the house means both poverty and alienation in the house" (Shi-zhi). In addition to conveying emotion, the setting can also be used to highlight important symbols in a piece of literature. For example, in "Odour of Chrysanthemums," chrysanthemums become a symbol of renewal and hope. By carefully crafting the setting to reflect this important symbol, Lawrence allows readers to gain insight into his characters' emotional states and their journey toward finding peace.

In "Odour of Chrysanthemums," the hot/cold and light/dark imagery is used to develop a sense of atmosphere, characterization, and emotion. The first use of this kind of imagery occurs earlier on in the story when Lawrence writes the flames of the coal pit were like "red sores licking its ashy sides" (Lawrence). Here, the image of a cold, pale sky conveys a feeling of loneliness and despair that resonates throughout the story. This imagery is further reinforced in later passages when Lawrence says that "the house was afire" (Lawrence). The juxtaposition between the warmth of the firelight and the coldness of Mrs. Bates' kiss serves to emphasize her emotional distance from her husband and children. This imagery also illustrates how Lawrence uses the setting to create an atmosphere that reflects his characters' inner turmoil and loneliness. According to Shi-zhi, "However, their family is always enveloped in the black smoke and coldness of the mining area." (Shi-zhi). The use of light/dark imagery is also employed in the

story to add another layer of atmosphere and characterization. This imagery appears in various ways throughout the story, beginning with Lawrence's description of a "lad, his face a dusky mark on the shadow, sat watching her who was transfigured in the red glow" (Lawrence), which introduces a sense of foreboding.

The use of hot/cold and light/dark imagery intensifies in the story after the body is brought home, as Elizabeth's emotions are heightened due to her proximity to the body. This can be seen in the imagery associated with the cottage, which is a representation of Elizabeth's inner state. Shi-zhi writes that Lawrence "cleverly depicts the darkness of the environment, and through the constant description of dim light, allows readers to naturally feel the harshness of the miners' working environment and the family's alienation" (Shi-zhi). The temperature inside the cottage drops drastically when Walter's body enters; when Elizabeth tries to light a candle in order to see him better, it repeatedly refuses to stay lit and extinguishes itself. This imagery reflects the darkness and coldness Elizabeth feels in her soul caused by Walter's death. Furthermore, when she sees his lifeless body, Elizabeth is overcome with a sensation of being "cold and damp" (Lawrence). This imagery further conveys to the reader her sense of despair, as it suggests that the warmth has been sucked out of both her environment and her soul. Elizabeth's emotions are further intensified by the imagery of light and darkness, which serves to contrast her inner state with that of Walter's. When Elizabeth looks at Walter's body, she is overcome by a feeling of utter darkness and desolation; this is contrasted with the vision of his face in death, which Lawrence describes as being "very warm and bright" (Lawrence). This imagery is particularly significant as it not only conveys to the reader the sense of despair Elizabeth feels when she sees Walter's body but also serves to emphasize that his death has robbed her of joy.

In conclusion, the employment of hot/cold and light/dark imagery in *Odour of Chrysanthemums* by D. H. Lawrence serves to deepen the reader's understanding of the characters and their emotions. This careful use of setting helps to create a vivid and immersive experience for readers, allowing them to connect better with the narrator's feelings. Therefore, this technique is an invaluable tool for authors to use in order to evoke more emotion in their audience and create a more powerful narrative. In this way, the use of setting in literature can be a powerful tool for conveying meaning and emotion to readers. An analysis of how hot/cold and light/dark imagery used in the text deepens the reader's understanding of the characters and their emotions. In examining this work, it has become evident that setting can be a valuable tool for authors to use in order to create more powerful narratives and evoke emotion from their audience.

Works Cited

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Shi-zhi, GONG. "A Literary Geographical Analysis of Odour of Chrysanthemums." *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2021, pp. 84–87.

