

Symbolism and theme of limitation and opportunity english literature essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



In history women have often been titled as the assistant of men or the weaker sex. As a result of these traditions held by society, women have been working hard to isolate themselves from these cast and become more independent with their lives. In the short story "The Chrysanthemums" by John Steinbeck, describes Elisa Allen's frustration with her marriage. This will bring a limitation and opportunity to Elisa. Elisa's sense of self-worth is tied to the land or the weather. The author sets the mood of the story by using the winter fog, which is connected with Elisa's mood. The winter fog is described as her limitation to see the outside world. Since, Elisa and her husband live on an isolated and far away from the town. The fog has covered her opportunity to look at the far away town from the isolated house. As well as the place where she lives is quiet, cold and tender air due to the winter fog. Just a light wind blow in which the wind blow described Elisa's hoping her time will come to some supernatural event will deliver her things. "The high gray-flannel fog of winter closed off the Salinas valley (953)." The fog is a representation of the isolation between Elisa and the rest of the world. Another example of Elisa's retirement is that her house sits "across the river, on Henry Allen's foothill ranch (953)." Steinbeck placed Elisa's house away from town it is to allow the reader to realize that Elisa has no contact with other people other than her husband. "On every side it sat like a lid on the mountains and made of the great valley of closed pot" (953). The symbolism of fog is creating a pot that encloses Elisa into her own little; remote world. It also gives the support of her feelings of isolation. As well as it gives the sense of Elisa longing to see the world. In order to see the outside world, Elisa tried to order her world (house). She does house work as follows, "it was a hard-

swept looking little house with hard-polished windows..." (954). in which it shows her desire and love is lacking in her life and out of control. Therefore, this symbolism of the weather, the landscape explained the limitation and opportunity of Elisa to see and go to the outside world. Elisa shows her feeling and thoughts through the chrysanthemums. The chrysanthemums represent Elisa's passion and eagerness to live and experience life as a woman. While tending her chrysanthemums " she pulled out the crisp little roots and trimmed of the leaves of each one with her scissors (955)." This is a symbolisms of Elisa is a strong and eager woman who can do job like a man. Since, the chrysanthemums are inside the garden and could not escape from it. This represents Elisa as the flower in which she could not go out from her present situation and trapped inside. The Chrysanthemums represent isolation. Elisa is an eager person who hungers for excitement and passion in her life. Unfortunately due to conditions beyond her control, she is effectively isolated from the trapped on a country farm. Overall, the chrysanthemums are the inner beauty of Elisa and it shows the adventure, strength, feeling limited and confine of Elisa. Fences are the wall that separate Elisa from the rest of the world or to protect her, including her husband Henry. Her fences protect her flower garden from cattle, dogs, and chickens, while isolating Elisa and keeping her from realizing that she has missing out on in life (Lee 1). Henry's world is representing by cattle, dogs, and chicken, while her flower garden represents Elisa's world. The fence is separating Elisa from her husband. " He had come near quietly, and leaned over the wire fence (954)." This shows that Henry is always being soft around Elisa, courteous but always leaning over careful so that he will not intrude into the woman's

world (Lee 1). Therefore, the chrysanthemums and Elisa can not make her dream come true, no chance of her to adventure and being isolated alone. The costumes that Elisa wore is representing she is covering herself so that she will look like a man. Since, women back then could not do work as men do. This strongly shows the reader that the limitation of women to go outside and do work like a man is very low. By allowing the costume to be seen, is showing the readers that Elisa's passion that long to be free. The manly gloves that she wore to protect her hands show that she is longing for the man's adventure life while she still want to be a woman. Elisa is described as trapped by the pot. As she could not escape from the reality. According to the short story she gives her flower and the pot to the tinker. She used the tinker to help her to escape from her trapped life. Unfortunately, the tinker threw the chrysanthemums away but he kept the pot. It has prevent her from seeing the outside world and kept her as the beginning again. Therefore, the pot has kept her forever and prevents her from escaping. This is limiting the opportunity of her to escape. As result, the chrysanthemums, the landscape/the weather, fence, the pot and costume of the short story " The Chrysanthemums", represent the limitation and opportunity of Elisa to escape from trapped and work as a man. Therefore, symbolism in a short story could be related to the theme of the story. Work Cited John Steinbeck. ' The Chrysanthemums.' Fiction A pocket Anthology. R. S. Gwynn. 6th edition. Hong Kong: penguin Academics, 2009. 200