

# The crysanthemums by john steinbeck assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

I have chosen to work with “ The Chrysanthemums” by John Steinbeck for this assignment, I have found this short story to be fascinating and it brings with it emotional undertones which remain with the reader long after reading. In the essay I will be demonstrating how the author has used both tone and style and symbolism to convey the principles of the work. Tone and style can be found in the method of writing and narration.

Tone is indicated by the style the text is written, who the narrator is and it will establish the reader's relationship with the character's. Style is the distinctive use of language, it is the sum of the diction, imagery, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and figurative language. Often the style of writing can portray who the writer is. Symbol (or symbolism) in writing can be a person, time or place. Something that suggests meanings beyond the literal sense, it bears multiple suggestions and associations and is unique to that particular work.

This story is written in third person narrative, there initially appears to be no emotional pull in the way the story is told though it is rich in descriptive of place and setting, from this you get a sense of being hemmed in, an atmosphere almost of despair. Despite the fact that no real emotional ties seem to be present at first glance, and maybe because of this fact the reader is left to feel the emotional undercurrent.

I feel that the author has more invested in the emotions of this piece and this puts it at odds to the narrator. There is some speculation that this story is in fact based on John Steinbeck's relationship with his wife Carol (Satinwood, 2008) and alludes to a short affair she had with a friend of Steinbeck's wife's

boss. Throughout the story we get to know Elise Allen, her dreams and desires are laid bare not so much through thought or words but by her actions and her surrounds.

Elijah's conversation with her husband Henry just adds to the impression that she is a woman who wants to be thought of and treated as a woman in all aspects but through lack of communication with Henry she feels helpless and a bit like 'one of the boys'. Is her only quality of value the ability to grow things? Henry's insistence that she should turn her hand to the orchard (far more practical) than her beloved harassments just reinforces his inability to see her as a sexual being. Her sexuality is played down.

The story comes full circle with Elijah's dissatisfaction with her life, the idea of escape or a connection, though not sexual to another person who seemed to have an interest in her and her work gives her a peek into what could be, then back to where she started, dissatisfied with her life and love. This all adds to the alarm of dissatisfaction that is felt. The tragedy in all this is that she does not just come full circle but in the process loses her dreams of independence in the process. She seems to give up. She turned up her coat collar so he could not see that she was crying weakly- Like an old woman" (Steinbeck, 1938). BY Vote assignment, I have found this short story to be fascinating and it brings with it writing and narration. Tone is indicated by the style the text is written, who the narrator is and it will establish the reader's relationship with the character's. Style is the distinctive use of language, it is the sum of the diction, imagery, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and figurative language. Often the style of writing can nipping who the writer is.

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