

УДК 821.111-32

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FEELING «ODOUR OF CHRYSANTHEMUMS» WITHIN CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

The article deals with the idea of Eastern and Western cultural synthesis in «Odour of Chrysanthemums» written by D.H. Lawrence. The author has given a figurative chrysanthemum symbolism the profound meaning in terms of Eastern and Western interpretation. This provided the grounds and encouraged the development of the idea. The formative aspects of D. Lawrence's ways of writing within the modernism aesthetics context have been analyzed.

Key words: personality nature, sensitive world perception, symbolism, dialogism, cultural synthesis.

Sophistication, elegance and sensitivity are the distinctive features of David Herbert Lawrence's works that are commonly associated with such novels as «Sons and Lovers», «Lady Chatterley's Lover». But his literary heritage includes not only novels. Having come to light in 1907, the first his work was «A Prelude», a short story published after his victory at Nottinghamshire Guardian Christmas competition. The judges' comments on work were «conventional, but encouraging» [1, p. 1].

The topicality of Lawrence's works in terms of the world literature can be explained with the bright originality and fundamental problems. Moreover, the author highly concentrates on «man against society» conflict, necessity of maintaining inseparable liaison between humanity and nature, relationship between a man and a woman and the problems connected. The author's works have been greatly studied by the scholars and critics, among which one can distinguish A. Fernihough [2], G. Hough [3], J. Worthen [4], N. Zhuktenko [5], N. Mikhalskaya [6], A. Pustovalov [7] and others. Though Lawrence's short stories have not been so widely and thoroughly studied and this fact enables further work on the problems raised. The aim of the investigation is to disclose the cultural synthesis in «Odour of Chrysanthemums».

Literary society believed that the position of Lawrence was «on the verge of modernism» [2, p. 179]. It is indeed that superlative awareness of the very soul of Nature that distinguishes Lawrence's work, that gives it its startling beauty, that isolates him as a writer, and that shut him off as a man from the majority of his kind. For example, J. Worthen believes that you can find «both realistic and symbolic elements» in the early works [4, p. 10]. Meanwhile, A. Fernihough states that the reviewers were «made uneasy with Lawrence's methods and material» as there are various literary genres and traditions in his works [2, p. 3].

Ambiguity stipulated with the constant search for new aesthetic values was the sign of that period. As the literary era immediately preceding Modernism, Victorianism was apt to face the strongest acts of artistic rebellion. The system of social and intellectual values became obsolete and the artists were made to seek new cultural and artistic constants. But then, trying to leave behind the cultural traditions of the past modernist writers faced challenges. They were endowed with these traditions which had a formative influence on their own way of writing, so to be fully released from them meant to break the back of non-solvable problem.

While analyzing the peculiarities of Lawrence's artistic and aesthetic search, the scholars state that he «was trying to reach the persuasiveness of the reality in his works by means of

intensifying the relationship with the character and decreasing the distance between the character and him, this is an attempt to put the reader in the core of the character» [7, p. 9]. And as B. Proskurin emphasizes the effect of verisimilitude is reached not with the help of the Victorian novel devices, but «intuitive and emotional ones as well as psychological and analytical identity between reader and character» [8, p. 71]. The scholar finds the experimentality in «human conception integrity inserted in continuous and never-ending objective reality» [8, p. 69].

First of all, Lawrence character is a bright person. The category of individuality is of urgent importance for him. The author tends to make stress not on the common features of the characters, but on their peculiarities which distinguish them from the crowd such as «strangeness», «alienation», «inherent individuality». As A. Pustovalov mentions, the way of life generalization, that was used in nineteenth century by the realist writers in creating the characters, has hardly been followed by Lawrence and his approach to the character can be called «contrary typification» [7, p. 115].

R. Aldington believes that the author analyzes the depth of human soul leaving behind social class differences. In Lawrence works there is an attempt to penetrate into the apparent obstacles searching for «materia prima» which ties the character with mankind stream of life despite the outrage individualistic manifestation [9, p. 332]. And this is not only connected with the novels but also short stories.

«*Odour of Chrysanthemums*», short story, was written in 1909 but before published in «*The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*», released by Duckworth publishing house at the end of November 1914, Lawrence would write such novels as «*The White Peacock*» (1911), «*Sons and Lovers*» (1913) and «*Love Poems and Others*» (1913).

Having read the first paragraph of the story, Ford Madox Ford, chief editor, immediately recognized that Lawrence «genius may well be a heightened version of the truth» [1, p.2]. But this truth is not something extraordinary, as according to the biography, the plot of the story arose from the real event when one of Lawrence's paternal relatives died tragically in a coal mine.

The writer is really well aware of the life in mining town, as he was born and lived some time in one of such towns. At Eastwood, near Nottingham, an ordinary family of Arthur John Lawrence, a miner, and Lydia Lawrence, a teacher, saw the birth of their fourth son – David – on 11 September 1885. He adopted his mother compassionate and sensitive attitude towards culture, art, intellectual values of the past and the present. His father gave him passionate and indomitable love to life stressing the plenitude of natural instincts, the resplendence of its «volatile colors and shades» [10, p. 6].

The story of the writer's life is better told by his own works as they reflect a lot of events, connected especially with his childhood and adolescence memories. Keith Cushman believes that the early stories exemplify Lawrence's art at its most dramatic, his vision at its most sympathetic. A moving statement about the human condition is made within the context of the world Lawrence knew as a child and young man [11, p. 6]. J.M. Mary states that «life-long story of the author and his works is the same one» [12, p. 1].

When we start studying «*Odour of Chrysanthemums*», we will discover the fact that it is considered to be «the most autobiographical in mother-father aspect of the materials» [11, p. 9]. It was his parents whose prototypes were used in the short story. Despite its objectivity, the story is, as the writer himself put it, «full of [his] childhood's atmosphere» [11, p. 48].

It was likely to be a reason for Lawrence thinking over the climax of the story which was «a huge confrontation» [11, p. 53]. Lawrence has passed beyond the personal question of his mother and father to express an insight into man's fate. In the end he decided to kill Walter Bates (Arthur Lawrence's biographical character) since he considered his father «to be guilty of all misfortunes his family had to suffer» (at that moment) [11, p.56]. His attitude to the father would be reconsidered only after his mother death. His father was blamed for the hours his mother spent waiting for his return after shifts, for the patience his mother had seeing the husband drunk. It is known that Arthur Lawrence «tended to spend his free time with the fellows in the beerhouse and when back at home he had one over the eight» [10, p. 7].

In spite of his passion for life, Lawrence failed to create the complete social, philosophical or poetic system. The idea of completeness itself sickened his way of thinking. He apprehended life as constantly changing process which found a charming one. Moreover, his world outlook was under the formative influence of the crisis of the European rationalism that stems from the philosophy the Enlightenment and Classical German philosophy. Those were the times when the category of Reason was dominant as the scholars and philosophers believed that it was only the highest subject ability, which is the reason, which encouraged life orderliness due to the aims set and the ways of reaching the target formulated. Lawrence's works are likely to contain the echoes of views which can be recognized as Nietzsche's and Freud's theories. The author put scientific materialism contemptuously behind him, and strove to achieve a new and completer synthesis through the instincts.

In addition, Graham Hough discovers that one can draw a parallel between the methods of Jungian analytical psychology the symbolism of David Lawrence. This similarity is based on their desire to reach «inner balance in the process of integrating the opposites, including the conscious with the unconscious while still maintaining their relative autonomy» which was considered be the central process of human development. Furthermore, they both tended to leave the mask in order to reveal true essence [3, p. 37].

The symbolism of conflict, according to A. Pustovalov, can be regarded as «expressing the process of individuation that takes place in the author's soul, under which the psychologist understood the birth of original personality in the fight with the chaos of the collective unconscious. In other words, the direction of the process occurring in the author's consciousness does not differ from the purport of Lawrence's studies stating the person independence and self-sufficiency» [7, p. 14].

In most cases personality traits are exposed due to the symbolism. N. Mikhalskaya emphasizes the fact that «Lawrence combines the exact using of symbols with the general philosophical ideas in his works» [6, p. 84]. What is more the meaning of the symbols is revealed not only within the context of the Western culture but also within the culture and philosophy of the East.

When the writes applied to the Eastern culture this step could not be considered to be taken incidentally. That was common tendency of escaping from the civilization peculiar to the artistic consciousness at the turn of the century. Moreover, the scholars consider that there is a special consistency. Thus, V. Narivskaya observes that «it was a natural process caused by the formed tendency in art and literature when the artist tried to escape from the pressure of civilization and to learn the exotic territories. This can be proved with N. Gumilev's travelling to Africa, M. Kuzmin's to the East, to Alexandria, P. Gogen's to Haiti, M. Voloshin's to provincial part of Italy, A. Chekhov's to Sakhalin etc. Considering all this N. Gumilev was not converted into the African, he was still the Russian, P. Gogen was still the French etc.», and Lawrence, we should add, was still the English [13, p. 60].

In «Odour of Chrysanthemums» the symbolic orientation is exposed in the poetics of title. As to the English Review chief editor opinion, the author has to be observant to notice that chrysanthemums have an odour, as the majority of people do not even know about that. Chrysanthemums are not only flowers of autumn, they are «autumn itself» [14].

But these are not associations connected with these flowers. According to the historical and cultural sources, the first mentioning of the chrysanthemums dates back to China where the archaeologist found the first flower image on the porcelain made up 2 500 years ago. They consider the flowers to be exalted, that could be cultivated by the elite classes in the gardens and this fact emphasized «their superiority over the others» [15, p. 15]. Moreover, the name of the flower «chu hua» is consonant with the word «waiting, lingering» and it evokes the same emotions when one feels blue [16].

As to Japan, the flower was brought in the 8th century to the Land of the Rising Sun where it is still considered to be an informal symbol of the country. The Japanese name of the flower – «kiku» – means the «sun». The chrysanthemums are the symbols of the sun giving the life to all the matter [17].

The Japanese depict the flower as a single-flowered one with 16 petals and it serves as a symbol of divine power. Furthermore, they symbolize «longevity and happiness» [15, p. 16].

Japan considers the orderly unfolding of the chrysanthemum's petals to represent perfection [18].

Dreaming of chrysanthemums indicates an unfolding of the inner self, during a tumultuous time of life. In other words, the flowers may represent a time of deep personal growth forged by hardship or conflict. As a result, there is a stronger, more realized person [19].

The Chinese interpretation of the flowers is likely to play a role in selecting the title of the short story. As it tells us about the life of the miner's wife, but we all know that the most precise word to describe it is «waiting». The wife is waiting for the husband to return after the shift, for him to drink a glass of beer in beerhouse, but in any case she is waiting for him to come back home. The antithesis to the symbolic meaning is the social class depicted, as Lawrence chose the ordinary workers – miners, not noble people – to describe their lives.

But the Japanese meaning of the flower is exposed more evidently and brightly. From the very beginning the landscape frame describing the house consists of «*dishevelled pink chrysanthemums*», which hung beside the path «*like pink cloths hung on bushes*» [20, p. 181]. One can consider that this phrase includes, apart from the metaphorical comparison «path – life», the parallel with the category of the beautiful. And as long as the description of the flowers is given, the main character appears, so she can be regarded as the personification of the perfection in a human disguise. So there is no wonder that Annie, Elizabeth's daughter, is «*in a little rapture*» when she sees the flower in her mother's apron in the light of copper reflector, and this is «*unusual event*» [20, p. 186].

Despite the fact that the attention of the child is paid to the chrysanthemums who owing to being an innocent does not notice her mother's figure displayed itself just rounding with maternity. But it is the flowers which emphasize this fact. Moreover this provides the grounds for ascribing a special meaning to the chrysanthemums. As N. Glinka states, there is no things that exist beyond the gender since the very single reason for human being is the process of birth that is a «solemn performance» [21, p. 126]. In this case the perfection of the woman described is the perfection of giving a new life.

In addition to using the symbols in the outer space detalization, we should point out the importance of their usage in the description of the main character's inner state. This aim is reached by means of interior monologue. It helps to disclose both main character's philosophical striving to cognize herself and the features of strong personally who has been formed in terms of the problem arisen. N. Panasenko believes that the personal predominates over the communal and the attention paid to the character's inner world allows penetrating deeply into it. It evokes such questions as «Who am I?» and «What am I?» [22, p. 236]. In other words, the influence of the Eastern culture can not be limited in terms of detalization, it reflects the type of narration as well as the form of the character's disclosure.

But as to the English traditions and customs, they reveal entirely different approach to the symbolic interpretation of the chrysanthemums. These flowers were brought at the end of the 18th century to England. Since that time they have been used not only for bunches and other kinds of decoration, but also for funeral rites. So the English consider the chrysanthemums to be a symbol of «deep and silent sorrow» [23].

The motive of grief passes through the short story and it is connected with the image of chrysanthemums. Before Elizabeth meeting Walter for the last time, she fixes her eyes on the pink chrysanthemums that were hold in two vases on the dark mahogany. These vases – like He and She – are filled with the life due to the flowers. But «there was a *cold, deathly smell* of chrysanthemums in the room» [20, p. 195], that is the author's intention to intensify the readers' uneasy waiting and inevitable death approaching with the help of these epithets. As soon as a vase with flowers is broken, the Death comes to Elizabeth's home.

Life is fragile, but the body is just a vessel, receptacle for the soul. But here we do not consider a regeneration or life after death. The matter is the meaning which we ascribe to the soul. The chrysanthemums are the burden of all main character's life: «*It was chrysanthemums when I married him* [Walter, Elizabeth's husband], *and chrysanthemums when you* [Annie, Elizabeth's daughter] *were born, and the first time they ever brought him home drunk, he'd got brown chrysanthemums in his button-hole*» [20, p. 187]. So the associations connected with the odour of the flowers have the different nature, mostly negative one. Helen Croom examines

these associations as the result of the life experience perceived, so the progression of life cycle has a «symbolic foreshadowing». What is more, she points out the connection with the flowers related to the life in marriage [24, p. 6]. As little Annie has no life experience, the fragrance of the flowers she perceives as a child can do that – naïvely and enthusiastically. But John, her brother, treats them in rather different way. He tears «*at the ragged wisps of chrysanthemums and drops the petals in handfuls along the path*» [20, p. 182]. Here one can draw a parallel between man's and woman's (in children characters) attitude toward the environment and its beauty. That is why Elizabeth decides not to punish him for this awful treatment of flowers. And she breaks off a twig with three or four wan flowers and then pushes it in her apron-band, having no strengths to throw them away. This is her attempt to preserve the rays of beauty she faces.

N. Glinka states that the integrity of the person is evident when we consider the attitude to the sensitive world – the world of fragrances, touches, images. Due to this treatment person releases himself from «the obsessive self-satisfaction» [21, p. 128]. Therefore the symbolic meaning of the flowers is used in combination with the game of light and shades which not only adds colouring to the scenery description but allows to expose the emotional state of the characters. There is a gradual shift from outer physical phenomenon to inner world, the fragility of which can be compared with the life of autumn flowers.

One ordinary evening of the Bates family living in a mining village turns to be a short story with the help of which David Lawrence depicts the subtle line between life and death, light and shadow. This confrontation contributes to the appearance of a woman who is strong and independent, who is capable of overcoming the difficulties without losing her fortitude.

As soon as a life cycle is over, Elizabeth finally smells the true fragrance of chrysanthemums which helps to realize the estrangement of her husband and her: «*they had met in the dark and had fought in the dark, not knowing whom they met nor whom they*» [20, p. 199]. This fragrance is akin to the truth that is usually unnoticed in the heat of living as well as the beauty of the surrounding. Hardly can we find a person who would like to feel the fragrance of alienation and impenetrable solitude.

According to A. Pustovalov, the symbolism in Lawrence's works can not be regarded as «something external, superficial or invented» because of uniting the rationality and the unconscious. Thus, the author's symbol «including dual meaning, represents the important element in the book, essential «creative unit» [7, p. 25].

If we take into consideration Lawrence aspiration for depicting the life full of emotions, the use of symbols can not be regarded as accidental. A. Losev believes that «the depiction of life in its internal and external development can no be a dead image», because the author can reach the sufficient level in describing our objective reality «by means of the symbolic interpretation, when life is depicted as a continuous flow, as an intermittent development, as a constant striving for the ideals we prayed for» [25, p. 109].

With the help of symbols the writer tries, to some extent, to implement order to the «chaos» dominating at the turn of the century, disclosing the cultural liaison between the past and the present. And due to the diversity of different cultures and traditions he manages to depict the inner world versatility of the Person.

Moreover, the symbols contribute not only to multilateral character's depiction but also to their dialogism. The short story has a Man who is opposed to a Woman and this opposition set in the combination of two natures, as well as the light is opposed to shadow, the life – to the death.

While reading «*Odour of Chrysanthemums*» we can trace the train of associations occurred in Elizabeth's consciousness, the process of the perceiving this or that event, the imprint left on the character's life. Meanwhile the symbolic meaning of these associations is closely connected both the western European culture and the Eastern one. But there are no borders between these cultures in the consciousness as the life is perceived in unity and versatility. One can conclude that comparing the meaning of the chrysanthemums inherited in the European mentality with the character of Walter Bates who dies at the age of technological triumph and depersonalization, David Lawrence tends to emphasize the decadence of the system and its harmful influence on human life.

On the contrary, the idea of sun and perfection which the author derives from the Eastern culture, he integrates it into the idea of «new life». And it is interesting why these ideas are

related to Annie who is full of hopes, who has a long life to live, who treasures the beauty around her and believes it to be a miracle. Elizabeth, her mother, is a woman of new generation, who represents an independent personality capable of facing a lot of difficulties, but what is important, she is able to live the Life. Lawrence endows her with this ability because she can feel and perceive the world around her. She manages to distinguish the odour of chrysanthemums in the heat of living and to cognize the truth by means of feelings and sensations. As it is the only way, according to the author, to live, not to exist. In this light the metaphor of scent acquires the peculiar significance as it reflects the sensitive method of world perception which is opposed to the rationalism in Lawrence outlook.

To conclude, the artistic perception of the chrysanthemum symbol, the metaphor of scent embody the idea of Eastern and Western cultural synthesis in «Odour of Chrysanthemums» written by D.H. Lawrence. In the view of the above one can suppose that Lawrence, while developing this idea, lays the corner stone for his own philosophical primacy of sensitive world perception over the rational one. So the principle, that is followed in his further works, especially during the late period, has been formed.

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В статье исследуется идея синтеза культур Запада и Востока в рассказе Д.Г. Лоуренса «Запах хризантем». Свое обоснование и развитие идея синтеза культур получает в глубоком осмыслении писателем образной символики хризантемы в ее восточном и западном толковании. Анализируются аспекты становления творческого метода Д.Г. Лоуренса в контексте эстетики модернизма.

Ключевые слова: личностное начало, чувственное восприятие мира, символизм, диалогичность, синтез культур.

У статті досліджується ідея синтезу культур Заходу та Сходу в оповіданні Д.Г. Лоуренса «Запах хризантем». Свое обґрунтування та розвиток ідея синтезу культур отримує у глибокому осмисленні письменником образної символіки хризантем у її східному та західному тлумаченні. Аналізуються аспекти становлення творчого методу Д.Г. Лоуренса у контексті естетики модернізму.

Ключові слова: засади особистості, чуттєве сприйняття світу, символизм, діалогічність, синтез культур.

Надійшло до редакції 7.09.2012 р.