



**FEMALE ELEMENTS: THE IMAGE OF ALVINA
HOUGHTON IN D.H. LAWRENCE
*THE LOST GIRL***

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the study of the female image in the novel *The Lost Girl* by the English modernist writer David Herbert Lawrence and to the actualization of the issue of woman's role and place in the society at the beginning of the 20th century. The rapid development of feminism led to the aggravation of the issue of the woman's existence and their status in the community, their rights and freedoms. A woman stops to be a man's shadow, as she used to be under the patriarchal way of life of people, she prefers to express her own views on everyday or social problems, goals, ideas, desires.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the concepts of "feminine", "feminist", "female" in the image of Alvina, which reflect the character's relationship with her family and other characters of the novel, who surrounded her at different periods of her life.

The main heroine's character is elaborated in the article. Alvina is depicted so contradictory that she is dominated by a single concept at different periods of her life. They seem to flow in to each other, not simply coexist. We

considered the young girl's relationship with the family and the society in which she lives, precisely through the description of which, the writer focuses the reader's attention on the problem of "*woman-society*" relations.

The main character is depicted by the writer as a strong and courageous woman who does not fit into the framework that was typical for the community of the 19th-20th centuries. D.H. Lawrence and his bold creativity are the forerunner of the events that will unfold in society later, when the question of woman's role and place in the society will reach the peak of its popularity.

Key words: D.H. Lawrence, modernism, feminism, female images, concept.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Жіночі стихії: образ Альвіни Хоутон в романі Д.Г. Лоуренса «Згублена дівчина»

Статтю присвячено дослідженню жіночого образу в романі англійського письменника-модерніста Девіда Герберта Лоуренса «Згублена дівчина» та актуалізації питання щодо ролі і місця жінки у суспільстві поч. XX ст.. Стрімкий розвиток фемінізму призвів до загострення питання буття жінок і їхнього стану у спільноті, їхніх прав і свобод. Жінка перестає бути тінню чоловіка, як це склалося за патріархальним укладом життя людей, вона починає активно висловлювати власні погляди на побутові чи суспільні проблеми, цілі, ідеї, бажання.

Мета статті полягає у виокремленні концептів «фемінне», «феміністське», «жіноче» в образі Альвіни, які віддзеркалюють взаємовідносини героїні з родиною та іншими героями роману, які оточували її у різні періоди життя.

У статті осмислено характер головної героїні. Альвіна зображена настільки суперечливою, що у різні періоди її життя в ній домінує якийсь один концепт. Тобто, вони наче не просто співіснують, а перетікають один в один. Розглянуто відношення молодої дівчини до сім'ї та суспільства, в якому вона живе, саме через описання якого, письменник зосереджує увагу читача на проблемі відношень «жінка-суспільство».

Героїня зображена письменником сильною та сміливою жінкою, яка не вписується в рамки, що характерні для спільноти межі XIX-XX ст. Д.Г. Лоуренс і його смілива творчість є предтечею тих подій, які розгорнуться у суспільстві

пізніше, коли питання про роль і місце жінки в соціумі досягне піку своєї популярності.

Ключові слова: Д.Г. Лоуренс, модернізм, фемінізм, жіночі образи, концепт.

INTRODUCTION

The period of the development of literature at the turn of the 19th-20th always attracted a lot of attention, interested many researchers and literary critics due to certain features. One of these principles is emphasis on the problem of a woman's place, her rights and freedoms in the society of that time. This issue reaches its peak of relevance at the border of these centuries and arouses the keen interest. Before that, a woman was perceived as a shadow of a man, as a person who fulfills certain duties for her family and society, but at the same time, she seems to have no rights of her own. The patriarchal system of people's lives had a great influence on the formation of general views that existed in society at that time. The general attitude towards a woman, her problems and views on life was not an exception, the ideas of the patriarchal society left their mark on these as well. Only over the time, representatives of various spheres of life related to art and culture appeared, with some new and fresh ideas about a woman's existence, which began to change the general picture. Of course, the representatives of literature were among the first who tried to change the society's attitude to women through their literary works.

LITERATURE REVIEW

David Herbert Lawrence's works always attracted a certain interest of various researchers and literary critics and caused controversy. We have the opportunity to single out some researchers among those who studied the writer's works: D.V. Zatonskyi, S. D. Pavlychko, N. Yu. Zhluktenko, E. P. Honcharenko, E. Radford, S. Wakefield, S. Matthews, S. Reid, V. Ejupi, L. Siljanovska and others. The writer D. H. Lawrence stood out among modernist writers. A large number of literary critics and researchers pay considerable attention to his work; he stands out as one of the key figures of the first half of the 20th century and the creator of new literature: "There is no doubt that David Herbert Lawrence is the icon of the Period of Modernism in British as well as the world Literature. It is Lawrence who gave directions how

to cope with the difficulties of modern era. Not only does he encompass the above mentioned elements, but he goes even farther within the exploration of our Eros and Thanatos, then also with the ideals of the society in the new spheres where they happen to find themselves. He managed to put so much of his life in his books, and managed to create characters which are considered as the most completed ones in the history of Literature” (Ejupi, Siljanovska, Iseni, 2014, p. 112).

It is known that the British philologist Andrew Radford paid attention to the character of T. Hardy’s novel “Tess of the d’Urbervilles” as well as to the character of D. H. Lawrence’s novel *The Lost Girl*, considering them as a development (and a variation) of the Greek myth about Persephone: “Andrew Radford reads Thomas Hardy’s titular character from ‘Tess of the d’Urbervilles’ and D. H. Lawrence’s Alvina from *The Lost Girl* as variation and development of the Greek myth of Persephone which is used ‘as a lens through which to gauge late-Victorian England and its discontents’... “ *The Lost Girl* differs in that it ‘stresses’ the immeasurable worth of Alvina’s [...] experiences over the stifling and moral prohibitions that worry her invalid mother” (Radford, 2022).

The understanding of Alvina and other female images on the basis of feminist criticism was left out of Andrew Redford's attention. Also, the researcher did not notice that not only the features of the Persephone archetype can be traced in female images. Archetypes of various ancient Greek goddesses also develop in the heroines.

The Lost Girl has not been studied in Ukrainian literary studies. It should be noted that this novel has not been translated into Ukrainian or other Slavic languages. Thought he main character of the novel Alvina is contradictory, astonishing for a woman of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Therefore, it is necessary to fill this gap and explore the heroine in the disclosure of three concepts: feminist, feminine and female. This will allow the most complete understanding of the character of a woman at the beginning of the 20-th century and the specifics of English modernist literature.

AIM OF THE ARTICLE

The aim of the article is the interpretation of the female literary image in the novel *The Lost Girl* by D.H. Lawrence and the highlighting of the concepts “feminine”, “feminist”, “female” in the image of Alvina.

METHODOLOGY

In the course of the research, we will apply the methodology of feminist criticism. We will distinguish the concepts of “female”, “feminine” and “feminist”, this will give the opportunity to explore the female image of the novel as a phenomenon. It should be emphasized that professor S.K. Kryvoruchko in her book “Literary work of Simone de Beauvoir: evolution of artistic images” has noted: “The feminist criticism, as noted by P. Barry, focuses on distinguishing of the concepts ‘feminist’, ‘feminine’, and ‘female’. The key to distinguishing between these concepts is the issue of ‘conditionality’ and ‘socialization’. T. Moi interprets ‘feminism’ as a ‘political position’ or a woman’s place in the social hierarchy, career orientation; ‘femality’ as a ‘question of biology’; and ‘femininity’ as a set of culturally determined characteristics” (Kryvoruchko, 2012, c. 14).

S.K. Kryvoruchko involved the principles of feminist criticism in the process of analyzing S. de Beauvoir’s works. We will do this in the interpretation of D.H. Lawrence’s images.

RESULTS

The process of struggle for women’s rights, namely the Feminist movement, had a great impact on the development of world literature. Let us recall what was stated by Peter Barry: “The ‘Women's Movement’ of the 1960s was certainly not the beginning of feminism. It was rather a restoration of the old tradition of thought and action, which already had its own classic books that diagnosed the problem of women's inequality in the society..”; “In many respects, this movement was literary from the very beginning, in particular, it was manifested in the awareness of the importance of female images promoted by literature, the recognition of the vital need to fight against them, doubts about their authority and validity. In this sense, the Women's Movement has always been closely connected with books and literature...” (Barry, p. 144).

The fresh views on the problem of women's existence started to be formed and the literary works of that time became a so-called “device” for writers to express their own opinion about this problem.

The English writer David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) occupies a special position among the modernist writers. The era of modernism, in our opinion, has

always stood out among other eras precisely because of the way the writers of that period created. The Ukrainian professor, the doctor of philological sciences S.K. Kryvoruchko noted: “Modernist writers behave very calmly and intelligently, almost like scientists and artists, even academically. They wrote their works and did not try to bring them to the community at any cost in order to realize themselves. It can be said that they wrote ‘in the table’ (they created literary works without a hope of publishing them in the foreseeable future), led a closed and solitary way of life, and, even if they united in groups, they behaved rather ‘quietly’” (Kryvoruchko, 2022).

It is known that in D.H. Lawrence’s works the features of the concept of Imagism can be traced. Let us recall what S.K. Kryvoruchko has told about this: “The concept of imagism involved the creation of a suggestive image as a self-sufficient poetic unit. The suggestiveness means the writer's creative ability to ‘force’ the reader's imagination to ‘work’. The goal of the imagists was to create the readers’ vivid impressions in order to update the understandable worldview and form a new idea about things. The updating of the long-forgotten ‘old’ that can cause a reader’s unexpected vivid reaction was also suitable for suggestive images” (Kryvoruchko, 2022). Such details give us an opportunity to better understand how exactly D.H. Lawrence could influence readers through his novels.

“David Herbert Lawrence, as one of the most outstanding writers in the world of literature, undertook the most difficult task which he and only he performed in an extremely successful way, and the reason for managing this is that he successfully decided to write about the forever lasting magical principle in the world - the truth” (Ejupi, Siljanovska, Iseni, 2014, p. 112). The writer created a so-called dialogue with the readers and he tried to touch the most painful and profound topics that worried the society at that time through his works. D.H. Lawrence was amazed at how much a person can be enslaved by the civilization and the machines that rule it. He was obsessed with the idea of changing and improving the life of society. In addition, the writer actively raised the issue of women’s place in the society of that time. He was one of those writers who not only began to include a large number of female images in his works; he started to make them dominant. D.H. Lawrence emphasized that a woman was not just a shadow of a man, she also had her own thoughts and desires, and most importantly, she had the right to show them, not hide them.

In addition, the writer was the first who raised the topic of the human body and its bodily manifestations. He presented such literary works, the plots of which are

inextricably linked to the topic of intimate relations between a man and a woman. Perhaps for the modern reader and literature this is not something new, but for the moral norms of that time, this topic was frankly obscene; especially if it involved a sexual relationship between a man and a woman who were not married, or if these people were secret lovers. Some works by D.H. Lawrence were called scandalous, some of them were not immediately accepted by the society and critics; maybe it was due to the fact that the writer touched such frank topics so boldly.

D.H. Lawrence brings to a reader's attention the literary works plots of which are closely connected or are devoted to the problem of a woman's existence in the society. We can mention some of the most famous writer's works: *The Lost Girl* (1920), *Women in Love* (1920), *The Virgin and the Gypsy* (1926), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), etc. If you pay attention to the titles of these novels, it immediately becomes clear that the central character is a woman, and it is certain that the main themes and conflicts are related to her.

Our research is based on the novel *The Lost Girl*. It can be confirmed that all the female images presented by D.H. Lawrence in this novel are peculiar, not similar to each other. The writer really singles out some of the female images, showing how different they are, but we will focus on the central image of the novel - the main character Alvina. The study of female images in literary works has always been a painstaking process. In the process of studying the chosen character of the novel, we will pay attention to distinguishing the concepts "feminist", "feminine" and "female"; in this way we will investigate: what exactly dominates / coexists / flows in the central character of this literary work. This will allow us to trace the evolution of Alvina's image. As we have already mentioned, D.H. Lawrence reveals a sufficient number of female images in the context of the novel *The Lost Girl*, and in our opinion, each of these images had its own special influence on the formation of the main character and on the disclosure of one of the mentioned concepts in the character at different periods of Alvina's life.

The main character of the novel – Alvina Houghton attracts the reader's attention only at the beginning of the second chapter "The Rise of Alvina Houghton". From the first words of this chapter, the reader gets a picture of how exactly the girl lived during the first 25 years of her life: "The heroine of this story is Alvina Houghton. If we leave her out of the first chapter of her own story it is because, during the first twenty-five years of her life, she really was left out of count, or so overshadowed as to

be negligible. She and her mother were the phantom passengers in the ship of James Houghton's fortunes" (Lawrence, 1920, p. 33). It seems that the patriarchal – unusual for the English mentality – atmosphere in the Houghton family and the unhealthy relationship between Alvina's parents that was depicted by D.H. Lawrence in the first chapter of the novel, had a great influence on the girl since her childhood: "She was a thin child with delicate limbs and face, and wide, grey-blue, ironic eyes. Even as a small girl she had that odd ironic tilt of the eyelids which gave her a look as if she were hanging back in mockery" (Lawrence, 1920, p. 33). The artistic images, with the help of which D.H. Lawrence describes the girl first, namely – "the phantom passenger in the ship", "so overshadowed as to be negligible", do not allow readers to imagine a strong and independent girl. We can make an assumption that Alvina could have the same fate as her mother - uninteresting, sad and empty, if the governess Miss Frost, who devoted her life to taking care of all the members of the Houghton family, had not intervened into the process of girl's education and had not influenced on the formation of her character.

In fact, the grown-up Alvina became the complete opposite of her mother. Regarding the image of Mrs. Houghton, Alvina's mother, the writer paid almost no attention to this female image; although D.H. Lawrence included it in the context of the work, he did not give the readers any information about Clarice Houghton's fate. In our opinion, he did so in order to create a parallel between two characters and to make the reader observe the great difference between Mrs. Houghton and her daughter; it is possible that such techniques distinguished the representatives of the imagism concept, the features of which can be traced in the writer's works. Clarice Houghton is depicted as a very weak woman, not only from the point of view of physical health, but also from the point of view of mental health: "Mrs. Houghton was now very weak, and so nervous in her weakness that she could not bear the slightest sound. Her greatest horror was lest her husband should come into the room. On his entry she became blue at the lips immediately, so he had to hurry out again" (Lawrence, 1920, p. 57). The woman was so weak and mentally unhealthy that her husband's visit was the greatest terror for her. We can assume that earlier she loved Mr. Houghton, but he "broke" her because of his indifference. While studying the image of Alvina, we realized that she was not weak like her mother. The metaphor "the phantom passenger" is more descriptive of the mother than the daughter.

The girl was also different from the other young girls who lived in the town

of Woodhouse, whose main dream was a wedding and a profitable marriage. “In Woodhouse, there was a terrible crop of oldmaids among the ‘nobs’, the tradespeople and the clergy. The whole town of women, colliers’ wives and all, held its breath as it was a chance of one of these daughters of comfort and woe getting off. They flocked to the well-to-do weddings with an intoxication of relief” (Lawrence, 1920, p. 12) – the writer unites the girls into a single group, which he calls “a terrible crop of old maids”, but he does not add the main character to this group. Again, we observe the contrast - a drawn parallel, thanks to which it becomes clear how unusual the main character is.

Alvina is special, and this is evidenced even by the fact that it is difficult for a reader to understand which character traits are best revealed in her and what is dominated. Probably, that is why the novel was called *The Lost Girl*; she seems to be lost in herself, she does not understand herself: where is her real place and what is her purpose. The plot conflicts of the novel refer the reader to the “needlessness” of the main character, because wherever Alvina was, there was always a reason that caused her to feel uncomfortable; she wanted to run away, but she did not understand where she needed to go.

“I can’t stay here all my life.. I can’t bear it. I’m buried alive – simply buried alive”; “I want to go away... I don’t know. I don’t care. Anywhere, if I can get out of Woodhouse” (Lawrence, 1920, p. 42). The girl did not want to stay in Manchester House and decided to “escape” to a place called St. Pancras, where she began studying and qualified as a nurse. In this way, the character begins to reveal herself in the feminist concept, because she thinks about the profession and starts to learn. However, subsequent circumstances change the picture, because firstly, the writer emphasizes that Alvina has never even thought about having such a profession: “Alvina was indeed speaking at random. She had never thought of being a nurse – the idea had never entered her head. If it had she would certainly never have entertained it. But she had heard Alexander speak of Nurse This and Sister That...” (Lawrence, 1920, p. 43). Even after she received her specialty and was forced to return home, the girl did not manage to build a successful career: “It goes saying that Alvina Houghton did not make her fortune as a maternity nurse”; “If Alvina wanted to make her fortune – or even her living – she should have gone to a strange town. She was so advised by everyone she knew” (Lawrence, 1920, p. 56). At first, Alvina intended to work in her specialty, but the situation was affected by the fact that the girl’s mother became even

more ill and Alvina spent almost all of her time by her side, she took care of her own mother. After Mrs. Houghton's death, Alvina even tried to give some piano lessons, although she did not like it, she did it only because of Miss Frost's insistence: "Miss Frost, with anxious foreseeing, persuaded the girl to take over some pupils, to teach them the piano. The work was distasteful to Alvina. She was not a good teacher" (Lawrence, 1920, p. 35).

It should be noted that during the period when Alvina returned home and thought about the work, she did not think about men at all, it seemed that they stopped to cause any interest from the young girl: "As a matter of fact, Alvina was detached for the time being from her interest in young men" (Lawrence, 1920, p. 57). But even despite the work of a nurse and a music teacher, it cannot be claimed that the main character is fully revealed precisely in the feminist concept.

Regarding the disclosure of the feminine concept in the main character, D.H. Lawrence notes that Alvina attended church and even spent some time playing the piano: "She had her lessons from her beloved governess, she worked at the piano, she took her walks, and for social life she went to the Congregational Chapel, and to the functions connected with the chapel.... As she grew older she entered the choir at chapel, she attended Christian Endeavour and P.S.A., and the Literary Society on Monday evenings" (Lawrence, 1920, p. 33-34). It can seem to a reader that the girl devotes her time to attending church, the church choir and playing the piano only because of Miss Frost's instructions; because of the fact that Miss Frost devoted her own time to these activities, she wanted to awaken the same interest in the development of cultural skills inside the girl and to stimulate her creative realization. By the way, it should be noted that Alvina needed her piano skills a little later. When Mr. Houghton decided to establish his own theater, Alvina played for the visitors every evening. That is, the girl really tries to realize her creative potential, in which the feminine concept can be traced, but just like the feminist concept - it is not dominant in the main character of the novel.

The female concept is revealed in the character of the young woman. Like almost every woman by nature, Alvina fell in love with a man and tried to do everything to ensure her happy life with him. But D.H. Lawrence created a special woman, because she hides many contradictions. It is known that the female concept reveals everything that was given to a woman by the nature: a woman is the keeper of the home hearth, her life is built around her husband and children, and her main duty is to take care

of her family and the well-being of her loved ones. She must raise children, cook food and wait for her husband wherever he is. According to the patriarchal standards a woman should be weak. But we cannot say that the main character is weak. She is very strong, on the contrary; she defends her interests and fights for her love and happiness.

Despite all the men who were close to Alvina, the biggest love of her life was Cicio. He was the first man with whom Alvina had an intimate relationship, despite the fact that they were not yet married. Alvina loves this man and follows him; she gives up her usual way of life, everything she has and goes with him to his hometown - she goes against all the rules and morals that prevailed in the society of the 20th century. When she tells Cicio that she is pregnant, watching his reaction, she rejoices even more, becomes happier, like every woman who is expecting a child from the beloved man and already loves him very much: "She felt the strange terror and loveliness of his passion. And she wished she could lie down there by that town gate, in the sun, and swoon for ever unconscious... His yellow, luminous eyes watched her and enveloped her. There was nothing for her but to yield, yield, yield. And yet she could not sink to earth" (Lawrence, 1920, p. 373).

DISCUSSION

We pay attention to the woman of the beginning of the 20th century in order to better understand the modern woman.

Alvina Houghton is the forerunner of the female characters of literary works of the 21st century. Modern literary characters, like the world itself, change very quickly: new ideas appear, devices are invented, characters in the literary works begin to use smart technologies that can improve and make life easier. We demonstrate Alvina's development because she needs more. There is an opinion that modern women are very difficult to understand. We determine how the writer depicts what ideas and goals live in the female consciousness, how D.H. Lawrence proves that a woman is capable of everything. We emphasize that after reading his novel, a reader should not have any doubts: anyone should believe the words that a woman is the "weak sex". We single out D.H. Lawrence's idea that every woman is a unique, strong and sometimes unsurpassed person. The writer emphasizes the problems of women's existence, in which the main character is presented in a dominant position. We want to show that

D.H. Lawrence's works can be the key to understanding modern women and their views on life.

CONCLUSION

Alvina Houghton is depicted by David Herbert Lawrence such an unusual, special girl that a reader manages to find a lot of contradictions in her again and again. The girl is indeed depicted and revealed in all three concepts: feminist, feminine and female, but it is very difficult to understand what exactly dominates her. It seems that at different periods of the girl's life, one concept takes a dominant position, while others recede into the background, as if they are overshadowed; and then, over time, when the situation in Alvina's life changes, another concept becomes dominant.

D.H. Lawrence depicts the character that is revealed in three concepts:

- Alvina's revealing in the feminist concept – the study of her interests and her desire to build a career and to occupy a high position, to have the job she dreamed about;
- The disclosure of the character in the feminine concept – the study of a young woman's creative self-realization;
- Her disclosure in the female concept – the study of the main character as a woman and all the characteristics that were given to her by the nature.

In the process of study of the main character, we discovered what exactly Alvina was focused on. The girl's orientations influenced her fate, made her unusual, so unlike other female characters of the novel *The Lost Girl*.

The only thing that has always been unchanged is the girl's strong position in life. These orientations are showed in Madame's statement when she asked Alvina about her last name: "Houghton! Huff-ton! When it is said, it has a sound *against*: that is, against the neighbor, against humanity" (Lawrence, 1920, c.217). "Against". Perhaps this word indicates the position of the main character. She sticks to her thoughts and views and goes against everyone: against neighbors, against people, against the society as a whole.

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