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AFRICAM SYMBOLISM IN THE NOVEL “WOMEN IN LOVE” BY D.H. LAWRENCE

АФРИКАНСЬКИЙ СИМВОЛІЗМ В РОМАНІ ЛОУРЕНСА «ЖІНКИ У КОХАННІ»

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The article studies the peculiarities of the African symbology in the novel by English writer, poet and literary critic D.H. Lawrence “Women in love”. This novel has repeatedly become the object of study in modern literary criticism. However, the influences of different cultures were not properly studied. The article aims to distinguish characteristic features of African symbology in association with ancient and modern art, to indicate the divine feminine principle which in connection with African symbology is related to the image of Ursula. West Africa, part of which was under the influence of Britain and was its colony, has always attracted the British primarily due to the originality of its culture, customs and rituals. D.H. Lawrence believed that the ancient African people had ancient knowledge, which in civilized countries was lost due to technological progress, industrialization, and democratic principles proclaimed in society. The divine feminine principle is revealed in the novel due to the symbology of moon which conveys truth about Universe that sometimes is ruined by those who does not take it for granted. Lawrence reveals the development and evolution of the hero by understanding African fetishism. He was able to point out the symbolic meaning of the Sun and Moon, masculine and feminine, the attempt of man to “destroy”, “refute” the power of the divine feminine, the recognition of the unique feminine essence (in Ursula). Rupert tries to apply his ideas and beliefs concerning the union with the woman taking into account her unique origin (marriage to Ursula as an attempt to create a union). The essence of religious worship was introduced into the text of the narrative through an appeal to an African figurine by Rupert. For others mental knowledge turned out to be understandable – their communication was reduced to commercialism and self-interest. An appeal to the cultural heritage of West Africa reveals the experience of physical and sensory knowledge of previous generations, which is transmitted through the mythological ideas of ancestors concerning the connection of all living and non-living things on Earth.

Key words: African fetishism, symbology, Lawrence, art.

У статті досліджено особливості африканської символіки в романі англійського письменника, поета та літературознавця Д. Г. Лоуренса «Закохані жінки». Цей роман неодноразово ставав об'єктом дослідження сучасного літературознавства. Однак впливи різних культур не були належним чином вивчені. Стаття має на меті виділити характерні риси африканської символіки у зв'язку з античним і сучасним мистецтвом, вказати на божественне жіноче начало, яке у зв'язку з африканською символікою споріднено з образом Урсули. Західна Африка, частина якої перебувала під впливом Великобританії і була її колонією, завжди приваблювала англійців насамперед самобутністю своєї культури, звичаїв і обрядів. Д. Г. Лоуренс вважав, що стародавні африканські народи володіли стародавніми знаннями, які в цивілізованих країнах були втрачені внаслідок технічного прогресу, індустріалізації та проголошених у суспільстві демократичних принципів. Божественне жіноче начало розкривається в романі завдяки символіці місяця. Лоуренс розкриває розвиток і еволюцію героя через розуміння африканського фетишизму. Йому вдалося вказати на символічне значення Сонця і Місяця, чоловічого і жіночого начал, спробу людини «знищити», «спростувати» силу божественного жіночого начала, визнання унікальної жіночої сутності (в «Урсулі»). Руперт намагається втілити свої ідеї та переконання щодо союзу з жінкою, враховуючи її унікальне призначення (одруження з Урсулою як спроба створити союз). Сутність релігійного культу введено в текст роману через звернення до африканська статуетка, значення та символіка якої зрозуміла тільки для Руперта. Інші віддають перевагу розумовому пізнанню. Звернення до культурної спадщини Західної Африки розкриває досвід фізичних і чуттєвих знань попередніх поколінь, які передаються через міфологічні уявлення предків про зв'язок усього живого і неживого на Землі.

Ключові слова: африканський фетишизм, символіка, Лоуренс, мистецтво.

Actuality of the problem. The works of the English writer, poet and literary critic D.H. Lawrence became the object of many researches. His novel “Women in love” is considered one of the most important taking into account the range of the issues it was concerned with. This novel consists of many symbols which will lead to better understanding of the author’s vision and his poetics. One of such symbols is connected with African fetishism which did not get enough attention from the scholars.

Analysis of recent researches. African symbolism is partly analyzed in the works by L.R. Chamberlain who correlates African symbology with the images of Pussum in “Women in Love” [1]. Neilson Brett studies the same symbol but on connection with another novel by Lawrence “The plumed serpent” [2]. Morriz Inez R. points out to the general interest of the English to the African symbolism at the beginning of the XX century as a result of numerous expeditions made to Western Africa. The author also distinguishes the origin of the sculptures discussed in the novel [3].

Aim of the article is to distinguish characteristic features of African symbology in association with ancient and modern art, to indicate the divine feminine principle which in connection with African symbology is related to the image of Ursula.

West Africa, part of which was under the influence of Britain and was its colony, has always attracted the British primarily due to the originality of its culture, customs and rituals. D.H. Lawrence believed that the ancient African people had ancient knowledge, which in civilized countries was lost due to technological progress, industrialization, and democratic principles proclaimed in society.

In the novel “Rainbow” Lawrence used the theme of Britain's enslavement of other peoples. Lawrence, like his main character Ursula, does not believe in the good intentions of the British in the colonies they captured. He saw vanity and the thirst for profit, hiding under the mask of democratic principles. The author's position can be seen in the dialogue between Ursula and her lover Anton Skrebensky, who is going to take part in the Boer War as an English officer.

In the novel “Women in Love,” the issue of the Boer War in competitive struggle is no longer raised. The attention is paid to the transition to the uniqueness of ancient knowledge, which the Africans, unlike the British, managed to preserve and pass on to subsequent generations. Halliday's apartment has several objects filled with deep symbolic meaning. Gerald notices wooden figures brought from Africa. These strange and disturbing wooden Africans resembled embryonic beings. Among them was a figure depicting a naked woman with an enormous belly and a face in pain. The woman frantically squeezed the ends of the tourniquet hanging from her neck with her hands, pushed and helped the fetus move forward.

Thus, “chain of events” from the Old Testament can be seen in the novel: the apple of knowledge – the fall – expulsion from paradise – the curse applied to the woman (pains in childbirth) – Sodom and Gomorrah – the destruction of cities for their sins. Most of the above mentioned biblical symbols were discussed in detail in the articles “Apple as a Symbol of Cognition in D. H. Lawrence’s works” [4] and “Peculiarities of the Images in the novel by D. H. Lawrence “Women in Love” [5].

The image of a pregnant African woman is reflected on Halliday’s mistress Pussum, for whom the thought of motherhood is “monstrous”. In African face, Gerald “had a vision of Pussum. As if in delirium, he realized that it was her” [6, p. 102]. Gerald considers the figurine obscene; it only evokes “extreme disgust” in him [6, p. 103]. And only Rupert (Lawrence’s prototype) sees “art” in it [6, p. 102]. An argument arises between Rupert and Gerald. Without sharing the opinion of Gerald, Rupert mentioned that “there is eternal truth in it.” <...> She is the personification of this state. <...> Behind this carving there are hundreds and hundreds of centuries of development in a straight line; this is, to some extent, the highest culture” [6, p. 102]. “A real sensory culture, a culture of physical cognition in its most extreme manifestations, in which it is not reason that is disrupted, but only feeling” [6, p. 103]. Lawrence proves the ideas that had been expressed concerning knowledge in “Introduction to These Pictures,” comparing the works of Cezanne and Fantin-Latour.

Art as a way of expressing sensory and/or physical knowledge will be the object of discussion in some fragments – discussing figurines depicting the Chinese Geese, explaining what is form in

art – in the dispute between Ursula, Lerke and Gudrun. Now Gerald was struck by his disregard for conventions among his new acquaintances. Besides the fact that he "received the kindness" from Halliday to spend the night with Pussum, Gerald finds everyone with the exception of Rupert, completely naked in the morning. Men enjoy the fact that they can disregard the "convention". Halliday notes that it is one of his "cherished desires – to live day after day without a simple scrap of clothing" [6, p. 101]. If he succeeded, he would "say that he did not live his life in vain" [6, p. 101]. Gerald notices "broken beauty" in Halliday, "the face of a weak, vicious person, but, nevertheless, possessing a special touching insight" [6, p. 100].

The next morning, naked bodies of men who refused from the convention of wearing clothes, cause in Gerald "a feeling of shame", "disgust" and "extreme hostility" [6, p. 101]. He wanted to "preserve at least some illusions, at least some beliefs, for example, that people should walk around dressed" [6, p. 103]. Gerald feels that he must get rid of Pussum, that "there must be a complete break between them" [6, p. 104].

After leaving Halliday's apartment, he was upset that he left without giving Pussum money. "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's" – this is how Rupert described Gerald's remorse. Gerald knew that "Pussum got rid of him without the slightest regret. She got her Halliday she had wanted all this time. She wanted to subjugate him to her power. After that she will marry him. She wanted to marry him. <...> She didn't want to hear any more about Gerald; unless hard times came someday, for, after all, Gerald was what she called a man; all the rest – Halliday, Libidnikov, Birkin, all this bohemia – were only half men. But she could only live among such half-men. Real men, like Gerald, showed her place too openly" [6, p. 106].

The next chapter, entitled "Fetish", again introduces the African figurine to the center of the narrative. A fetish symbolizes religious worship of an object. It is no coincidence that it is in this chapter that Rupert defines the type of art represented by the figurine as the highest, perfect, which symbolizes a certain admiration for it. Perhaps it is Rupert-Lawrence's ability to see not only the external side of an object, but also to feel it from the inside, to understand what lies behind it (millennia of human development), which allows him to know and perceive what others cannot.

Religious fetishism in the novel expands its boundaries. The theme of the worship of the feminine principle is introduced into the text of the narrative through a subsequent reference to an African figurine (in the nineteenth chapter) and the introduction of the symbol of the moon.

Ursula accidentally witnesses Rupert talking to himself: "This is real singing with two voices – they lie, and you sing along with them. The truth would not be needed if no one lied. Because then no one would have to confirm anything. <...> Cybele, damn her! Damn Syria Dea! Does anyone express dissatisfaction with the fact that it exists? What remains?" [6, p. 329]. Rupert throws small stones into the water, trying to destroy the moon's reflection in the water.

The moon is a symbol of the feminine principle. Rupert's actions can be interpreted as an attempt to destroy something that is impossible to destroy, since this is part of the law of the Universe. No matter what actions a person takes, trying to refute the indestructibility of the mother goddess, she, like a lunar path, will come together again. Cybele was known as the "Magna Mater" (Great Mother) in ancient Greek mythology. Syria Dea is a Syrian-Phoenician deity, which combines the images of Astarte, Cybele, Atargasis, Aphrodite. The thin crescent moon also symbolizes the virgin birth in Christian images of the Virgin Mary with the new moon at her feet (Revelation 12:1). It is no coincidence that the description of the moon is personified: "The moon jumped up like a white spot and tore the air apart. <...> a torn flower, a distorted, chipped moon again not swaying on the waves, resurrected, renewed, trying to recover from the shock, overcome disfigurement and confusion, become whole and collected, find peace" [6, p. 330-331]. The rose flower, mentioned several times in this fragment of the novel also refers to the feminine principle. Let us remember the identification of the Virgin Mary with this flower, and the petals of a scarlet wild rose with the five wounds of Jesus Christ and his blood.

Thus, the title "Moony" may not only refer to Rupert, who seems to be questioning and trying to destroy the power of the feminine, yet recognizing the futility of his efforts. His actions seem to echo his own statement "The truth would not be needed if no one lied," where the "truth" would be "the feminine principle in the Universe," and his stones symbolize the "lie" with the help of which they are trying to refute this truth. "Moony" can be referred to Ursula, symbolizing the feminine principle in the novel. It is no coincidence that Rupert's actions seem terrible to the girl. She demands to stop throwing stones at the moon, protects her.

The moon as a symbol is clearly projected onto Ursula. While still watching her in Hermione's mansion, Rupert noted that "nature has generously endowed her with dangerous strength. She looked like a whimsical, selfless bud, which, when opened, would give release to the enormously powerful feminine principle. Without realizing it, he was drawn to her. His future was in her hands" [6, p. 121]. Rupert asks the girl to give him her "golden light" [6, p. 332], her soul. If the first African figurine expressed for Rupert the pinnacle of physical knowledge (through birth), the "struggle with the moon", identified with the mythical deities Cybele and Syria Dea, symbolizes the hero's desire to approach sensory knowledge through reunification with Ursula.

Lawrence again reveals the development and evolution of the hero by understanding African fetishism. Now Rupert needed something more, "darker than ordinary life could give. He remembered the African fetishes he had seen in Halliday's apartment. One figurine came to mind—about two feet tall, slender, elegant, imported from West Africa, made of dark wood, shiny and smooth. She was a woman with her hair styled in a high, melon-shaped dome. He remembered her vividly: of all of them, he liked her the most. She had a long and graceful body, her face was amazingly tiny, like a beetle, and her neck had rows of round heavy rings like a twisted column. He could not help but remember her: her amazing elegance, small, beetle-like features, a magnificent long graceful body on short ugly legs with very prominent buttocks, unexpectedly heavy for such slender, long hips. She knew something he didn't know. Behind her were millennia of truly carnal, completely unspiritual knowledge. Millennia must have passed since the mysterious extinction of her people – that is, from the moment when the connection between the senses and frank reason was severed, transforming, as if by magic, all sensations into one type – sensual. Thousands of years ago, what now occupied him must have been happening in these Africans: kindness, holiness, the desire to create and creative happiness – all this should have been forgotten and left only the desire for knowledge of one type – thoughtless, forward-moving knowledge, carried out by feelings, knowledge, beginning and ending in feelings, mystical knowledge through decomposition and decay" [6, p. 337-338]. The development of Gerald and Gudrun, Halliday and Pussum passed through decomposition and decay. Although Lawrence leaves open the question of whether it will reach the pinnacle of sensory knowledge.

The rings on the neck of an African woman symbolize her belonging to a certain tribe, as well as the inability to independently manage her life. It is known that in African tribes, a ring from a woman's neck could only be removed by a man as punishment for an offense, for example, for treason, which in most cases led to the woman's death. Rupert is attracted to this figurine for several reasons. Firstly, as an expression of submission, a woman's ability to entrust her life to a man. It is no coincidence that, in a dispute with Ursula, he says: "I want you to forget about your narcissistic will, your frightened selfish defense of your own rights, that's what I need. I want you to trust yourself so completely that you can give yourself free rein <...> in Dionysian ecstasy. <...> I don't want you to think about yourself, I want you to just be there and forget about yourself, not insist on anything" [6, p. 335], "your feminine essence", "your feminine ego is a rag doll" [6, p. 334].

Secondly, Rupert remembers three times that the African woman's face had the features of a beetle. In Ancient Egypt, the god Khepri, who was revered as the creator of the world and man, was depicted with the face of a scarab beetle. Lawrence transfers the features inherent in Egyptian mythology to the female character. The scarab beetle, rolling a ball of dung with eggs from east to west until the embryos mature and are born, symbolized the path of the Sun, which illuminates the Earth, creating

conditions for the rebirth of life. This beetle was revered as a sacred insect and symbolized the creative power of the Sun. Lawrence identifies the experience of an ancient African tribe with “the knowledge possessed by beetles who live exclusively in the world of vice and the cold of decay” [6, p. 338]. We find confirmation in the text of the novel: “That’s why her face resembled the face of a beetle, that’s why the Egyptians worshiped the scarab rolling balls” [6, p. 338] “through knowledge of vice and decay” [6, p. 220], which “went far beyond everything that phallic knowledge can embrace” [6, p. 339].

In one chapter Lawrence was able to point out the symbolic meaning of the Sun and Moon, masculine and feminine, the attempt of man to “destroy”, “refute” the power of the divine feminine, the recognition of the unique feminine essence (in Ursula) and the desire to create a union with her. Rupert once again tries to apply his ideas and beliefs in real life (marriage to Ursula as an attempt to create a union).

Conclusion and perspective of further research. The essence of religious worship, indicated in the title and introduced into the text of the narrative through an appeal to an African figurine, was realized only by Rupert Lawrence. For everyone else, mental knowledge turned out to be closer – their communication was reduced to commercialism and self-interest, to men and women who rejected the conventions of the modern world. An appeal to the cultural heritage of West Africa reveals the experience of physical and sensory knowledge of previous generations, which is transmitted through the mythological ideas of ancestors about the connection of all living and non-living things on Earth. Besides African symbolism, it is worth studying the influence of Chinese culture as it was also mentioned in the text through the notions of the energy of Chinese geese, Chinese wisdom and the secret of lotos.

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