POETICS OF DESIRE IN D.H. LAWRENCE'S SHORTER FICTION

doi: 10.34142/astraea.2021.2.1.04

RAGACHEWSKAYA Marina

MINSK STATE LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY
Marina Ragachewskaya is
a Habilitated Doctor of Philology,
Professor at the Department of World literature
at Minsk State Linguistic University
(2200234, Belarus, Minsk, Zakharova st, 21;
worldlit1@mail.ru)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1000-4238

ABSTRACT

Desire is a specific subject of research in many areas, including literary studies and text analysis. The representation of desire in fiction is an inseparable part of the sub-genre of psychological prose; its interpretation by readers and scholars requires an interdisciplinary approach and relies on psychoanalytic theories and terminology for elucidation. Shorter psychological fiction – novellas and short stories – depend on the authors' mastery of language use, while the formal textual length is limited. Therefore, the study of desire encoded in a short fictional piece is both difficult due to laconism and suggestiveness, and fruitful as a revelation of most subtle nuances of human nature through the examination of artistic discourse.

D.H. Lawrence's novellas and short stories articulate desire as the unconscious wish to obtain the object of love. It is the merit of the writer's art to employ various artistic means that may serve as the manifest content.

Interpreting imagery and symbolism, bodily consciousness and characters' "syncopated" dialogues, opens up such aspects of a textual embodiment of desire as its elusiveness, impossibility to verbalize and often its "forbidden" nature. Instead, the

writer resorts to heavy suggestiveness, gaps and silences to be filled with the reader's intuitive or professional knowledge, meaning-charged adjectives, metaphors and analytical intrusions. Examples from a selection of D.H. Lawrence's short fictional works reveal defense mechanisms that balance the fulfilment of desire. The mastery of D.H. Lawrence's shorter fiction rests on the skill to reveal the unnamable, to show the inner conflict working through desire fulfilment, to bring to consciousness the shame, guilt and pleasure irrespective of moral judgment.

Keywords: desire, D.H. Lawrence, short fiction, Eros, symbolization, bodily consciousness, "syncopated" dialogue.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Бажання – це особливе явище для дослідження в багатьох галузях знання, не винятками є літературознавство й аналіз тексту. Утілення бажання в художній літературі – це невід'ємна частина субжанру психологічної прози; його інтерпретація читачами й дослідниками вимагає міждисциплінарного підходу та для кращого розуміння спирається на психоаналітичні теорії та термінологію. Невелика психологічна проза – новели/повісті й оповідання – залежить від авторської мовної майстерності, у той час як формальний обсяг тексту обмежений. Тому вивчення бажання, що закодовано в творі малої прози, ускладнюється її лаконічністю й суґестивністю, однак у той же час дає свої плоди, оскільки розкриваються витончені нюанси природи людини в аналізі художнього дискурсу.

У новелах і оповіданнях Д.Г. Лоуренса бажання виражено у вигляді безсвідомого прагнення володіти об'єктом кохання. І заслугою письменника є його мистецтво застосування різних художніх засобів, які можна розглядати як явний зміст. Інтерпретація образності та символіки, тілесної свідомості й «розбитих» діалогів персонажів розкриває такі аспекти текстуального втілення бажання, як його невловимість, неможливість розкрити словами, а часто – і його «заборонену» природу. Однак письменник вдається до навантаження суґестивності, пробілів і прийомів замовчування (які читач заповнює інтуїтивними або професійними знаннями), використовує багатозначні прикметники, метафори й аналітичні авторські вкраплення. Приклади обраних творів малої прози Д.Г. Лоуренса вказують на захисні механізми, які врівноважують бажання та його задоволення. Майстерність малої прози Д.Г. Лоуренса пов'язана з талантом

висловлення невисловлюваного, зображення внутрішнього конфлікту, який виникає у зв'язку з необхідністю досягти бажаного, усвідомлення героями сорому, провини й задоволення, незалежно від моральних суджень.

Ключові слова: бажання, Д.Г. Лоуренс, мала проза, Ерос, символізація, тілесна свідомість, «розбиті» діалоги.

INTRODUCTION

The term "desire" is polysemantic; in literary studies, it partially owes its origin to the psychoanalytic theories pioneered by S. Freud. However, desire was not a term Freud used as a central or significant notion; rather it appeared following a massive crew of Freud's disciples and reformers. D.H. Lawrence, the controversial English author of the early 20th century, one of the world's most famous explorers of human psychology, novelist, poet, playwright and short story master was under the influence of the emerging revolutionary conceptions of human nature. Lawrence's shorter fiction provides a more intense, targeted and intricate look into the secrets of the human heart. Uncovering texts' layers of the manifest and latent content provides an enlightening discovery of the way Lawrence tries to hint at the subtleties of desire as an essentially erotic agent. Literary inventory can render only verbal instruments for understanding desire in a text, and psychoanalytic awareness provides valid insights. Lawrence as a master of the short story offers an amazing array of such means.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Desire as a psychoanalytic concept has attracted scientific inquiry since it became central to the understanding of human nature as outlined by psychoanalysis. The poetics of desire in a literary text has been explored in a wide range of monographs and research papers. The most relevant of these have conceptualized the very essence of desire in a text within the broader context of literature and psychoanalysis (Literature and Psychoanalysis. (1983). ed. E. Kurzweil, W. Phillips. N.Y.: Columbia University Press; Brooks, P. (1994). Psychoanalysis and Storytelling. Oxford: Blackwell; Wright, E. (2000). Speaking Desires Can Be Dangerous. The Poetics of the Unconscious. Cambridge: CUP; Parkin-Gunelas, R. (2001). Literature and Psychoanalysis. L.: Palgrave; Reisner, G. (2003). The Death Ego and the Vital Self: Romances of Desire

in Literature and Psychoanalysis. Cranbury: Associated University Presses; Black, P. (2003). "The Broken Wings of Eros: Christian Ethics and the Denial of Desire." In: Theological Studies, Vol. 64,: 106-126; Casey, S. (2003). Naked Liberty and the World of Desire: Elements of Anarchism in the Work of D. H. Lawrence. New York: Routledge.). These works treat desire in a more or less uniform perspective – as a deep lying unconscious/pre-conscious drive that seeks satisfaction; and the textual tissue may contain various ways to hint at the desire. As can be construed, the peak of interest in the subject of desire was seen through the 1980s – early 2000s. It somehow waned in the next decades of the 21st century over a presumed exhaustiveness of the theme.

As for the particular application of the notion of desire to individual fictional works, D.H. Lawrence appears in a number of books and research papers with a focus on desire in his poetics: Solomon, R.C. (1991). The Philosophy of (Erotic) Love. University Press of Kansas; Widmer, K. (1992). Defiant Desire: Some Dialectic Legacies of D. H. Lawrence. Southern Illinois University Press; Poplawski, P. (1993). Promptings of Desire. Creativity and the Religious Impulse in D. H. Lawrence. L.: Greenwood Press; Ingersoll, E.G. (2001). D.H. Lawrence, Desire, and Narrative. University Press of Florida; Cowan, J.C. (2002). D. H. Lawrence: Self and Sexuality. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press; Reisner, G. (2003); Casey, S. (2004); Ragachewskaya, M. (2012). Desire for Love: The Secret Longings of the Human Heart in D. H. Lawrence's Works. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing; Turner, J. (2020). D. H. Lawrence and Psychoanalysis. Routledge.

Earl G. Ingersoll interprets Lawrence's representation of desire from Lacanian perspectives. Gavriel Reisner's book discusses Lawrence as one of the authors who are concerned with desire as a central notion in their work. Reisner also uses Lacanian ideas to read Lawrence. The latest book – by J. Turner – has shifted focus significantly from text to biography to reveal the writer's mindset, his relationships with persons and writings on psychoanalytic subjects. The book offers a historical investigation of the impact of psychoanalysis on Lawrence's thinking and works.

The analysis of these sources reveals a space that remains unexplored – poetics of desire in shorter fiction, as this genre presupposes a more concise, laconic, and therefore – more slippery and intricate encoding of desire in a text which sets out to explore a moment in a character's lifetime, an instance in the consciousness.

AIM OF THE ARTICLE

In view of the above, considering the time gap in the research of the poetics of desire in Lawrence's works, it stands to reason that the exploration of the unsaid, the unspoken and the unspeakable can be productive through linking more harmoniously the linguistic and the conceptual, the purely fictional and psychoanalytic in this particular genre – Lawrence's shorter fiction (novellas and short stories).

METHODOLOGY

The critical approach in the analysis and interpretation was developed in the author's published research: Ragachewskaya, M. (2012). This is a combined textual-psychoanalytic method which follows the principle of considering the fictional text as a multilayered texture, with the manifest and latent content, taking issues with elements of language and style, and both Freudian and Jungian approaches. By analyzing the linguistic and extra-linguistic properties of the text as manifest content (imagery, discourse, symbolism, etc.) and treating the characters' actions as manifestations of defense mechanisms, it becomes possible to both present their psyches as harbouring desire in its multitude of forms, and appreciate the language this desire speaks through the writer's diction, syntax and rhythm.

RESULTS

Joyce Carol Oates famously proclaimed recently in her master class on the "Art of the Short Story": "If one can face the darkest elements in oneself, and things that are secret, you have such a feeling of power" (quoted from: Wenclas, 2019). The art of short story writing is something all authors, without exception, admit as demanding, trying to perfect it throughout their entire careers. A short story gained the definition of "one of the most elusive forms" (Cuddon, 1999, p. 815). As E. Hemingway put it in his posthumously published essay "The Art of the Short Story": "The test of any story is how very good the stuff is that you, not your editors, omit" (Hemingway, 1981). In fact, omissions and elusiveness are those aspects, which border on the thin line between "the said" and "the unsaid". A short story writer always faces the daunting task of speaking volumes through the thrifty and capricious medium – the laconic

genre form.

E. Wright observed: “Just as with the advent of modern literary theory it was found that ‘there are more things in literary texts than are dreamt of in Freudian philosophy’, so there are also many things in literary texts that the critic had not been conscious of before the advent of psychoanalysis” (E. Wright, 2013, p. 1). This is where the notion of desire comes in. The psychoanalytic concept of desire “was introduced into French by Ignace Meyerson's inaccurate translation of the Freudian term Wunsch (wish)” (Delaroche, 2021). Nowadays it is a Lacanian concept. However, both “desire” and “Freudian wish” mean “the subject's yearning for a fundamentally lost object” (Delaroche, 2021). If we put together the concept of thriftiness of a short story’s language and the lost object, we might embark on a psychoanalytic quest in search of that object, or, alternatively, identify the vehicle of the desire expression through artistic means.

One of the world’s masters of the short story is the early 20th century English author David Herbert Lawrence (1885–1930), who possessed an amazing talent of composing his texts with a subtle and profound layer underneath. We may refer to that layer as the latent content, the elusive desire of Lawrence’s characters, often difficult to articulate. In Lawrence’s own words, we have “no language for the feelings” (DHL, 1985, p. 203), but Lawrence’s shorter fictions reveal the narrative art expressing those very feelings. Lawrence wrote, rewrote, edited and re-worked his short stories all his life. As he puts it in his letter to Edward Marsh: “Lord, how I’ve worked again at these stories – most of them – forging them up. They are good, I think” (Lawrence, 1981, p. 198). I will address some of Lawrence’s novellas and short stories possessing a quality Weldon Thornton called “psychic texture” (Thornton, 1993, p. 21), allowing for a psychoanalytic reading of them.

Applied analysis in relation to Lawrence’s short stories may reveal the fundamental type of desire – desire for love – expressed in a number of ways: linguistically, stylistically and symbolically. The writer’s narrative techniques dramatize emotional repression, yearning, psychic defenses regulating the dramatic unconscious conflict between the Super-Ego and the Id. In Lawrence’s view, “What we want is the fulfilment of our desires, down to the deepest and most spiritual desire. The body is immediate, the spirit is beyond: first the leaves and then the flower: but the plant is an integral whole: therefore every desire, to the very deepest. And I shall find my deepest desire to be a wish for pure, unadulterated relationship with the universe” (Lawrence, 1981, p. 633–4).

In the selection of shorter fictions analyzed ("The Blind Man", 1920; "Second Best", 1914; "The Shadow in the Rose Garden", 1914; "The White Stocking", 1914; "The Prussian Officer", 1914), desire as a textual representation of an unconscious (or pre-conscious) wish is expressed in a number of verbal art techniques: body language, "syncopated" dialogical unities, psychic symbolizations, authorial analysis.

Paradoxically, Lawrence often rejected the emerging new discipline of psychoanalysis, while proclaiming after Freud the importance of the unconscious which he termed "blood consciousness", whose desire he advocated: "determine the nature of the true, pristine unconscious, in which all our genuine impulse arises" (Lawrence, 1995, p. 207).

Desire resides in the body – that was what Lawrence articulated in his psychoanalytic books Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (1921) and Fantasia of the Unconscious (1922). The utter importance of bodily consciousness, which, according to Lawrence, can have a sort of autonomy from the mind, is epitomized in the short story "The Blind Man" (1920). Its title character Maurice Pervin lost his eyesight in the war, but this loss has strangely enriched his sensual and organic perception of the world around him; his contact with the darkness—actual and metaphorical—becomes immediate and intimate . "Life was still very full and strangely serene for the blind man, peaceful with the almost incomprehensible peace of immediate contact in darkness" (Lawrence, 1977, p. 81). The omnipresence of darkness has the quality of a place in its own worth. It is the darkness of the inner vision, as well the story's brief episodes taking place in the dark – in the corridors, in the farm, in the yard at night, in the stables. The denotative and the connotative meanings of "darkness" unfold in the story through imagery and symbolism. Bibhu Padhi thinksthat "Lawrence intends to project 'darkness' as a major creative force, a powerful agent of the 'unknown'" (Padhi, 1989, p. 83). The main character approximates his unconscious to such an extent that the "desires of his blood" become more comprehensible to the reader.

Lawrence often interjects his extended psychological analysis of his character, following his "blood consciousness" theory: "He did not think much or trouble much. So long as he kept this sheer immediacy of blood-contact with the substantial world he was happy, he wanted no intervention of visual consciousness. In this state there was a certain rich positivity, bordering sometimes on rapture. Life seemed to move in him like a tide, lapping, lapping, and advancing, enveloping all things darkly. It was a pleasure to stretch forth the hand and meet the unseen object, clasp it and possess it

in pure contact. He did not try to remember, to visualize. He did not want to. The new way of consciousness substituted itself in him" (Lawrence, 1977, p. 92). The metaphor of a tide is perhaps the closest to help grasp the sense of what the unconscious is. Any object thus grasped represents the seeming availability of the desire object reached through the darkness.

Both Maurice and Isabel exist in the free indirect narrative discourse with Lawrence's generous analysis of their inner state. Sometimes, Maurice's condition is brought to his full consciousness, and at such moments desire is debased and crippled, because its object is blacked-out. The grief of the loss of the visual world surges up in Maurice, making him shrink into his deep inner self. During one of such dark moments, Isabel invites her old childhood friend Bertie, a lawyer now and still a bachelor, to their house. The scenes that follow present a most unique literary experiment, in which the writer tests different, even opposing, kinds of desire and their fulfillment. Bertie is a physically healthy man, who has achieved his social desire and has become a very successful lawyer. However, he appears rather deficient in his inner psychic development, because of his repressions, inhibitions and bodily constraints: "He was ashamed of himself, because he could not marry, could not approach women physically. He wanted to do so. But he could not. At the centre of him he was afraid, helplessly and even brutally afraid" (Lawrence, 1977, p. 97). Maurice, quite the opposite, "towers as an embodiment of perfect masculinity, strength and self-confidence. He is a happy lover, husband and a would-be father, despite any disfigurements the scar can cause to his face. Hence, the reader feels pity not for the blind man, as the case should dictate, but for the psychological cripple, Bertie, whose soul and body are unable to come into close contact of intimacy of any sort" (Ragachewskaya, 2012, p. 50-51). Thus, one type of desire – to achieve social status – is pitted against the other type – to attain inner happiness. The object of desire in the former case is general recognition, money, relative comfortable existence. The object of the latter is woman's love and masculine self-assertion.

The episode where Lawrence uses suggestiveness, engages evocative corporeal language: "Do you mind if I touch you?" The lawyer shrank away instinctively. And yet, out of very philanthropy, he said, in a small voice: 'Not at all.' But he suffered as the blind man stretched out a strong, naked hand to him. Maurice accidentally knocked off Bertie's hat <...> 'I thought you were taller,' he said, starting. Then he laid his hand on Bertie Reid's head, closing the dome of the skull in a soft, firm grasp, gathering it, as it were; then, shifting his grasp and softly closing again, with

a fine, close pressure, till he had covered the skull and the face of the smaller man, tracing the brows, and touching the full, closed eyes, touching the small nose and the nostrils, the rough, short moustache, the mouth, the rather strong chin. The hand of the blind man grasped the shoulder, the arm, the hand of the other man. He seemed to take him, in the soft, travelling grasp" (Lawrence, 1977, p. 102). It is via the body, its shapes and its touch, that we deal with desires, understand their impulses and transcendence to consciousness.

The poetics of desire in this story stretches beyond the erotic. The collateral aspect of desire is possession and power. Initially, Maurice feels inferior, deprived of the potential to exercise male power: he needs ascertainment, an action to prove himself powerful. "'You seem young,' he said quietly, at last. The lawyer stood almost annihilated, unable to answer. 'Your head seems tender, as if you were young,' Maurice repeated. 'So do your hands. Touch my eyes, will you? – touch my scar.' Now Bertie quivered with revulsion. Yet he was under the power of the blind man, as if hypnotized. He lifted his hand, and laid the fingers on the scar, on the scarred eyes. Maurice suddenly covered them with his own hand, pressed the fingers of the other man upon his disfigured eye-sockets, trembling in every fibre, and rocking slightly, slowly, from side to side. He remained thus for a minute or more, whilst Bertie stood as if in a swoon, unconscious, imprisoned" (Lawrence, 1977, p. 103).

Maurice has been living in harmony with his deeper self and his "blood desires", which has rendered a much worthier, happier and more satisfactory acquiescence of life than living by the rules of logic and rational mind. In the quoted passage the discourse of the body rules the psychoanalytic interpretation: Lawrence often resorts to the description of eyes and hands as a kind of antinomy, with eyes providing the dictatorship of visuality, imposing, misleading, taking one away from him/herself, while the hands serving as an instrument of touch, more organic and harmonious with the inner self.

The significance of "touch" for Lawrence's fictional poetics has brought about a vast area of related research. One point is worth mentioning, referring to J. Cowan: "Lawrence presents a greater moral significance in 'true relatedness' through the medium of touch the function of which he grounded in his theory of psychophysiology of the unconscious" (J. Cowan, 1985, p. 121). The poetics of touch employs contexts in Lawrence's fiction that charge the gesture of touch with other sensations and involve the transfer of the motion of touch into a state of

consciousness a character suddenly experiences. In "The Blind Man", "Bertie could not answer. He gazed mute and terror-struck, overcome by his own weakness. He knew he could not answer. He had an unreasonable fear, lest the other man should suddenly destroy him. Whereas Maurice was actually filled with hot, poignant love, the passion of friendship. Perhaps it was this very passion of friendship which Bertie shrank from most" (Lawrence, 1977, p. 103).

The reference to the above novella seems appropriate in the sense it concentrates the various representations of body language and the poetics of touch to be found in Lawrence's fiction elsewhere, but due to the more concise genre form, highlights it most relevantly.

Another device exemplifying the poetics of desire in Lawrence shorter fiction I choose to term "syncopated dialogical unities", by which I shall mean dialogue and the accompanying remarks supplied by the figures of narration. The matrix of the desire interwoven into the narrative covers several layers: first of all, it is what is said directly by the characters – the level of argumentation; secondly, it is the level of the narrative – when direct speech becomes part of the story's language (events, actions, biographical detail, etc.); the third level could be called reflexive, with a hierarchy of its own –what the characters think about the object of their desire, and what the author says about it in his digressions, generalizations and commentaries (see: Ragachewskaya, 2012, p.60).

In one of the most enigmatic short stories, "Second Best" (1914), in a couple of short scenes the author portrays Frances, a university student, visiting her home farm, meeting with her younger sister and the country lad Tom. Frances' boyfriend, as it turns out, jilted her. She is deeply despondent, and in her state, the desire for love creeps up again as a defense against frustration. The story reflects an attempt to capture and relate in language this mysterious and illogical instant when a desire is born between a man and a woman. As J. Kristeva in her essay "Love Discourse" writes, "the language of images, or literature, should correspond to this invisibility with its powerful pulsation" (Kristeva, 1994, p. 104).

In the crucial conversation between Frances and Tom Smedley, we witness the two levels in the narrative revealing desire in parallel terms: the dialogue and the authorial remarks follow their own inner logic. The table below demonstrates this poetic structure (Lawrence, SB, 1993, pp. 67-68):

Characters' direct speech	Authorial remarks
«You are back, then!»	said Tom. She marked the touch of uncertainty in his voice.
«No,» she laughed, «I'm still in Liverpool,»	and the undertone of intimacy made him burn.
«This isn't you, then?»	he asked.
	Her heart leapt up in approval. She looked in his eyes, and for a second was with him.
«Why, what do you think?»	she laughed.
	He lifted his hat from his head with a distracted little gesture. She liked him, his quaint ways, his humour, his ignorance, and his slow masculinity.
«Here, look here, Tom Smedley,»	broke in Anne.
«A moudiwarp! Did you find it dead?»	he asked.
«No, it bit me,»	said Anne.
«Oh, aye! An' that got your rag out, did it?»	
«No, it didn't!» Anne scolded sharply. «Such language!»	
«Oh, what's up wi' it?»	
«I can't bear you to talk broad.»	
«Can't you?»	He glanced at Frances.
«It isn't nice,»	Frances said. She did not care, really.
	The vulgar speech jarred on her as a rule; Jimmy was a gentleman. But Tom's manner of speech did not matter to her.
«I like you to talk nicely,»	she added.
«Do you,»	he replied, tilting his hat, stirred.
«And generally you do, you know,»	she smiled.
«I s'll have to have a try,»	he said, rather tensely gallant.
«What?»	she asked brightly.
«To talk nice to you,»	he said.
	Frances coloured furiously, bent her head for a moment, then laughed gaily, as if she liked this clumsy hint.
«Eh now, you mind what you're saying,»	cried Anne, giving the young man an admonitory pat.
«You wouldn't have to give yon mole many knocks like that,»	he teased, relieved to get on safe ground, rubbing his arm.

«No indeed, it died in one blow,»	said Frances, with a flippancy that was hateful to her.
«You're not so good at knockin' 'em?»	he said, turning to her.
«I don't know, if I'm cross,»	she said decisively.
«No?»	he replied, with alert attentiveness.
«I could,»	she added, harder, «if it was necessary.»
	He was slow to feel her difference.
«And don't you consider it is necessary?»	he asked, with misgiving.
	she said, looking at him steadily, coldly.
«W--ell--is it?»	he replied, looking away, but standing stubborn.
«I reckon it is,»	She laughed quickly.
	she said, with slight contempt.
«But it isn't necessary for me,»	he answered.
«Yes, that's quite true,»	She laughed in a shaky fashion.
	she said; and there was an awkward pause.
«I know it is,»	she asked tentatively, after a while.
«Why, would you like me to kill moles then?»	he said, standing firm on his own ground, angered.
«They do us a lot of damage,»	she promised, defiantly. Their eyes met, and she sank before him, her pride troubled. He felt uneasy and triumphant and baffled, as if fate had gripped him. She smiled as she departed.
«Well, I'll see the next time I come across one,»	said Anne, as the sisters went through the wheat stubble;
«Well,»	laughed Frances significantly.
«I don't know what you two's been jawing about, I'm sure.» «Don't you?»	
«No, I don't. But, at any rate, Tom Smedley's a good deal better to my thinking than Jimmy, so there--and nicer.»	
«Perhaps he is,»	said Frances coldly.

	And the next day, after a secret, persistent hunt, she found another mole playing in the heat. She killed it, and in the evening, when Tom came to the gate to smoke his pipe after supper, she took him the dead creature.
«Here you are then!»	she said.
«Did you catch it?»	he replied, taking the velvet corpse into his fingers and examining it minutely. This was to hide his trepidation.
«Did you think I couldn't?»	she asked, her face very near his.
«Nay, I didn't know.»	
	She laughed in his face, a strange little laugh that caught her breath, all agitation, and tears, and recklessness of desire. He looked frightened and upset. She put her hand to his arm.
«Shall you go out wi' me?»	he asked, in a difficult, troubled tone.
	She turned her face away, with a shaky laugh. The blood came up in him, strong, overmastering. He resisted it. But it drove him down, and he was carried away. Seeing the winsome, frail nape of her neck, fierce love came upon him for her, and tenderness.
«We s'll 'ave to tell your mother,»	he said. And he stood, suffering, resisting his passion for her.
«Yes,»	she replied, in a dead voice. But there was a thrill of pleasure in this death.

The conversation is focused on the mundane, the trivial, on agricultural farm matters, but ends ironically with the man's proposal "to go out with". The level of the narrative constructs a different order related to the desire. It evidences in the inner struggle Francis is going through: "undertone of intimacy", "her heart leapt up", "she liked him", "she smiled", "coloured furiously", "bent her head for a moment", "laughed gaily", "with a flippancy that was hateful to her", "looking at him steadily, coldly", "laughed quickly", "with slight contempt", "laughed in a shaky fashion", "asked tentatively", "she sank before him, her pride troubled", "laughed significantly", "a strange little laugh that caught her breath", "all agitation, and tears, and recklessness of desire". Tom, in his turn, goes through uncertainty and anguish ("he burned"),

masking his "slow masculinity" by vulgar speech. Quick to feel the intimacy in Frances's voice, he is stirred, but no more than for a moment, and then grasps his "safe ground" (speaking about killing moles) to be gratified in the end with triumph. The defense mechanisms of repression (evident in emotives) and displacement (the subject of the talk) mask the erotic nature of desire.

Symbolization of desire in this story is presented with the image of a mole: "A mole was moving silently over the warm, red soil, nosing, shuffling hither and thither, flat, and dark as a shadow, shifting about, and as suddenly brisk, and as silent, like a very ghost of joi de vivre [...]. She watched the little brute paddling, snuffing, touching things to discover them, running in blindness [...] (Lawrence, SB, 1993, p. 64). The little creature is compared with a shadow, and its blind eyes are apparently a metaphor for the inexplicable sexual attraction, the dark desire and blind passion.

In "The Shadow in the Rose Garden" (1914) and "The White Stocking" (1914) the author starts with the husband and wife being together and being tender to each other, then we move along with their emotional landscape towards the past and back into the narrative present. There is a condensed symbolism of desire, as both titles indicate. In these stories the couples have not been married long; both of them face the fact of an old flame (or flirtation) that the female partner had – and who is still the desired object. Both the women characters discover that "the old flame" is an illusion.

A subtle game of absence and presence is reenacted in these two stories. The realization that the former (or lost) lover/suitor is representative of desire occurs only through intricately arranged symbols: a crooked apple tree, a rose garden, a pair of white stockings, a pearl earring. The rose garden serves as a portal into the past, a symbol of memory, of loving and desiring a man. The woman in the "Shadow..." story comes across her former lover, a military man, who is a lunatic now, and who therefore fails even to recognize her: "She sat and heard him talking. But it was not he. Yet those were the hands she had kissed, there were the glistening, strange black eyes that she had loved. Yet it was not he" (Lawrence, SRG, 1993, p. 74). Thus, the object is irretrievably lost. Desire is tarnished. The garden with the roses acts on the level of metaphor and does not harbour the desired unpredictable contingency so much praised by Kristeva. The sea closes this symbolization with the suggestion of infinity, immeasurability and incompleteness of desire.

In "The White Stocking", the object of desire for a young wife is somewhat displaced. "She had been a warehouse girl in Adams's lace factory before she was married. Sam Adams was her employer. <...> His fondness for the girls, or the fondness of the girls

for him, was notorious" (Lawrence, WS, 1993, p. 85). Sam Adams sends Elsie secret presents, which flatter her, revealing his great fancy for her, his desire. However, these presents remain like "things-in-themselves". Elsie's "object" is "half in desire, half in dread" (Lawrence, WS, 1993, p. 91). The white stocking and pearl earrings are representations, essential for psychoanalysis. However, as. A. Green thinks, there is a "confusion between the unrepresentable and non-represented" (Green, 1979, 45). The short story deals with the desire that is rather unrepresentable. Sam Adams admits: "I was born with an amourette in my mouth (Lawrence, WS, 1993, p. 91) – which annuls Elsie as the real object of his desire. Lawrence's use of symbols which, unlike in the previous stories (a mole, a rose garden), do not evoke associations, is subtle and meaningful. These objects are "empty symbols", conductive of desire's illusory nature. The jealous and furious husband disposes of them: "He went slowly upstairs, struck a match, and found the trinkets. He brought them downstairs in his hand. "These?" he said, looking at them as they lay in his palm. She looked at them without answering. She was not interested in them any more. He looked at the little jewels. They were pretty. 'It's none of their fault,' he said to himself" (Lawrence, WS, 1993, p. 98).

"The Prussian Officer" (1914) is a very uneasy kind of story dealing with the perverse homoerotic desire, which is never fulfilled. This desire remains burning and barren. The relations between the captain and the orderly are balancing on the edge of strict discipline, but the writer manages to point at the strange passion, not evident to the characters, drawing the senior man to the youth. "The officer tried hard not to admit the passion that had got hold of him. He would not know that his feeling for his orderly was anything but that of a man incensed by his stupid, perverse servant. So, keeping quite justified and conventional in his consciousness, he let the other thing run on. His nerves, however, were suffering. At last he slung the end of a belt in his servant's face. When he saw the youth start back, the pain-tears in his eyes and the blood on his mouth, he had felt at once a thrill of deep pleasure and of shame" (Lawrence, PO, 1993, p. 5). The forbidden desire is represented through an act of violence. The event following the moment of the characters' latent realization of the impossibility and the absurdity of the passion in the given time and location is tragic – the orderly murders the Captain, revenging for his violence, but dies tragically, too.

In this story, desire works through the unnamed but recognizable image of Eros and its counterpart Himeros (Desire). Logical enough is the finale: "The bodies of the

two men lay together, side by side, in the mortuary, the one white and slender, but laid rigidly at rest, the other looking as if every moment it must rouse into life again, so young and unused, from a slumber" (Lawrence, PO, 1993, p. 18). The homoerotic desire also defies representation in Lawrence's texts. Not finding a way to deal with it, the author chooses to "kill" such characters.

DISCUSSIONS

Inquiry into human nature and the evolving techniques in intimate discourse, prompted by the spread of social networks and dating websites, may be much enriched through a more thoughtful consideration of the language and poetics of the world's outstanding literary masters. Subtle analysis of words in contexts, of "speaking" desires can be beneficial for psychoanalysis, too. This research is mostly literary by nature, its interdisciplinary areas stretch to the sphere of applied psychoanalysis. However, as readers today tend to become broadly competent, but generally less insightful, it may be worthwhile to draw attention to the best psychological masterpieces of world literature through a detailed psychoanalytic-textual analysis of them.

CONCLUSIONS

The mastery of D.H. Lawrence's shorter fiction rests on his talent to reveal the unnamable, to show the inner conflict working through desire fulfilment, to bring to consciousness the shame, guilt and pleasure irrespective of moral judgment.

The selected short stories – "The Blind Man", "Second Best", "The Shadow in the Rose Garden", "The White Stocking", and "The Prussian Officer" – treat of several kinds of desire: social and "blood" desire, the erotic desire, desire for the lost object and homoerotic desire. All these find adequate poetic means for representation. Especially evocative is body language. It directs the reader's gaze straight to the character's unconscious, presuming we possess some knowledge of psychoanalysis or at least Lawrence's own theories. "Syncopated" dialogical unities work in those cases when the desire needs verbalization, but is restrained by social mores and language limitations. Psychic symbolizations play with the representability/non-representability of desire. In the latter case, the symbols lose their associative power and become "things-in-themselves". In all the stories, authorial analysis provides more insight into human nature. Psychological analysis and commentary are aimed

at tying other elements of poetics together.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

REFERENCES

Cowan, J. C. (1985). Lawrence and touch. In: The D.H. Lawrence Review, vol. 18, no. 2/3, pp. 121–137.

Cuddon, J. A. (1999). The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (revised by C. E. Preston). London, GB: Penguin Books.

Delaroche, P. (2021). Subject's Desire. Encyclopedia.com. Mode of access: https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/subjects-desire#: ~:text= For%20Lacan%20as%20well%20as,for%20a%20fundamentally%20lost%20object.&text=Freud%20used%20dreams%20to%20derive,to%20the%20satisfaction%20of%20need.

Green, A. (1979). The Tragic Effect: The Oedipus Complex in Tragedy. Cambridge University Press.

Heminway, E. (1981) The Art of the Short Story. In: The Paris Review, ISSUE 79, SPRING 1981. Mode of access: https://www.theparisreview.org/letters-essays/3267/the-art-of-the-short-story-ernest-hemingway.

Kristeva, YU. (1994). Diskurs lyubvi. In: Tanatografiya erosa. Sost., per., comment. S. L. Fokin. (cc. 103–109). SPb.: TOO Mifril» (in Russian).

Lawrence, D.H. (1977). The Blind Man. In: The Portable D. H. Lawrence. Ed. Diana Trilling. (pp. 80–104). New York, USA: Penguin, pp. 80–103.

Lawrence, D.H. (1995). Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious. London, UK: Penguin Classics.

Lawrence, D. H. (1993). Second Best. In: Selected Short Stories. New York: Dover Publications, inc., pp. 62–68.

Lawrence, D. H. (1993). The Shadow in the Rose Garden. In: Selected Short Stories. New York: Dover Publications, inc., pp. 69–79.

Lawrence, D.H. (1985). Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays. Ed. B. Steele. Cambridge, GB: Cambridge University Press.

Lawrence, D. H. (1993). The Prussian Officer. In: Selected Short Stories. New York: Dover Publications, inc., pp. 1–18.

Lawrence, D. H. (1993). "The White Stocking. In Selected Short Stories. New York: Dover Publications, inc., pp. 80-99.

The Letters of D. H. Lawrence. Volume II. (1981). Ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Padhi, B. D. (1989). H. Lawrence: Modes of Fictional Style. Troy, N. Y., USA: Whitston Pub Co Inc.

Thornton, W. (1993). D. H. Lawrence: A Study of the Short Fiction. New York, USA: Twayne Publishers.

Wenclas, K. (2019). New Pop Lit NEWS. The Joyce Carol Oates Ad. Mode of access:

https://newpoplitnews.com/2019/11/16/the-joyce-carol-oates-ad/.
Wright, E. (1999). Speaking Desire can be Dangerous. The Poetics of the Unconscious. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Received: 19.03.2021
Accepted: 20.05.2021

Cite this article as:
Ragachewskaya, M., (2021). Poetics of desire in D.H. Lawrence's shorter fiction. Astraea, 2(1), 61-78. doi: 10.34142/astraea.2021.2.1.04