Portrayal of Hegemonic Masculinity in D.H. Lawrence's Novel *The Lost Girl*

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Abstract
The study on men and masculinity's effective contribution to an extensive scope of distinct cultures advocates that pertinent social organisations legitimise the domination of men over women. Hegemonic masculinity is ideologically sanctioned in social formations and particularly in this study, the early twentieth century of England. Not all men challenge to observe this nature of masculinity as there are some who dispute hegemonic masculinity by inculcating alternative masculinities which are subordinate in nature. Nevertheless, most men place themselves fittingly in conditions where their choices may be judiciously restricted. The purpose of this study is to explicate the portrayal of hegemonic masculinity in one of D.H. Lawrence's male protagonists, in his novel *The Lost Girl* (1920). This study applies the theory of Connell to explicate the characteristics associated to hegemonic masculinity in a gendered relationship. The fundamental finding reveals that the the female protagonist is under the male protagonist's control and hegemonic masculinity prevails between them.

Keywords: Hegemony, Dominance, Gender, Emotion, Portrayal

1.0 INRODUCTION

The study aims to examine the characteristics related to hegemonic masculinity in Lawrence's novel *The Lost Girl*. These features are examined based on Lawrence's male protagonist Ciccio, who plays a vital role in the portrayal of hegemonic masculinity. The analysis is focused on the gendered relationship between Ciccio and his wife, Alvina Houghton. These characters' behavioral codes and Lawrence narration are used as the data for analysis. The study utilises the hegemonic theory illustrated by Connell (1987) and Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) to elucidate the masculine identity in the novel.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In his theory that is linked to power relations, Connell, claims that men are predominantly accountable for the formations of hierarchical gender relations (Connell, 1987). Inadequate evidence is recognised with regard to the progress of hierarchy that takes place, however, since gender hierarchy functions not only between genders but also within, the emphasis on masculinities is fundamental. The hierarchical gender relations expedite the general subordination of women in gendered relationships. Undeniably, while much of the research within the domain of gender history is frequently apparent to be woman-centred, recently the emphasis on masculinity has commenced to be addressed as a subject in its own right (Green & Troup, 1999). According to literary critic Gardiner (2002), masculinity is the accomplishment of ruling the rapport between men and men in addition to between men and women in society, where in broad-spectrum, women are subordinated to men. Granting that there are numerous types of masculinities or various ways of being a man, there is one exceptional type of masculinity that is perceived as the dominant and the most appreciated form of masculinity among men in particular societies (Kimmel, 2006). In the North American society, what is stereotypically referred to as "hegemonic masculinity" is the principal type of masculinity or the cultural ideal of manliness which is chiefly reflective of white heterosexual who are widely middle-class males (Kimmel, 2006).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study aims to examine the features connected to hegemonic masculinity in Lawrence's novel *The Lost Girl*. Masculinity in this study is comprehended in the context of hegemonic masculinity that embodies the theory applied by Connell. Intrinsically, this study utilises Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to explicate substantial features related to power and dominance in the character of Ciccio from Lawrence's novel, *The Lost Girl* (1920). These features are analysed based on Lawrence's male protagonist Ciccio's portrayal of masculinity. The investigation is focused on the gendered relationship between Ciccio and his wife, Alvina. This couple's interactive codes and Lawrence narration are used as the data for analysis. The study utilises the hegemonic theory illustrated by Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) to elucidate the masculine identity in the novel.

4.0 THE HEGEMONIC CICCIO IN *THE LOST GIRL* (1920)

4.1 Summary of the Novel

Alvina Houghton (Alvina) the female protagonist is the daughter of an early twentieth century British theatre owner in Lawrence's novel *The Lost Girl*. Her father, James Houghton's death liberates Alvina from the constraints of pleasing her father, but her happiness is short lived as she is in debt. Alvina had to sell the theatre but she continued to supervise it until entertainers who are travelling come to perform. She comes into contact with an Italian exotic hero, Ciccio, who has been commissioned to work at the theatre. She is immediately attracted to his rough nature and curt

manner, which is regarded as less civilised by the others. She then leaves her home to runaway with the Heroic Ciccio for Naples, against the advice of the people close to her.

Alvina's future and aspirations are awakened by Ciccio, but not for eternal happiness. Ciccio is a man who is quiet but cunning and he is an actor in the group. Alvina is a woman who has no family or obligations to hold her to her hometown after the departure of her father. When the performing troupe left, she located Ciccio to join him as a piano player. Ciccio grow closer with Alvina and although she sees that a life with Ciccio is going to lower her social status, she still favours to be with him. Alvina begins to get tired of travelling and the Heroic Ciccio resists offering her anything more than just their affair.

When World War I began, Ciccio being a foreigner was required to depart from England. To avoid being separated, Alvina and Ciccio got married and ran away to Naples, Italy. With his dominant male power, Ciccio succeeded in making Alvina lead a life as a farmer's wife with him. Although, Alvina discovers happiness with Ciccio, she also realises that her life is much harder than it was in England.

4.2 Findings and Discussion

Lawrence, being one of the novelists who advocate patriarchy, regards women as weak and requires the superior security of men (Millett 241). Men and women are distinctive by birth and the disparity between them is imbedded not only biologically but also in their gender roles. In the *The Lost Girl*, Ciccio is the active Heroic gender, the initiator of action, while Alvina is the emotional and passive respondent. Ciccio's portrayal of his active gender indicates that he is the superior macho character who depicts the Heroic form of masculinity.

Lawrence's idea in *The Lost Girl* is that Alvina is seeking her identity in an undesirable manner as her true nature is the opposite, when she seeks shelter from a male superior. Lawrence knowingly constructs Alvina in a negative way for the purpose of preparing the pathway to stress on the requirement for a dominant male who has a deeper understanding of the world. The dominant and tough character of Ciccio attracts the attention of Alvina. She has met many men before but none appealed to her because they did not have the "good-naturedness", which was a sign of real masculinity and the true instincts of a man. Moreover, there were constantly some characteristics that repelled Alvina from those men she met previously, either for their weak physical appearances or they are too vain. Therefore, it is evident that the physical attractiveness and the dominant masculinity portrayed by Ciccio appeal to Alvina.

It is also essential to take note that Lawrence spares a chapter for Ciccio to indicate the importance of his appearance into Alvina's life. Ciccio is portrayed as an eccentric, primitive but good-looking male. Nonetheless, the strangeness of Ciccio comes together with Alvina's fearful admiration for him. When Ciccio acts on the stage on their last night in Woodhouse, Alvina found herself to be enchanted by him:

> As she saw him standing in his negligent, muscular, slouching fashion, with his head dropped forward, and his eyes sideways, sometimes she disliked him. But there was a Finesse about his face. His skin was delicately tawny and slightly lustrous. (196)

The extract depicts the charm Alvina feels for Ciccio, which is so powerful that instead of avoiding him just as she did with the previous men she knew like Graham and Albert, she consents to Ciccio's authoritative presence and commanding existence by initiating effort to be a part of his life. Alvina is passive in front of Ciccio because she is suppressed by Lawrence's masculine ideology through Ciccio, and Ciccio's presence is elucidated as somewhat covert, something beyond Alvina's grasp:

> But in his eyes, which kept hers, there was a dark flicker of ascendancy. He was going to triumph over her. She knew it. And her soul sank as if it sank out of her body. It sank away out of her body, left her there powerless, soulless. (212)

In this scene, just after Alvina's father's death, she is exposed to the force of the superior male power. Ciccio exist as a mysterious man for Alvina. Consequently, Alvina identifies Ciccio in a different way for "He seemed to her to be the only passionately good-natured man she had ever seen" (173). Unlike the other men she met, Ciccio is depicted constructively although he belongs to another culture. He is also depicted as attractive and passionate which is apt for an ideal masculine man. Therefore, what Lawrence provides for Alvina finally, is a man belonging to nature, in contrast to Alvina herself, who belongs to a world of culture. In contrast to the other men in the novel, Ciccio is portrayed as a primitive man with the "strange fine black hair he had, close as fur, animal and naked, frail-seeming, tawny hands" (160). Ciccio, thus, is existing for Alvina as her protector, and his existence suggests the requirement for male authority.

As the novel progresses, Ciccio's intimidation to Alvina increases, especially after the dismiss of her father. Upon learning about the ill-fated news, Ciccio "gives [to Alvina] the faintest gesture with his head, as of summons towards him" (197), and this action eradicates the Englishwoman bereft of fatherly protection:

> …there is something predatory and silently conniving in Ciccio, something that does take advantage of the limitations of others – in short, something that is not justified by a reference to Alvina's long-awaited, necessary wedding in the darkness. Here and throughout the novel Ciccio remains too unknown, brooding, and inarticulate to fully convince us of the value of his transforming murder of Alvina. For Alvina's assassination appears to negate not only her will but also her energy (qtd. in Balbert 394).

The above excerpt subtly shows that Ciccio is the Heroic character. Ciccio's mysterious charisma remains a vague mystery. Ciccio travels to Italy with Alvina and despite the rising popularity of travelling to the European south, Italy south of Rome continued to remain an uncultivated territory. In the early twentieth century, southern Italy marks the end of European civilization and is gravely near to the world of non-European cruelty. It is imperative to apprehend Ciccio and Alvina's trip to

southern Italy by placing them in the contexts. Unquestionably, Ciccio is represented with hint to the hegemonic masculine primitive figure living at the colonial boundaries. His origin in a colonial backwater and his movement to the European center first, and later back to his point of origin establish a ground for a post colonial reading of the novel.

In another incident, soon after James Houghton's death and being completely helpless, Alvina follows the performing troupe called Natcha-Kee-Tawaras, under the spell of Ciccio. Towards the end of the night when the troupe commemorates Alvina's becoming a part of the troupe as the non-official bride of Ciccio, Madame Kishwégin's presentation of the key to Alvina's room and the light to Ciccio is greatly symbolic:

> Kishwég in must open your doors for you all,' she said. Then, with a slight flourish, she presented the key to Ciccio. 'I gave it to him? Yes?' she added, with her subtle, malicious smile. Ciccio, smiling slightly and keeping his head ducked, took the key. Alvina looked brightly, as if bewildered, from one to another. 'Also the light!' said Madame producing a pocket flash-light, which she triumphantly handed to Ciccio. (243)

This symbolical ritualistic grooming of Ciccio is presented as the ascendance of men. The ceremony did not consider giving neither the key to Alvina's own room nor the light. However, these symbolic items are "triumphantly" given to Ciccio the male superior, and the scene "produced a kind of dazed submission in her, the drugged sense of unknown beauty" (243). Alvina's eager submission to Ciccio in the face of such a ceremony shows the special privilege given to men over women. It can be understood that Lawrence is emphasising his idea about men's superior power in a restrained way. The action of receiving the keys, allows for Ciccio to exert his power on Alvina. The powerful pursuit of Ciccio is juxtaposed by Alvina's passive receptiveness, and clearly Alvina is dominated.

Lawrence's novel commences to foresee the denouement of the plot as soon as Alvina ascertains a rapport with Ciccio. Within her first meeting with the Italian man, Alvina senses as if, "a great instinctive good-naturedness came out of him" (157), but she also finds him aggressive, incomprehensible, and perplexing:

> He smiled into her eyes as if she understood. She was a trifle nervous as he smiled at her from out of the stable, so yellow-eyed and half-mysterious, derisive. Her impulse was to turn and go away from the stable. But a deeper impulse made her smile into his face…. (159-60)

Alvina's reaction to Ciccio reveals an uncomfortable feeling of hope in her when she realised he is her source of development although she dreaded his dominant behaviour. Lawrence does not reveal a loving relationship between Ciccio and Alvina. In its place, he chooses to persecute Alvina within Ciccio's male propriety and she shadows Ciccio in subdued submission, "Her eyes were wide and natural and submissive, with a new awful submission as if she had lost her soul. So she looked up at him, like a victim" (212). The feeling that Ciccio creates Alvina to experience is abundant that "in her orgasm of unbearable feeling" she senses the affection for Ciccio "right in her bowels" and this sentiment is portrayed as, "terrible, unbearable" (213). The language that Lawrence employs to portray the description of the rapport between Alvina and Ciccio insinuates to the temperament of

power relations concerning the genders and may be deceiving. Nonetheless, Lawrence's argument is to emphasis on the purported expected limitation of women in the existence of a sexual idol.

Lawrence does not willingly make the reader sympathise with Ciccio. Just as he is interpreted as attractive to Alvina, he is at the same time represented as mean, "Awful things men were, savage, cruel, underneath their civilization" (167). Nonetheless, this is again a deliberate paradoxical illustration since Lawrence is not really happy with the cultured world. As he repeatedly conveys in his discursive works, civilisation to him is somewhat unfruitful, something which makes people disregard their nature, their real self (137). Consequently, Lawrence's mostly negative "savage" representation of Ciccio is to juxtapose the crude phallic hero, whom he supports, to the refined man. After all, from the start, Alvina attempts to become an individual belonging to the world of culture which unceasingly rejects her, and she can only be juxtaposed by a foil, a man of nature. Thus, later Lawrence constructs Alvina to experience conflicting mind-sets about Ciccio:

> His mouth had the peculiar, stupid, self-conscious, half-jeering smile. Alvina was a little bit annoyed. But she felt that a great instinctive good-naturedness came out of him, he was self-conscious and constrained, knowing she did not follow his language of gesture.
>
> (173)

What differentiates Ciccio from the other men Alvina encounters is then his arresting charm and mystery. Contrasting with the earlier civilised men Alvina encounters, whom Lawrence never permits the reader to fully understand, Ciccio is unsophisticated and unfamiliar to the world of culture. Unblemished by modernity, which is an ultimate state in Lawrence's viewpoint, Ciccio stimulates inquisitiveness not only on Alvina's side but also for the reader:

> He stood and examined the beasts critically. Then he spoke to them with strange sounds, patted them, stroked them down, felt them, slid his hands down them, over them, under them, and felt their legs (172).

Ciccio portray his masculine character with gestures and body language in his own style. The "strange" closeness between Ciccio and the horses is a sign of Ciccio's "half-mysterious, derisive" nature (173). The particular sexual scene disturbs Alvina, and when Ciccio rests his eyes on Alvina as he is taking care of the horses, Alvina for the first time senses that Ciccio can come into contact with something in her soul that she has not learned yet, "His eyes kept hers. Curious how dark they seemed with only a yellow ring of pupil. He was looking right into her, beyond her usual self, impersonal" (173). The impersonal self that Lawrence talks about is the self of womanhood which is alien to Alvina and Lawrence portrays a suppressed character, who is awakened through Ciccio's diffusion into her life.

Although Ciccio is depicted as a victim who going for war, numerous critics have doubted whether Ciccio is suitable partner for Alvina and whether her hasty submission to Ciccio is reasonable. A number of critics share the same view as Meyers when he states:

> The great weakness of *The Lost Girl* is that Lawrence does not make Alvina's love for Ciccio convincing or persuade us that Ciccio, though better than her five unsatisfactory lovers, is the right man for her. (101)

If there is no power of the "savage annihilation" that intimidates to "overthrow" Alvina's [un]consciousness as a British woman, her association with Ciccio is not a sensible choice.

In addition, Graham Hough indicates that Ciccio exemplifies the opposite world to what Alvina represents, rather than being portrayed as a complete character, “He [Ciccio] is not individually very sympathetic or very convincing, but as soon as he and Alvina leave England his background becomes superb” (93). In fact, Ciccio's "lovely, rich darkness of his southern nature, so different from her own" (LG291) somewhat justifies and even supports Alvina's unexpected and unfathomable submission to him

Critic Siegel in his study stipulates that when looking at masculinity further than the conventional code of masculinity, Ciccio’s masculine self is related to the characteristics of the prehistoric Etruscan culture, where Lawrence in his collection of travel writings called Etruscan Places (1932) is depicted as "small and dainty in proportion, and fresh, somehow charming instead of impressive" (26). As Siegel indicates, one of the characters by the name of Dr. Mitchell, whom Alvina was engaged to prior to marrying Ciccio, have each inherited the opposing rituals of the Etruscan society, which exemplified, respectively, "the natural flowering of life" (Etruscan 49) and the "imposing" and "patriarchal" Roman Empire. Alvina's selection of Ciccio to Dr. Mitchell suggests her psychological detachment from Imperial Britain that has grasped the cultural tradition of the Roman Empire.

In *The Lost Girl*, Lawrence indicates that although Alvina tries very hard to achieve a social status, Italy is not an accepted place to hunt for her “self” since he considers that women are incapable of finding their actual selves as long as they attempt to get into the world of men. Alvina needs to be protected by a man. She faces in her Italian husband Ciccio’s hometown Pescocalascio uninhibited primitivism. Lawrence’s female protagonist becomes lost amid the Italian landscape, and Lawrence is successful in making Ciccio to become her protector. Alvina discovers that she is ‘protected’ by being trapped between the rigid demands of the hegemonic Ciccio in a strange land and her love for him. The desire Alvina experiences with Ciccio is extremely powerful that instead of resisting him like she did with all the other men she befriended earlier, she finds herself submitting to Ciccio’s dominance and in fact is serious about being his life partner. Alvina’s passivity in the presence of Ciccio is evident because she feels “safe” with him. Alvina is conquered by Lawrence through Ciccio, and Ciccio’s overprotective male authority is described as rather baffling in the novel.

Lawrence portrays Ciccio as conforming to hegemonic masculinity as he and Alvina are not portrayed an affectionate couple. Lawrence depicts Alvina as being victimised by Ciccio’s male appropriateness and she obeys Ciccio in a compliant submission because, “Her eyes were wide and natural and submissive, with a new awful submission as if she had lost her soul. So she looked up at him, like a victim” (212). The language that Lawrence employs to explain the relationship between Ciccio and Alvina suggests the nature of dominant power relations between the couple. Regardless of the fear-provoking image of Ciccio, at the same time Lawrence indicates that he is also charismatically beautiful. Therefore, Ciccio’s description by Lawrence is similar to patriarchy’s

belief that men should be dominant, frightening with the amazing power they have but at the same time attractive. This is unquestionably a resonant of patriarchal potentials, and Alvina's eager submission is the extremity which Lawrence supports in his philosophy.

Ciccio does not show public recognition of Alvina, and this despairs her. Lawrence is not describing Alvina's psychic condition but seems to be warning women to consent to male authority or they will face misery especially in social recognition. Alvina was depressed after her father's death but as soon as she accepted the authority of Ciccio, she was immediately given social recognition in the primitive society she lives in. Although this might be understood an act of falling in love, it is actually Ciccio's male authority that makes her consent: "She seemed almost to melt into his power" (254). Patriarchy triumphs and Alvina is harshly punished due to her submission to male dominance. Moreover, the space that Ciccio will possess in Alvina's life as a dominant figure is foreshadowed when he sits down on her father's chair when he and Alvina went back to Woodhouse to pack Alvina's belongings (259). The male authoritative figure of the father is symbolically exchanged with Ciccio's when he assumes the role of the male power, a figure that has been lacking in Alvina's life.

Concerning Ciccio's Plutonic supremacy in *The Lost Girl*, Lawrence intentionally makes it more challenging for us to differentiate between the darkness as lively source of renewal, and the melancholic state of heartless complete destructions. Ciccio's "terrible" desire stipulates emotional rebirth. In fact, even this salvation is reduced to an implacable uncertainty. When Alvina moves to her new home and new life in the Abruzzi Mountains, she experiences more stricken episodes. She has to familiarise herself with additional petrifying primitive activities than she could ever have imagined in the bowels of the English earth. Living a life with Ciccio represents loss of social status, long term of solitariness and the poverty of peasant Italy. Italian marriage law stipulates that the wife with effect notably turns out to be her husband's property. Alvina is noticeably conquered when Ciccio and one of his male kinsfolks appear to be "threatening her with surveillance and subjection" (329). This male relative totally avoids discussing with any women religious matters, political debates or other topics that have the potential to encourage conversation for Alvina with her more sophisticated English coterie of acquaintances. What is intriguing in Lawrence's novel is, paradoxically although Alvina is depicted as receiving a harsh treatment, she is virtually distinguished as a radiant opposite to the brusque, reserved men of her new home who perceive in her "a fairness, a luminousness" of soul, "something free, touched with divinity" (325).

The last few chapters of the novel, depicts Alvina's journey from England to Italy and her encounter with a primitive world. This too intensifies additional symbolic significance to her position as a "lost" woman. Undoubtedly, in the beginning of the novel the narration is about how Alvina turns out to be "lost" in England and the rest of the narration describes about the ways she turns out to be "lost" in Italy. Alvina, having survived several definitions of "lost", now appears more truly lost when Ciccio leaves her with child to become a soldier. The final chapter indicates that Alvina will encounter a life being "literally" lost in the interior of the Italian village even without the existence of Ciccio, who is departing for the approaching war.

Alvina's effort to control patriarchal constraints at the beginning of the novel is progressively substituted by the portrayals of the threatening forces of the Italian man Ciccio and his primitive culture. The frenzy of World War I recruits Ciccio and he leaves Alvina who is pregnant with a child, unaccompanied in the interior of the threatening Italian country. She pleads with her husband

to make a promise to return to her as soon as the war ends. Although Ciccio promises to return, Alvina is not convinced. The conclusion of the novel ends with the description of Ciccio's departure and the future of Alvina is uncertain.

Ciccio, was anticipated to depict as a brave knight who defends his country and his woman, is able to be respectable in the society and being hard working. These are the features of the perfect picture of men, as it always had been. Alvina's gender role was created as an opposite to an ideal male role, and assist in perpetuating patriarchy. Ciccio, being the man and the head of the family is given the responsibility to keep up with all social contacts, display aggressiveness, stay strong, be rational, be prepared to fight and defend the country and be sexually active. These are the characteristics possessed by Ciccio. However, Alvina is totally dependent and submissive to her male protector. Based on the analysis of Lawrence's *The Lost Girl*, it can be concluded that the female protagonist is under the Heroic male character's control and hegemonic masculinity prevails between them.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Ciccio, is portrayed as a brave knight who defends his country and his woman and is also able earn respect in the society for being hard working. These are the characteristics of the perfect picture of men, as it always had been. Alvina's gender role was created as an opposite to an ideal male role, and assist in perpetuating patriarchy. Ciccio, being the man and the head of the family is given the responsibility to keep up with all social contacts, display aggressiveness, stay strong, be rational, be prepared to fight and defend the country and be sexually active. These are the characteristics possessed by Ciccio. However, Alvina is totally dependent and submissive to her male protector. Based on the analysis of Lawrence's *The Lost Girl*, it can be concluded that the female protagonist is under the Heroic male character's control and hegemonic masculinity prevails between them.

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