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TREADING IN FEAR – THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS:**E. M. FORSTER’S HEROINE CAROLINE ABBOT IN PURSUIT OF FREEDOM**

Abstract: Gender issues have been a topic in written literature since ancient times. In the past, writers and philosophers questioned and often denigrated the role of women in society. Christianity brought to literature a model of two opposite women figures, a bad girl disrespected by respectable members of community, versus a good girl who represented all Christian virtues. In the Victorian and post Victorian era, women’s emancipation became a major societal issue. In the early twentieth century, literature by and about women intensified. In the modern feminist era, particularly after women earned the right to vote and gained greater access to education and workplace, literature started concentrating on women’s changing roles and continued obstacles to equality. As a writer who was extremely susceptible to the influence of time, E. M. Forster described his characters in close contact with their surroundings. He criticized the position and role of women in a Victorian middle class family. He depicted his heroines in constant struggle between their desires and suitable and appropriate

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behaviour expected by their family members and friends. The choice his female characters are faced with is whether they can bring themselves to break deep-rooted social conventions in order to attain personal happiness as free-thinking women or whether they should stick to the society’s expectations. The paper concentrates on the main female protagonist of Foster’s novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, analysing the transformation the character undergoes in her pursuit of personal freedom and fulfilment.

Key words: position and role of women, emancipation, internal struggle, suitable and appropriate behaviour, society’s expectations.

INTRODUCTION

Gender issues have been a topic in literature since ancient Greece, when Sappho and Homer wrote about female sexuality, marriage and emotional relationships between men and women. Christianity brought to literature the archetype of a good and bad girl; she is an angel and at the same time a monster, a virgin and prostitute (Nsaidzedze, 2017, p. 2). The Victorian era saw certain changes: women instead of using pseudonyms began publishing their works under their real names. Charlotte Brontë published her *Jane Eyre* in 1847, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning published *Aurora Leigh* in 1857, which is considered to be the first and most feminine Victorian poem (Nsaidzedze, 2017, p. 3). Although writers, both male and female, started using the issue of women’s emancipation more often, the position and role of women still varied a great deal. At the one side of the spectrum, a female character in the literature of that time could be depicted as a “home angel” whose role was to make her home a comfortable dwelling place, as well as to be a faithful companion to her spouse and a devoted mother who spent her spare time in charity work. This perception of a woman limited her role and significance, assigning her the position solely within her home and family. At the other end of this spectrum, there was a “liberated” woman who fought for the right to education, labour and independent life. Nevertheless, that kind of woman was still treated as a heretic and the society deprived her of independency by not allowing her to vote, to be educated, to work and inherit property. Modern time brought the first significant changes in the position of women. Laws were passed giving women the right to vote, to be educated and elected in parliaments. Historical changes during the Victorian era prompted discussions with regard to the role of women. *The Great Reform Act* of 1832 represented a starting point for debates about women’s rights since it stated that women were not part of the electorate body and were deprived of the right to vote. It was not until 1918 that women over the age of thirty were granted the right to vote by the *Representation of People Act*. The 1928 *Equal Franchise Act* allowed all women over the age of twenty-one to vote, thus giving women electoral equality with men.

But Victorian women were not only deprived of the right to vote. They were totally deprived of their self-being. The Common Law¹ still kept to the coverture²,

The closest analogue to marriage was feudalism. Lest a woman entertain any doubts over her serf status, the wedding ceremony, with its injunctions to subordination and obedience, was perfectly clear upon this point. St. Paul abjured the bride to be obedient unto her husband as unto the Lord....Secular law was equally explicit and ruled that when man and woman become “one”, that one was the man (Millet, 2016, 68).

Victorian women were also divested of the right to handle their own property. In this period, a woman underwent a “civil death” upon marriage, forfeiting what amounted to every human right, as felons do now upon entering prison. She lacked control over her earnings, was not permitted to choose her domicile, could not manage property legally her own, sign papers or bear witness. Her husband owned both her person and her services (Millet, 2016, p. 67).

The *Married Woman’s Property Act* was passed in 1870 allowing women to legally own the money they earned and to inherit property. Women were also allowed to work outside their homes, mostly in textile and clothing factories and workshops. They were also given the right to divorce on the same grounds as men by the 1857 *Matrimonial Causes Act*. Education as well was the issue that preoccupied feminist advocates. At the time Queen Victoria succeeded the throne, education was available only to the rich boys, while girls were taught at homes by governesses. The *Elementary Education Act* passed in 1870 prescribed compulsory education for all children aged between five and thirteen. The progress in the fight for women’s higher education was achieved when Girton College of the Cambridge University admitted women in 1869 and the University of Oxford offered “Lectures for Ladies” in 1873, although they did not allow them to study for degree courses. The University of London was the first to allow women to take degrees in 1878. However, many feminist writers, as well as advocates of women’s rights, pointed out that their goal was not only to make women equal with men, but also to recognize a female’s true nature and necessities.

Throughout history women were disciplined to become obedient. They were brainwashed that they were good for nothing but to be stay-at-home daughters, wives and mothers, give birth to a load of children, handle household chores and be unseen otherwise. The patriarchal society with its norms predestined a woman’s fate. They were controlled – first by their fathers and brothers, and later by their husbands. Patriarchy permeated all

¹ The part of English law that is derived from custom and judicial precedent rather than statutes.

² An archaic term referring to the legal status of a married woman. Upon marriage, husband and wife were said to have acquired unity of person that resulted in the husband having numerous rights over the life of his wife.

spheres of life. It was “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1990, p. 20). Consequently, “all the power and authority within the family, the society and the state remain entirely in the hands of men” (Abeda, 2010, p. 7). Therefore, it is no surprise that literature by and about women was almost non-existent. One of the best-known appraisals of women’s role and position in the society afore and at her time was given by Virginia Woolf in her essay *A Room of One’s Own*. Raised in a noble family, constantly urged to broaden her interests, especially in the field of literature, by her father Leslie Stephen³, Virginia Woolf learned to think, contemplate, reason, and respect intellect. After the death of her father, she moved to Bloomsbury. Her home became the centre of the Bloomsbury Group⁴ whose members criticized strict ethical norms which were still under the influence of Victorian puritan morals, the principles which sacrificed spontaneous feelings of individuals. The group protested against insincerity, hypocrisy of the society with regard to issues concerning sexuality, privacy and decency. Valuating individuals according to their material status in the society was rejected by the Group, whose position was that people should be regarded with respect to personal values and not their social status. Woolf does not approach the Woman Question⁵ from the literature point of view but from the conditions required for its emergence, emphasizing the circumstances which make it impossible (Dojcinovic-Nesic, 2000, p. 25). Her point of view is summed up in her idea that “a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction” (Woolf, 1929, p. 4). According to Woolf, money is essential precondition for writing, which presented insurmountable barrier since women were not on equal footing with men in that respect. She wonders what could have happened if imaginary Mrs Seton “and her mother and her mother before her had learnt the great art of making money” (Woolf, 1929, p. 19). But Woolf realizes that the question is useless since “in the first place, to earn money was impossible for them, and in the second, had it been possible, the law denied them the right to possess what money they earned” (Woolf, 1929, p. 20). Although at the time Virginia Woolf wrote her essay the *Married Woman’s Property Act* (1870) had been implemented for over fifty years, most women were still tied by patriarchal bondages. Earning money and still

³ Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904) was an English author, critic, historian and biographer.

⁴ The Bloomsbury Group was a group of English writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists in the first half of the twentieth century, including writers Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster; Virginia’s husband Leonard Woolf, an essayist and non-fiction writer; post-impressionist painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant and others.

⁵ In England, the “Woman Question” referred to social changes in the nineteenth century which questioned the role, position and fundamental rights of women in industrialized countries, primarily the UK.

having a dozen of children and the house to take care of were obstacles that almost no woman could surmount. And yet, Virginia Woolf argues that immaterial difficulties were much worse – a woman could not speak her mind; she was not intellectually free; she was denied the fullest worldly experience. Woolf concludes that “...it is fairly evident that even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist. On the contrary, she was snubbed, slapped, lectured and exhorted” (Woolf, 1929, p. 46). No matter how gifted a woman was, she could not have written any kind of literature at the time of overall denigration of women. Woolf states that men’s antagonism towards women’s emancipation was rooted in the desire “...not so much that SHE shall be inferior as that HE shall be superior” and that “The history of men’s opposition to women’s emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself” (Woolf, 1929, p. 46). Woolf describes men as the ‘opposing faction’; they are “hated and feared, because they have the power to bar her way to what she wants to do” (Woolf, 1929, pp. 49-50). Yet, the years of industrialization, social progress and prosperity in all spheres of life encouraged women to start their battle for equality.

A close friend of Virginia Woolf’s and a member of the Bloomsbury Group E. M. Forster used the idea of women’s emancipation in his novels. Although the acts granting women certain rights had already been passed, women were aware that they were still sexually, domestically, educationally and otherwise inferior to men. The inequalities women were faced with led to suffragette movement⁶ and civil disobedience. The emergence of suffragettes prompted discussions about the nature and position of women. The prominent name of the women’s struggle for equality was Emmeline Pankhurst who, with her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, formed the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903 which started campaigning for women’s rights. At the same time, the movement toward sexual freedom began to arise as an expression of women’s dissatisfaction with the restrictions that had been imposed on them by earlier generations (Remy-Hebert, 2016, pp. 5-6). Therefore, E. M. Forster’s female characters reflect the time in which he created them. Forster was not a prolific writer, yet he is one of the most important novelists of the twentieth-century English literature. He wrote only six novels: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910), *A Passage to India* (1924) and *Maurice* (completed in 1914, but published posthumously in 1971). Although Forster portrayed impressive and memorable female characters in his novels, he

⁶ The name comes from the noun *suffrage* which means *the right to vote in political elections*. The suffragette movement emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century as the result of growing sense of injustice as the direct respond to the *Great Reform Act* which denied women the right to vote. The suffragettes used various forms of struggle for the women’s rights – art, debates, propaganda, and even attacks on property.

did not react to the issue concerning women’s emancipation in a direct way depicting the struggle for their rights. Forster described his heroines in close contact with their surroundings, analysing in what ways new circumstances influenced a woman’s psyche and behaviour, criticizing false Victorian moral and encouraging them to change their destiny of their own free will. His female protagonists are not typewriters who agitate and scream and who are carried off by the police, as Mrs Honychurch from *A Room with a View* characterizes them. “They are womanly and passionate heroines, who experience their emancipation through travelling abroad. Thus, they cross not only geographical but also cultural and social bounds” (Pekacz, 2006, p. 128). In her text about Forster, Virginia Woolf states that “the divorce law and the poor law came in for little of his attention. His concern is with the private life; his message is addressed to the soul” (Woolf, 1927, p. 644). Woolf continues that “This belief that it is the private life that matters, that it is the soul that is eternal, runs through all his writing” (Woolf, 1927, p. 644).

Forster’s novels offer profound insight in social problems of his time, especially female issues. Writing about female issues, he wanted to draw attention to “oppressive living conditions of women and expose the subordinate position of women in patriarchal society”, (Jiang, 2020, p. 101).

The paper analyses Caroline Abbot, the main female character of E. M. Forster’s novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, focusing on her struggle toward the liberation from patriarchal conventions and pointing out contradictions in her actions and in Forster’s attitude towards women’s emancipation.

A NOTE ON THE NOVEL

Forster’s first novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* was published in 1905. First, he gave it the title *Monteriano* by the place where most of the plot occurs. However, his publisher was not satisfied with it. Forster suggested two alternative titles and finally they decided to change it into *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, which was taken from Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Critics* and which runs “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread”.

In this novel, Forster analyzes a typical English provincial family in untypical surroundings. He takes the Herriton family to Italy, to a small town Monteriano, where they are confronted by a strange situation which forces them to react in ways greatly differing from their previous experiences. Forster uses contrasts to depict his characters, thus emphasizing the difference between England and Italy. He describes his English characters as typical middle-class men who are well-adjusted but useless machines with developed minds but undeveloped hearts, while Italians are straight, passionate people enjoying the pleasures of life. Besides impressive characters, both in the English and Italian line of the story, Forster suggests an important cultural difference relating to the position and role of

women in the two countries. Although at that time women in England neither had equal rights with men, nor were emancipated in a modern sense of the word, English family is dominated not by Philip, but by Mrs Herriton, while men traditionally rule Italian families. Even though he advocates women's emancipation, Forster's sympathies, despite all their faults, lie with "uncivilized" and unconventional Italians. He criticizes English conventions. Mater familias, old Mrs Herriton, represents all negative characteristics of England's province. Her life consists of nothing else but conventional social forms. She is a selfish tyrant, hypocritically pretending to be pious and concerned with the welfare of others, who hides her real feelings and the wish to rule over everybody (Marković, 1982, p. 62).

Mrs Herriton's daughter Harriet is another character that does not change. Brought up by her strict mother, Harriet suppresses her feelings all her life and does not "allow" Italy to change either her behaviour or her views on life. However, Forster does not describe all "English" protagonists in a negative context. He draws a distinction between the female members of the Herriton family and Philip, Mrs Herriton's son and his Sawston acquaintance Caroline Abbot. Two of them change under the influence of Italy, returning to England fulfilled with new experiences and attitudes towards life. But, Forster does not idealize Italy, either. Gino, a young Italian, is not portrayed entirely in a positive way. Although he lives a full life, while life passes the English characters by, Gino is depicted as a carefree and irresponsible young man who is trying to live his life as effortlessly as he can, doing almost nothing or as little as possible and always at the expense of others.

The novel begins with the description of a little English town's characters confined in the cocoon of patriarchal society which is suddenly shaken by the decision of Lilia Herriton to travel to Tuscany. Her decision to marry a young Italian leads to an array of incidents resulting in a tragedy. Although the Herritons, the family of Lilia's late husband, are prejudiced against her and did not approve of her marrying into their family because, according to their opinion, their son married a girl who was below their social status, they do not approve of her new marriage which is scandalous in their eyes. The Herritons decide to remove Lilia completely from their lives and to take her daughter away from her and bring her up according to their principles not allowing her to take any part in her mother's life. But Forster does not portray Lilia in a positive way either. She is frivolous, uneducated and without manners. Nevertheless, she is the first character in the novel who dares to try to change her life. The fact that she does not do it for high principles, such as the struggle for a better position of women in society, but for her personal selfish reasons – to get rid of the tortures inflicted on her by her late husband's family who controls her life, does not diminish the importance of her attempt, no matter how fruitless and unsuccessful it turns out in the end. Even though Lilia is confronted with negative attitude of the Sawston society towards

her wish to travel to Italy, her friend Caroline Abbot is not intimidated by it and accepts the “challenge” to accompany her on her journey to a more “unrestrained world”.

CAROLINE ABBOT’S SEARCH FOR A BETTER POSITION IN MEN’S WORLD

In his letter to R. C. Trevelyan (*An Exchange between Forster and R. C. Trevelyan*) dated October 28, 1905 and published as an appendix to Abinger Edition of the novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* Foster stated, “The object of the book is the improvement of Philip Herriton”. Nevertheless, it is obvious that “Caroline Abbot, rather than Philip Herriton, is a central figure of the novel” (Cavaliero, 1979, p. 70).

At the beginning of the novel, Caroline is described as a twenty-three-year-old girl predestined to become a spinster. Philip does not think much of her. She is “good, quiet, dull and amiable, and young only because she was twenty-three: there was nothing in her appearance or manner to suggest the fire of youth” (Forster, 1987, p. 33). Caroline lives with her father, a widower who has dedicated his life to her bringing up. Although she has spent all her life in her hometown, she is not a typical girl. She does not sit at home, knitting and waiting for a suitor to ask her hand. Caroline is “educated” for a girl of that time. She can read, she speaks Italian and she is engaged in charity work. Still Caroline knows that there is life beyond bourgeois Sawston. She wants more of her life, but does not have the courage to step out of line. Unexpectedly, she gets a chance to leave Sawston. To everyone’s surprise, Caroline agrees to be a travelling companion to Lilia Herriton on her journey to Italy. The Herritons do not comprehend why such a young girl wants to chaperone a widow who is ten years her senior. They do not understand that Caroline, although she has never left Sawston before, wants to take responsibility for her and Lilia’s travelling on their own. She herself explains it telling Philip: “I am John Bull⁷ to the backbone, yet I want to see Italy just once. ... It will give me things to think about and talk about for the rest of my life” (Forster, 1987, p. 34). And indeed, Italy has a great impact on Caroline. Her feelings and behaviour change upon coming to Monteriano. There, everything looks more beautiful, easier and allowed. While in England she does not dare to break rules and breach conventions, in Italy it seems that everything is possible. Far from England and accusing lectures of hypocritical moralists, Caroline and Lilia, for the first time in their lives, behave in accordance with their feelings. “We were mad – drunk with rebellion,” says Caroline (Forster, 1987, p. 77). She even adds that they had no common sense. Thus, she justifies her following acts. After Lilia has met Gino and fallen in love with him, Caroline urges her to marry him. She does it for two reasons.

⁷ The typical Englishman, after John Bull, chief character in Arbuthnot’s allegory *The History of John Bull* (1712)

Firstly, because she is indignant at the hypocrisy of Sawstan because "...everyone spent their lives in making little sacrifices for objects they didn't care for, to please people they didn't love; they never learned to be sincere – and, what's as bad, never learned how to enjoy themselves" (Forster, 1987, p. 76). The other reason is love. Caroline believes that a man and a woman should marry because they are in love. Nothing else should matter. For a long time, women could not choose. They had to marry men from their social class and spend their lives without love. A marriage was a sort of contract, a formality that one had to fulfil in order to please social norms. After Philip has arrived in Monteriano with the aim of dissuading Lilia from a marriage with Gino, Caroline acts as her advocate. She knows that Philip will not approve of Lilia's marriage because the Herritons do not think Gino is her match. Caroline, of course, does not agree. In her opinion, social distinctions do not matter. Even Gino's being younger is of no importance because she is sure that both Gino and Lilia are madly in love with each other and that their love will make them happy in spite of all norms they have breached. She tells Philip that the Herritons should respect Lilia's choice. After Philip's comment that Lilia is not capable of choosing on her own, Caroline retorts angrily: "Had you ever let her choose?" (Forster, 1987, p. 75). This question summarizes frustration of all women raised in a patriarchal society – they could not choose.

But, Lilia's death makes Caroline doubt her actions. She even tells Philip: "That is the one time I have gone against what is proper, and there are the results" (Forster, 1987, p. 76). Caroline is tortured by opposite feelings. She does not know what to do. Should she act in accordance with her beliefs or should she comply with socially prescribed norms? She does not seem to be liberal any more. This is one of the main weaknesses of Forster's heroines. Hesitation and the change of mind are the main features characterizing internal struggle of Forster's heroines. On the one hand, Forster portrays Caroline Abbot as a determined young lady who knows what she wants of her life, while on the other hand he makes her act contrary to her previous beliefs and decisions. Just when she urged Lilia to marry Gino, Caroline takes everything back deciding not to defy societal expectations. When Lilia married Gino and joined the Roman Catholic Church she gave "a good slap in the face for the people at home" (Forster, 1987, p. 61). Everybody at home in England sided with the Herritons, castigating Lilia's decision, even Caroline. Lilia is disappointed by her friend: "Night after night did Lilia curse this false friend, who had agreed with her that the marriage would 'do'.... and then, at the first hint of opposition, had fled back to England, shrieking and distraught" (Forster, 1987, p. 61). That was not the only time that Caroline showed her indecision. Returning to Italy upon Lilia's death, she wants to pay a visit to Gino. Caroline is offended by Philip's assumption that she wants to do it on her own. "Mr Herriton! Do you suppose that I would have entered that man's house, knowing about him all that I do? I think you have very odd ideas what is possible for a lady" (Forster, 1987, p. 101). Philip is surprised by her comment. He sees that there are two Miss Abbots. One who can travel to Monteriano on her

own – very strange for a young woman of her class since ladies were supposed to travel only with a companion, and another Miss Abbot who finds it inappropriate to pay a visit to Gino on her own. Nevertheless, Caroline goes to Gino’s home without anybody. She learns that Gino wants to propose to a woman he has recently met. She objects to his intention to marry again because, in her opinion, that would be a marriage without love. Gino is surprised by her dissatisfaction. He does not see anything wrong in his wish to marry another woman, even though he does not love her. He thinks that his wife-to-be will fulfil her duty and that he will be quite happy with her. Caroline quivers with indignation at the word duty. She realizes that the only reason Gino wants to get married is to provide a housewife and housemaid for him. Caroline relates her feelings explicitly. She is against deep-rooted conventional relationships between a husband and wife. She does not want to accept that a wife is inferior to her husband, that her only role is to give birth to children and raise them, to keep house and satisfy all her husband’s needs. Caroline resents the fact that married women have no right to relate their feelings and beliefs, as well as to satisfy their own personal needs. Through Caroline’s words, Forster criticizes Victorian moral and family. He uses Gino’s marriages, the past miserable one with Lilia, and a marriage-to-be (obviously on the same foundations as the previous one), to indicate the negative aspects of Victorian patriarchal society. A woman is no more than an object in her husband’s possession – a thing that cannot use her own head. Her only role is to be an ornament to her husband if she is married to a well-off family or a housemaid if she is poor. A woman’s position in a family is picturesquely described by Gino’s best friend Spiridione, who advises him how to handle Lilia and put her in her place. According to Spiridione:

Women must be faithful, while men need not. Women should go to church services regularly, while men may fail to go. Women should be confined to their homes and spend time with other female relatives, while for men the world is their oyster (Scott, 1984, p. 48).

There is another reason why Caroline is frustrated with Gino’s notion of marriage. She is in love with him. In fact, she has been in love with him from the first moment. She even admits it to Philip, telling him that she is not ashamed of her love and that she would have given him her body and soul if he had asked her. But, is it so? “Is she ready to sacrifice her freedom for the passion that cannot be returned? Despite love she feels for Gino, Caroline does not want to make the same mistake as Lilia” (Scott, 1984, p. 52). She does not want to change one groove for another, as Lilia has done. She does not dare, despite possible consequences, failures, disappointments and hesitations, to try to change her life. She does not have the courage to oppose social conventions in practice, not only theoretically. She is not prepared to be criticized and disapproved by society, even for the sake of her own freedom. She has tried to live her life through Lilia. She has stood up to generally accepted principles indirectly by persuading Lilia to “cross the boundary” and marry a man, who is

neither socially nor intellectually her match. Lilia's death has made her realize that everything has been in vain. Caroline has finally understood something that Lilia has understood too late, and that is that "Italy is such a delightful place to live in if you happen to be a man." It is a place where "...brotherhood of men is a reality. But it is accomplished at the expense of the sisterhood of women" (Forster, 1987, p. 53). Unfortunately, this statement does not relate only to Italy, but to all countries of the time. Caroline's indirect striving to change a woman's place and role in society has turned up to be fruitless. Nevertheless, we cannot consider it trifle since it is only a step in women's continuous struggle for equality.

CONCLUSION

The world where Caroline Abbot and Lilia Herriton lived was extremely conventional and the place and role of women in it was strictly determined. Although the time Forster wrote about was the time of general social and industrial prosperity, the change in women's position could be achieved only with the change in the mentality of all people. However, most Forster's heroes do not undergo any noticeable transformation or improvement. Apart from some female characters, who seek a better place in the world, almost no other characters demonstrate the change in their notions about a woman's place in society. Even Caroline and Lilia do not make every effort to achieve such a change. Encumbered with the norms of patriarchal society, they are always somewhere betwixt and between their desires and actual achievements. Their dissatisfaction is suppressed and it surfaces when they arrive in Italy. Far from moral bondages of bourgeois Sawston, they become aware that life offers more freedom than they have experienced. They yearn for a qualitative change in their lives. They want to make their own decisions. However, the struggle for a new position in the world is not easy and simple. Although everything seems possible in Italy, they experience a bitter disappointment. They realize that even Italian women accept their inferior position. The best example is the words of a maid after Lilia has attacked Gino for his infidelity. "What courage you have!" she says. Then, instead of supporting her and identifying with her anger, a complete turnaround shocks Lilia when the maid adds, "...and what good fortune! He is angry no longer! He has forgiven you!" (Forster, 1987, p. 67). That was the last straw. Realizing that even women do not approve of her wish to be on equal terms with men, Lilia falls apart. Death was her escape from her sad fortune. Shaken by Lilia's death, Caroline no more craves to change her destiny. She realizes that her fight against mediocrity of society has been in vain. Talking to Philip Herriton about her experience in Italy, Caroline relates: "I didn't see that all these things are invincible, and that if we go against them, they will break us to pieces" (Forster, 1987, p. 77). Although Forster advocated women's rights through his heroines, he "let" Caroline give up on her hopes and desires. Forster created great female characters but did not allow them to strive for their goals with more fighting spirit. Did he

think that the emancipation of women was no more than a free choice of a future husband, walks around a city without a chaperon, travelling abroad on one’s own or charity work? Although he advocated liberal ideas and equality between sexes, Forster did not “allow” his female characters to develop into self-confident persons, responsible for their destiny. Nevertheless, he is one of the first male writers who explicitly supported women’s struggle for equality, which is yet to be attained in some parts of the world.

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KORACI U STRAHU – BORBA ZA PRAVA ŽENA: KEROLAJN EBOT, HEROINA E. M. FORSTERA, U POTRAZI ZA SLOBODOM

Rezime: Problem odnosa polova je tema pisane literature još od davnina. U prošlosti, pisci i filosofi su dovodili u pitanje i omalovažavali ulogu žena u društvu. Hrišćanstvo je u literaturu uvelo model dve potpuno suprotne figure žena, lošu devojkicu, koju časni članovi zajednice nisu poštovali, nasuprot dobre devojkice, koja je bila oličenje svih hrišćanskih vrlina. U viktorijansko i post viktorijansko doba emancipacija žena je postala veliko društveno pitanje. Prvih godina dvadesetog veka, literatura koju su pisale žene, kao i književna dela o ženama, postaju sve intenzivnije. U moderno feminističko doba, pogotovo nakon što su žene dobile pravo da glasaju i nakon što im je školovanje i zapošljavanje postalo pristupačnije, književnost je počela da se koncentriše na promenu uloge žena, kao i na prepreke ka jednakosti koje su i dalje postojale. Kao pisac koji je bio izuzetno osetljiv na uticaj vremena u kom je živeo, E. M. Forster je svoje likove opisivao u bliskoj povezanosti sa okruženjem. Kritikovao je položaj i ulogu žena u viktorijanskoj porodici srednjeg staleža. Opisivao je heroine koje vode stalnu borbu između svojih želja i primerenog, valjanog ponašanja kakvo su od njih očekivali članovi njihovih porodica i prijatelji. Njegovi ženski likovi suočavaju se sa izborom između mogućnosti da raskrste sa duboko ukorenjenim konvencijama, kako bi dostigle ličnu sreću kao žene koje slobodno misle svojom glavom, ili da se i dalje ponašaju u skladu sa očekivnjima društva.

Rad se sastoji od četiri četiri dela - *Uvod, Beleška o romanu, Potraga Kerolajn Ebot za boljim mestom u muškom svetu i Zaključak*. U uvodnom delu razmatraju se istorijske okolnosti u kojima je nastao Forsterov roman *Gde anđeli se plaše da kroče*. U drugom delu rada dat je kratak prikaz romana sa posebnim osvrtom na razliku između stava koji imaju

Englezi i Italijani prema životu. Treći, glavni deo rada, posvećen je Kerolajn Ebot, glavnom ženskom liku u romanu, njenoj potrazi i žudnji za ličnom slobodom i boljim položajem u svetu, koji još uvek uređuju i kojim još uvek dominiraju muškarci, i pored nominalno usvojenih zakona koji garantuju ženama prava u različitim sferama života, istovremeno kritikujući njenu nedoslednost u toj borbi, kao i Forsterov nedovoljno borbeni duh koji je usadio glavnoj akterki romana. Zaključak ukazuje na glavni nedostatak u Forsterovom stavu prema emancipaciji žena, koji je, iako pozitivan, ipak nedovoljno napredan i odvažan.

Ključne reči: položaj i uloga žena, emancipacija, unutrašnja borba, primereno i valjano ponašanje, očekivanje društva.

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