CHAPTER 4

THE PHALIC CONSCIOUS AND THE PHALIC:

'The Lost Girl'
In *The Lost Girl* we have a typical Lawrentian phallic conscious character in Alvina. She takes a plunge from the trodden world of the mental consciousness into the untrodden world of the phallic consciousness. She is at last lost to the Woodhouse morality and Manchester's paraphernalia. The unsteadiness and instability and unknown nature of her particular life situation is the making of a phallic conscious character. Cicio, the Italian is phallic as the novelist portrays him as a functionary. The novel ends with the suggestion that Alvina is lost to the world of mental consciousness without realizing fully the state of phallic consciousness.
In order to present this theme, the novelist attributes mental consciousness to all those natives who are associated with Woodhouse. James Houghton, Alvina's father is "romantic - commercial" in nature, and he feels depressed as his matrimony with Clarissa does not fulfil his monitory prospects. His business endeavours are repeated failures. He is a dreamer, something of a poet and commercial. He fails to put into practice his dream in the domestic activities and especially in his business on Manchester goods.

Clarissa, James Houghton's wife, is presented as a shadowy figure. She fails to cope with her husband's way of thinking and his aspirations. So she develops a heart disease as a result of nervous repressions. Miss Frost, the governess of Alvina, finds in James the elements of a hypocrite and airy and gracious selfishness. So she keeps a courteous distance with James. She thinks that the whole morale of the house depends on her and takes it as her responsibility to look after Alvina and her nervous, petulant, heart-stricken mother. Miss Pinnegar, on the other hand, is related to James in a curious manner. It has all the features of a mental relationship. It is not a secret relationship, but "simply an implicit correspondence between their two
psyches, an immediacy of understanding which preceded all expression, tacit, wireless."¹

The novelist here observes that the first twenty-five years life story of the protagonist has not been given importance because she and her mother have been "phantom passengers in the ship of James Houghton's fortunes." The atmosphere that prevails in Manchester house is highly repulsive one, but Miss Frost offers Alvina her benevolent and protective care. The contradiction in her nature, which is unnoticed at an early stage comes to the surface level in a slow process:

Sometimes, however, she would have fits of boisterous hilarity, not quite natural, with a strange note half pathetic, half jeering ...

... For twenty years the strong, protective governess reared and tended her lamb, her dove only to see the lamb open a wolf's mouth, to hear the dove utter a wild cackle of a daw or a magpie, a strange sound of derision ... But there was an odd, derisive look at her back of her eyes, a look of old knowledge and deliberate derision. She herself was unconscious about it. But it was there.²

² Ibid., pp.21-22.
When Alvina is twenty-three, she meets Graham, a dark little Australian with "very dark eyes and a body which seemed to move inside his clothing". Miss Frost identifies in him a repulsive factor and cautions Alvina that he has dark blood in his veins and that he is not a man to be trusted. For the first time in this novel her inclination to what is natural and primitive is introduced. It is also the beginning of the conflict between Miss Frost and Alvina. Yudhistar comments on it:

The stress on Graham's "dark" nature is in indirect contrast to the purity and high-mindedness of Miss Frost. Alvina is strongly attracted by "the darkie" - as Graham is popularly known - but this attraction is by no means "love". It is something more primitive: more sensuality than tender love. Miss Frost tries to wake the girl's loving heart, which loving heart is certainly not occupied by Graham whom Alvina finds both fascinating and a trifle repulsive.  

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Alvina's decision to undertake nurse's training is to be taken as a revolt against Woodhouse morality. She finds herself placed in a situation that is objectionable in various respects, but she likes it. She never ventures to indecencies, but she has a peculiar faculty "for looking knowing and indecent beyond words, rolling her eyes and pitching her eyebrows in a certain way ..." At the hospital, doctors and students like her because she is "just their sort: just their very ticket." But actually she is not and could not be so. Her experience as a nurse help her only to lose her respect in humanity. She has acquired knowledge regarding the unpleasant aspects of man. She feels that she has a deeper knowledge than Miss Frost in this respect. Miss Frost fails to understand her real self and mistakes her contacts with others as the genuine one. Alvina's real self remains hidden and she hates all those who have passed judgements on her. Her rebellious mind can't help pouring curse against the conventional morality: "Purity and high-mindedness - the beautiful, but unbearable tyranny. The beautiful, unbearable tyranny of Miss Frost! It was time now for Miss Frost to die."4

4 The Lost Girl, P.36.
When the young doctors take unpardonable liberties with her, she is filled by "a superhuman, voltaic force" with which she could "tear any man, any male creature, limb from limb." But the "curious Amazonic power" lasts for a while and she turns to be a mere woman again and looks them with the "inevitable female - to - male homage." Only Headly ventures to overcome her "isolate self-sufficiency in the fray, her wild overweening backbone." She counteracts to his treacherous suddenness of attack with voltaic suddenness. She realizes that even her inclination to Young cannot be fulfilled due to the "inflexible fate within her, which shaped her ends." She comes back to Woodhouse as a virgin, but she feels that she is beaten by fate. Though she has been trained as a nurse, she could not make her fortune. She seems to share the same fate of her father in her expectations.

Her visit to the coal mining place is a new experience to her. An underworld of miners "in their enslaved magic" suggests the forces of darkness which if liberated, "would cause the super imposed day-order to fall." She feels that "what was wanted was a Dark Master from the underworld." It is part of a clever scheme that the novelist introduces the imagery of darkness. Keith Sagar observes:
The darkness of the pit has become part of Lawrence's mythology, an underworld where human contact is by touch and knowledge is intuition. Alvina's visit down the mine opens her eyes to the fact that the ordinary day-world is, but the surface of darkness.  

Alvina's visit to Arthur Witham's house gives her the prospects of a new relationship with his brother, Albert Witham who is expected to arrive from England. She, in her contacts, with men wants something serious and risky: "Not mere marriage - Oh dear, no! But a profound and dangerous interrelationship." But all her hopes are shattered when he arrives. She thinks of him with qualities of a fish. To her greatest disappointment he is unattractive. During Christmas, she calculates the possibility of a reconciliation with him. But when he comes, all her fancies vanishes. She notices his appearance" - just as fishes stare - then his dishuman-ness came over her again like an arrest, and arrested all her flights of fancy." The novelist, in an interlude, says that so far Alvina's story has been common place. But he foretells that the remaining part is something extraordinary:

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6 The Lost Girl, P.85.
Ordinary people, ordinary fates. But extraordinary people, extraordinary fates. Or else no fate at all. The all-to-one-pattern modern system is too much for most extraordinary individuals. It just kills them off or throws them disused aside.  

May, the manager of James Houghton's theatre is another person who figures in this novel. His attachment with Alvina is purely verbal. He makes no physical advances, but dreads a woman who "coming on towards him." He likes only "the angle, and particularly the angel mother in women." There spreads a scandal on the attachment between Mr. May and Alvina. The fact is that Mr. May is fond of himself, and his body, in an epicurean way, but the thought of other people's body makes him shudder. Their relationship is confined only to a mental consciousness intimacy.

We find that the story reaches another phase when James Houghton appoints the Natcha-Kee-Tawara Troupe for conducting programme. Alvina, in her first visit to Kishwegin, is struck by the strange beauty of Cicio, the Italian. Here we find in their relationship a recurrent

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7 Ibid., P.86.
pattern in Lawrence's novels. Harry T. Moore observes:
"This is the first enunciation of a recurrent Lawrentian theme, the Anglo-Saxon woman becoming a "dark" man's mate."\(^8\) Alvina's conversational approach to Cicio reveals only his inability for that. He looks at her with his "dusky eye lashes". He tries to express with his gestures which she could not follow. She finds in him great instinctive good naturedness:

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. For him, it was not yet quite natural to express himself in speech. Gesture and grimace were instantaneous, and spoke worlds of things, if you would, but accept them.\(^9\)

Alvina has a frank discussion with Kisweign. She complains that Woodhouse is unlucky for her. Madam points out that English women lack the balance between the heart and the head. We hear the novelist's emphasis on blood consciousness when she says: "They are all

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\(^9\) *The Lost Girl*, p. 143.
very kind, and very practical with their kindness. But they have no heart in their kindness. It is all head, all head: "the kindness of the head." Madam seems to say that Alvina fails to comprehend this due to the difference of race. She says: "But you have blue eyes, you cannot understand. Only dark eyes -". Madam replies to her question that yellow eyes like Cicio's are the darkest of all. The novelist here seems to suggest that the phallic character has an invariable quality for their eyes - darkness.

There arises a situation of conflict in the Natcha-kee-Tawara group. Max and Cicio quarrel with each other and Cicio leaves the place after giving a stab with his knife. Madam's attempts for a compromise meet with failure. Alvina takes the initiative and she succeeds in obliging Cicio. Cicio, after this incident, becomes close to Alvina. He observes her in the same way as he watches a serpent. When the troup finally leaves Woodhouse, Alvina feels sorry. She has developed some sort of unknown intimacy with Cicio. James Houghton's death has come as a sudden blow to Alvina. Cicio comes to see her quite unknown about this development. It is an unknown force that drives her towards him. His movements are quite involuntary. She knows that he is

10 Ibid., P.151.
going to triumph over her. Her eyes reveal that she is "neutral and submissive, with a new, awful submission as if she had lost her soul." His voice seems to be a "palpable contact". She whispers involuntarily, soulless and like a victim. He kisses her "with a finesse, a passionate finesse which seemed like coals of fire on her head." She retreats to her room and kneels down on the floor in a paroxysm.

The next day when she thinks of Cicio, she feels a burning inside her and a shudder. Cicio's verbal expressions are often awkward and he has a derisive smile. A horror grips her mind thinking that he might be stupid and bestial. She could not comprehend his look: "His yellow eyes watched her sardonically. It was the clean modelling of his dark, other-world face that decided her - for it sent the deep spasm across her."11

Madam's questions only help to increase her fear. She says that though he has been with her for three years, she knows practically nothing about him. There is some sort of obscurity and secrecy that shrouds him. She makes her aware of the uncertainty that goes with him and the degradation and humiliation that would effect. She hints that Cicio's very name 'Marasca' is a sound of

11 Ibid., P.185.
"bad augury, bad sign." In addition to the uncertainty regarding Cicio, Alvina is troubled by everybody's suggestion regarding how she should shape her future. In the midst of all these uncertainties, she is certain about one thing: "Some obstinate will in her own self absolutely refused to have her mind made up. She would not have her mind made up for her, and she would not make it up for herself." When days pass on she finds herself "entangled in an asphyxiating web of indecision" and her heart begins to sink as the expected Cicio fails to turn up. She wants to free herself from the "horrible buzz and entanglement of her sordid affairs." Once again she is overcome by her "wild recklessness" Madam gives her the hint that Cicio will marry her only if she brings a fortune with her.

Alvina leaves Woodhouse and joins as a member of the Natcha troupe. At night, they celebrate their feast of affiliation. She is named as "Allaye" and they all declare that they are one tribe and one nation and they will abide by the law of Kishwegin and they are Kishwegin and Allaye one at the same time. In the first night, Alvina is accompanied by Cicio to her quarters. But the meeting that follows turns fatal to her. In the

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11 Ibid., P.165.

12 Ibid., P.197.
darkness she feels his heavy, muscular predominance. She seems to be under a spell cast by him. She wants to free herself, but could not. She feels to be assassinated by him. Had she ever seen him ugly, her memory would have given her enough strength not to yield before him. Certainly it would have been helpful to her in keeping her self. There is a rational force within that forbids her not to oblige. The counter movement which Cicio initiates is irrational. It predominates the rational one. A knowledge of the irrational domineering the rational is a painful experience to the protagonist. Consequently, she has the strong feelings of attraction and repulsion.

The rational thinking fails her at the mere sight of Cicio which could arouse in her "overwhelming fascination." His movements remind her of the movements of a creature: "... he seemed like some creature that was watching her for his purpose." His eyes always reveal some unknown force which influences her:

She preferred his tawny eyes with their black brows and lashes. His eyes watched her as a cat watches a bird, but without the white gleam of ferocity. In his eyes were a deep, deep sun-warmth, something
fathomless, deepening black and abysmal, but somehow sweet to her.\textsuperscript{13}

She is started at the touch of him, she feels that she is striken by the paw of an unseen creature. When they go by a train to Woodhouse, she finds that Cicio is affectionate and emotional in his own way. She feels that the physical understanding is overwhelming when they sit in the tram car, she finds him to be a dark skinned foreigner and outcast:

An outcast! And glad to be an outcast. She clung to Cicio's dark, despised foreign nature. She loved it, she worshipped it, she defied all the other world. Dark, he sat beside her, drawn into himself, overcast by the presumed inferiority among these northern industrial people.\textsuperscript{14}

Miss Pinnegar strongly protests against Alvina as she brings Cicio and Geoffrey with her. She fears that Alvina thinks of marrying Cicio. She bursts out:

"You're a lost girl!"\textsuperscript{15} The title of the novel is also the same. It seems that Alvina and Cicio bear the same

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., P.218.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., P.222.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., P.224.
fate in their own native places. He speaks about the difficulty to survive in Naples. In Cicio, Alvina finds the struggle between the old instinct and modern awareness. But still he hasn’t given away to the modern force:

The countless generations of civilizations behind him had left him an instinct of the World's meaninglessness... old instinct told him the world was nothing. But modern education, so shallow, was much more efficacious than instinct. It drove him to make a show of himself to the world. Alvina watching him, as if hypnotized, saw his old beauty, formed through civilization after civilization; and at the same time she saw his modern vulgarianism and decadence.16

Alvina fears that there will be a set-back in their attachment when Cicio comes to know that there is no money left at Woodhouse for her. So she asks him to wait and see how things would turn out. But he gives more importance to her love: "It is always better if there is money... But I marry you for love, you know. You know what love is - "She protests against Cicio's advances, but she realizes that it is a futile struggle.

16 Ibid., P.229.
She has to oblige: "She let herself go down the unknown dark flood of his will, borne from her old footing for ever." She could not explain to the duality she finds in herself. She likes him; at the same time she repulses his approach. She philosophises her stand and fate. The level of experience she has reached at is a mystical one. The situation is beyond the level of comprehension:

There comes a moment when fate sweeps away.

Now Alvina felt herself swept - she knew not whither - but into a dusky region where men had dark faces and translucent yellow eyes, where all speech was foreign, and life was not her life. It was as if she had fallen from her own world on to another, darker start, where meanings were all changed. She was alone and she did not mind being alone. It was what she wanted. In all the passion of her lover she had found a loneliness, beautiful, cool, like a shadow she wrapped round herself and which gave her a sweetness of perfection. It was a moment of stillness and perfection. ¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid., P.241.
Alvina finds that she is placed in a complex situation. She can't stick on to "Woodhouse's calculated benevolence" or receive Madam's "cool look of insolent half-contempt". She can't go without money to Cicio as well. Miss Pinnegar makes a prophetic observation when she comments on Alvina's lifestyle: "Whatever you do, and however you strive, in this life, you are knocked down in the end ..." She realizes that she is fated to loose and it is inborn in her nature.

Alvina has been selected by the Borough Council, by a magical turn of events and she starts the life of a nurse. Here, she comes in contact with Dr. Mitchell, a Scotsman. He repeatedly appeals her to marry him. But she avoids him "like a plague". The outbreak of war affects her too. She also wants to do some service in the "wild dislocation of life". She gets her name enlisted for active service.

Alvina's engagement with Dr. Mitchell appears in newspapers and she feels that she has lost a little of her distinction. As a coincidence, Cicio reaches the premises of the house where Alvina lives and plays mandoline. She shudders seeing "his face, beautiful, non-human in the moonlight." Mrs. Tuke finds in Cicio a repulsive quality and observes: "Nothing is bigger
than intelligence. Your man is a hefty brute. His yellow eyes aren't intelligent. They are animal —"18 But Alvina is inclined to believe that "life itself is something bigger than intelligence." Sagar Keith's observation is worth nothing:

Cicio inhabits the mysterious world below consciousness, a mindless, savage world, into which he summons Alvina. Mrs. Tuke calls him an animal and Alvina atavistic for responding to him, for subjecting her individuality to 'forces', prostituting herself. Alvina herself feels like a sacred prostitute; but the word 'sacred' indicates the gulf between her own position and Mrs. Tukes.19

Alvina wants to get rid of Cicio, Dr. Mitchel and Mrs. Tuke and so she runs away to Scarborough. She believes in the maxim: "When in doubt, move." But "Move where to?" is a grave problem. Cicio and Tommy come to see her. Tommy complements Cicio's nature thus: "Cicio is a treat to be with, because he's so natural. But it isn't a mental treat —"20 She feels that his eyes

18 Ibid., P.292.
20 The Lost Girl, P.295.
continue to cast an appeal on her. "His eyes had a curious yellow fire, beseeching, plantive, with a demon quality of yearning compulsion." She seems to be mesmerized by his presence: "He had a strange mesmeric power over her, as if he possessed the sensual secrets, and she was to be subjected." She finds herself will-less and submissive. Her attitude resembles that of a prostitute: "She felt herself like one of the old sacred prostitutes: a sacred prostitute."21 There is no wonderful intimacy of speech in between them. His love doesn't stimulate or excite her, but extinguishes her. She is reminded of Mrs. Tuke's word atavism:

Atavism! Mrs. Tuke's word would play in her mind. Was it atavism, this strange, sleeplike submission to his being? ... But it was also heavy and sweet and rich. Somewhere, she was content. Somewhere even she was vastly proud of the dark veiled eternal loneliness she felt under his shadow.22

In Cicio, people notice "a potent, glamorous presence" and a "certain dark, leopard like pride." Cicio and Alvina decide to go to Italy and she lives

21 Ibid., P.297.
22 Ibid., PP.297-98.
"within his aura". She submits herself to him. It looks "he had extended his dark nature over her." He is happy with her and she is also of complete self-forgetfulness:

His tenderness made her queer into a swoon of complete self-forgetfulness, as if the floodgates of her depths opened. The depth of his warm, mindless, enveloping love was immeasurable. She felt she could sink forever into his warm, pulsating embrace.  

When Alvina sees the landscape of Italy she realizes what it is to "escape from the smallish perfection of England to the grander imperfection of a great continent." When she reaches California, true to the title of the novel, she is a lost girl: "She was cut off from everything she belonged to". She gains a primitive consciousness from the same beauty of the valley. The state of oblivion she seems to have achieved is irrational. She looses all the material prospects by following Cicio and gains some sort of a mystical experience:

How unspeakably lovely it was, no one could ever tell, the grand, pagan twilight of the valleys, savage, cold, with a sense of ancient

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23 Ibid., P.300.
gods who knew the right for human sacrifice. It stole away the soul of Alvina. She felt transfigured in it, clairvoyant in another mystery of life. A savage hardness came in her heart. The gods who had demanded human sacrifice were quiet right, immutably right. The fierce, savage gods who dipped their lips in blood, these were the true gods.24

The bygone heathen past is a constant torture to her "mediumistic soul". It is a kind of "neuralgia in the very soul, never to be located in the human body, and get physical." Sometimes the beauty of the passing river and the breathing presence of the upper snows bring her terrible happiness: "She had gone beyond the world into the pre-world, she had reopened an old eternity." At the same time, however, she feels that she could not survive in this place. John Worthen notes that a rational approach to the protagonist's action is rather impossible. The narrative gives the impression of a relationship that is mysterious:

These events have a strange inconsequence. They have a superficial truth: Alvina's reserve, her class and her Englishness conspire to resist Cicio and everything he

24 Ibid., P.325.
stands for. And Lawrence is deliberately making their encounter non-verbal, mysterious, instinctive. But we have no sense of Alvina's knowing what it is that dissatisfies her, or how she responds to Cicio. Cicio simply looks at her, she recognizes the look, and they can go away and get married and go to Italy. She goes through no realization, conscious or unconscious, of her feelings or of his. She simply gets off the hook temporarily, in Lancaster; and then, just as mysteriously, she gets on it again. Her resistance to Cicio does not even take the form of thinking about him; she just goes away and does something else.25

But we find that the narrative is quite in line with the making of a phallic and phallic conscious character. The uncertainly and instability of the phallic consciousness is clearly depicted in Alvina. Moreover, this consciousness leads to a dangerous pilgrimage. Alvina is lost in many ways, but what she has gained is not so far defined by the society:

She experiences the things which, together, her upbringing and England have protected her from; passion, the loss of significant language, a violent and non-Christian past. It is a 'strange valley of shadow' which she is now 'threading'; the image is approximately that of dangerous pilgrimage.  

At the last chapter titled "Suspense" we find that a situation is reversed. Cicio discusses matters of politics and religion and Alvina is excluded from such an intellectual exercise. Here Cicio's role changes from that of a phallic hero, he appears as a phallic conscious character. The novelist observes: "He lived in the open air and in the community ... His active, mindful self was none of hers. She only had his passive self, and his family passion."  

The novel concludes with Cicio's declaration to volunteer in the war. He fears that he would never come back. She doubts whether she is fated to bear a hopeless child. However, she inspires him with following words: "If you make up your mind to come back, you will come back. We have our fate in our hands". Cicio's assertion "I'll come back" gives a spark of optimism to her. What

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26 Ibid., P.115.
27 The Lost Girl, P.341.
the protagonist is lost to is not a matter of controversy, but what she gained is controversial. The novel ends with an optimistic note and we are inclined to think that she is not a lost girl. Yudhishtar's comment on it is quite an apt one:

The novel gives no indication of the possibilities in Alvina's future life with Cicio. But at the point where the novel ends she is surely a little more than a lost girl. In giving up Woodhouse and its values she had also found something - the rich, dark life of her body. But faced with the prospect of this "lapse of life" in the Abruzzi, where her very soul is starved of its "mysterious nourishment," Alvina is rightly apprehensive. She is lost in the old pagan world of the past: but if she is to be true to what Lawrence calls elsewhere "the great devious onward - flowing stream of conscious human blood", she must find her way onward, forward, and not remain lapsed in the mysterious world of the past.

The Lost Girl leaves Alvina still lost,
though not without hope that one day both
she and Cicio might be able to find a way
out, and save themselves.\textsuperscript{28}

Alvina has been led by a consciousness, instinctive
and intuitive to areas of experience unknown to the
modern society. Humanity in its various phases of
intellectual and materialistic progress have curtailed
man's flame of life. The result is it has achieved
uniformity and all are brought under a system.
Consequently, we have lost the phallic language; the
passionate flame that destroys everything and makes
everything new and a deeper religion. All these listed
above are phases discarded by the society in its
rational approach. Alvina's consciousness, leads her
to retrace the various phases of history, on which the
modern society has least idea. What the phallic
consciousness character, thus, achieves is a mystial
experience, in their words, because she draws it from
the fountainhead of all inspiration, creativity and
destruction, that is Darkness. Thus Alvina in \textit{The Lost
Girl} gains a deeper religion and consciousness of
Darkness. In other words, she gains phallic conscious-
ness and it is a means and an end in itself.

\textsuperscript{28} Yu\d{h}ishtar., \textit{Conflict in the Novels of D.H. Lawrence},
P.210.