

**Univerzita Karlova**  
**Filozofická fakulta**  
**Ústav germánských studií**  
**Filologie–germánské jazyky a literatury**



**FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA**  
**Univerzita Karlova**

**REPRESENTATIE VAN MANNELIJKHEID ENVROUWELIJKHEID IN  
DEHAAGSE ROMANS VAN LOUIS COUPERUS**

**REPREZENTACE MASKULINITY A FEMININITY VHAAGSKÝCH ROMÁNECH  
LOUISE COUPERUSE**

**THEREPRESENTATION OF MASCULINITY ANDFEMININITY INTHE HAGUE  
NOVELS BY LOUIS COUPERUS**

Abstract in English

**Anna Phillips**

**Vedoucí práce: doc. dr. Ellen J.Krol**

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## **Abstract in English**

This dissertation examines masculinity and femininity in what are referred to as the 'Hague novels' of Louis Couperus: *Eline Vere*, *The Books of the Small Souls* (*De boeken der kleine zielen*), and *Old People and the Things that Pass* (*Van oude mensen, de dingen, die voorbijgaan...*).

The following research questions were asked:

- 1) In what ways are masculinity and femininity represented in the Hague novels of Louis Couperus?**
- 1) Are these representations of the masculine and the feminine diametrically opposed, and if so, in what ways does the opposition manifest?**
- 2) Do the representations of masculinity and femininity in the individual Hague novels differ? If so, how?**

The research method is theoretically grounded in views of masculinity and femininity common to the 'fin de siècle' period (1878-1914) in which the Hague novels were published, and which forms the setting of the stories. A 'standardized image' comprised of 'typical' masculine and feminine features was created on the basis of characteristics related to masculinity and femininity that were found by exploring the secondary literature. These standardized images serve as a referential framework to assess the masculinity and femininity in the characters that are analyzed. The analysis also focuses on the appearance of the characters in the novels, their opinions, behavior, and roles played within society, marital relationships, and the family. Further, the description of the individual characters was facilitated by using the literary types defined in the secondary literature as a reference point. The narrative principle of focalization, and a theory developed by Judith Butler, which allows for analysis of gender performances and the relationships at hand, was also used to create the descriptions of the characters.

The representation of masculinity and femininity of almost thirty characters was analyzed.

The research shows that particularly masculine characters deviate from the traditional image of masculinity. (The analysis showed that two-thirds of the masculine characters examined may be characterized as effeminate, wimpy, or even deranged.) In contrast, female heroines are strong, make an almost masculine impression, and take over the roles traditionally played by their masculine counterparts. Female characters deviate much less from the

'standard image' and, moreover, their characterization is more diverse. Interestingly, it was found that the representation of masculinity and femininity takes on various forms in the Hague novels as a whole, while, however, no major differences exist among individual works.

This analysis also deals with an important consideration, namely the probable view of Louis Couperus himself of masculinity and femininity, as well as of gender roles and patterns that were common in his era.

**Keywords**

Louis Couperus, representation, masculinity, femininity, gender, the Hague novels