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ON SOME FEATURES OF ENGLISH MODERNIST TRAVEL WRITING¹

Abstract

This paper focuses on the travel writing of four great English novelists: D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell, Graham Greene and Lawrence Durrell. Each of their travel books reflects a certain period in their lives but also contains features of modernist literature in general. In the hands of these novelists, travel writing became a more subjective form which they used to express their disappointment, anxiety, sensitivity to social issues, wish to escape from reality and national identity to faraway or bygone cultures. A pinch of Englishness permeates it no matter how hard the mentioned authors tried to flee from their roots.

Key words: English modernist travel writing, D. H. Lawrence, G. Greene, G. Orwell, L. Durrell

1. A brief history of the travel genre until the interwar period

Writing and travelling have always been closely connected since ancient times. *The Odyssey* is considered to have pioneered the history of the travel genre. However, a traveller's tale about a shipwrecked sailor on a marvellous island had been composed in Egypt a thousand years before *the Odyssey* (Hulme and Youngs 2002: 2).

Essays, sketches, letters, plays or poems that previously described travel experiences gave way to the report as the most characteristic form of travel writing, which combined the chronology of movements and events with the author's observations. The readers now expected not only the illustrations of places, but also those containing ethnological elements. Although expensive and usually drawn for specific purposes, maps were sometimes added.

English travel writing started much later than e.g. Spanish travel writing. Therefore, those Englishmen who were eager to learn about distant places had to read

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translations of travel accounts. Scientists and philosophers from the Renaissance mostly relied on the information that other people brought from abroad. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the so-called “planetary consciousness” (Pratt 1992: 4) – which helped Europeans realise their cognitive and political domination over the “rest” of the world – developed from a conspicuous alliance between politics, travel and natural history (Schweizer 2001: 3).

Moreover, at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century, those who could afford the so-called Grand Tour as a new form of travelling were provided with the opportunity to visit numerous European cities and regions looking for satisfaction of their artistic or cultural needs. Travelling added to their previous education completed at Oxford or Cambridge.

The invention of the steam engine contributed to the increase in the number of travellers abroad. The number of those who were willing to travel and write down their experiences and impressions rose with the development of modern means of transportation.

The 1880–1940 period, the zenith of the British Empire, can be perceived as “the beginning of the era of globalisation in which we live today, a process set in motion by that vast expansion of territorial colonialism in the late nineteenth century” (Carr 2002: 73). “Intellectual conquering” of the rest of the world influenced the development of travel writing and vice versa. Until the Great War, travel writing identified more and more with the interests of those who wished to control and exploit the non-European world. The authors of travel accounts used complex writing strategies in order to devise adequate balance between the instructions given by their sponsors and their own images.

In the first quarter of the last century, travel writers assumed or, better to say, improved the role of an amateur spy who collected information in faraway regions. The 1930s travellers were the first to establish a new tradition of travel writing as a platform for voicing political ideas. At the same time, they abandoned the documentary, pseudoscientific, journalistic method dominant in the past “and instead opted for the more imaginative, introspective, essayistic, and argumentative kind of travel book that clearly aspired to be recognized as a form of literature” (Schweizer, 2001: 3–4).

2. Features of the time after the Great War

Upon the end of the Great War, the world suffered from the consequences of a disaster and destruction that had not been experienced before. The 1920s were marked by reserved enthusiasm and uncertainty due to the great economic depression and also by the pessimism and anxiety caused by the new regimes in Italy, Germany and Spain. Peace and stability were not truly incorporated in the Treaty of Versailles. Europe was obsessed by boundaries and maps, although an even more destructive global

conflict was nearing. Disillusionment seemed inevitable, especially disillusionment with the European civilisation and its influence on the rest of the world. Under such circumstances, nostalgia easily walked in.

The period after the Great War seemed sobering after the economic boom incited by a series of revolutionary inventions (car, bus, tram, electricity, telephone, telegraph, new materials, etc.) that started from the last decades of the 19th century. The idyll related to a never-ending growth and glory resulted, unfortunately, in an economic crisis, poverty, reduced salaries and mass unemployment. In the UK, those particularly affected were the workers engaged in the mining, shipbuilding, and textile industry. Political turmoil was not unexpected. Utopistic ideas encouraged by the happenings in Spain in 1936 were soon dispersed and turned into dystopia.

2.1 Creativity constrained and released

As the aim of this paper is to present some features of English modernist travel writing by establishing the responses of travel writers to the features of their time, what must not be omitted is a short overview of the circumstances in the United Kingdom during the First World War.

The regulations were strict. The Defense of the Realm Acts (DORA) of 1914 and 1915 restricted private travels abroad. Hence, ordinary citizens – not war correspondents and officials of any kind – were tied to the English land until the end of the First World War. “That meant four years, three months, and seven days of no traveling” (Fussell 1980: 9). Even travelling inside the country was limited, and trains were often cancelled. D. H. Lawrence wrote: “I feel sometimes I shall go mad, because there is nowhere to go” (Fussell 1980: 12). Reading a Baedeker for Italy in 1916, he expressed his wish in a letter to his friend: “Would God we were all in Italy, or somewhere sunny and war-less” (Fussell 1980: 12). His explanation is clear: “One breathes so much freer out of London. When I see a red butterfly settle on a fallen, bursten fig, and breathe with its wings slow, full, as if it respired sunshine – that’s how one feels in Italy, I think” (Zytaruk and Boulton 2002: 84).

Passports seemed to be both a novelty and a constraint. “A person coming from or intending to proceed to any place out of the United Kingdom as a passenger shall not, without the special permission of a Secretary of State, land or embark at any port in the United Kingdom unless he has in his possession a valid passport”² (Fussell 1980: 25). Presentation of the passport with the photograph of the passport holder, identification numbers, personal details and even details about the profession of the passport holder while crossing the border caused specific anxiety for British travellers. For them, islanders, borders were absurd. Fussell finds that the total sum of

² DORA, November 1915.

all adaptations of people and their reactions to the new circumstances created what we recognize as “modern sensibility” (Fussell 1980: 26).

As it is known that Englishmen were first real modern travellers, who started travelling to enjoy, not only to perform a task given by a superior, and as it is indisputable that the mentioned loss of physical freedom was added by the loss of possibility for intellectual and creative advancement during the war, then it is not surprising why talented, creative and extremely sensitive minds, such as D. H. Lawrence, felt constrained in a claustrophobic insular environment, as if caught in a trap. “Room – give me room – give me room for my spirit” (Lawrence 2002: 72), cried D. H. Lawrence after the torturing period he had spent in Cornwall during the Great War. His urge to escape and rush to intact corners of the world or those parts that offered any kind of hope was swelling until it burst. *Twilight in Italy*, his first travel book, sparked the flourishing of travel writing between the two world wars.

Modernist travel writers crossed borders, for various reasons, not only physically but also figuratively, by entering other cultures, identities or genres. Thanks to D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell, Graham Greene or Lawrence Durrell, who are famous for their novels and less for their travel books, travel writing was turning from realistic towards modernist model with all its variations.

3. Escape

Disappointed by the accomplishments of modern Western civilisation, the four modernist writers whose travel books served as the corpus for the analysis in this paper³ searched for authenticity in simpler and purer life styles of either bygone cultures or the existing but intact ones.

The leitmotif that pervades English modernist travel writing is *I Hate It Here* (Fussell 1980: 16). The intellect and spirit of D. H. Lawrence – the pioneer of British literary diaspora were compressed on the island. “There is nothing to anchor for. Land has no answer to the soul any more. [...] Let me wander aimless across the vivid outer world, the world empty of man, where space flies happily” (Lawrence 2002: 48).

Descriptions of his travelling by sea emphasised his moving away from the land where industrialisation and mechanisation suffocated the soul. The titles of his travel

³ The corpus includes the following travel books:

- D. H. Lawrence: *Twilight in Italy*, *Sea and Sardinia*, *Mornings in Mexico* and *Sketches of Etruscan Places*;
- George Orwell: *Down and Out in Paris and London*, *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Homage to Catalonia*;
- Graham Greene: *Journey Without Maps* and *The Lawless Roads*;
- Lawrence Durrell: *Prospero's Cell: A Guide to the Landscape and Manners of the Island of Corfu*, *Reflections on a Marine Venus*, *A Companion to the Landscape of Rhodes*, *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, *Sicilian Carousel*, *Greek Islands* and *Caesar's Vast Ghost*.

books indicate travelling farther and farther away or deeper and deeper into the past, all the time turning to innocent or unspoiled cultures.

In his first travel book, *Twilight in Italy*, Lawrence announced the common denominator for all modernist travel writings – idealisation of the past. He attempted to reveal the traditional peasant culture in Italy, but he was again faced with the catastrophic incoming tendencies, such as materialism, nationalism, emigration, war or mechanisation. He saw the mechanised society as “our master and our God” (Lawrence 2002: 125), which was going to destroy the old way of living and lead peasants into a chaos.

Hence, D. H. Lawrence searched for a natural world, and not an artificial one; he was attracted by those ignorant of modern civilisation, and longed for getting in touch with wild landscapes. Thus, he was impressed by Sardinia, an island so close to civilisation, but still untouched by its accomplishments. Sardinia, without its history, dates or race, kept its spirit of place, authentic and diverse in comparison with the mechanical sameness of the continental life.

His quest for reunion with the dark side of humanity continued in Mexico, spatially more distant than Italy, where the Indians preserved their vitality and religion, unlike the dying Europe. According to D. H. Lawrence, the first great writer who visited Mexico and wrote about it for the English-speaking audience, two big Indian commandments, both negative, are as follows: “Thou shalt not lie. Thou shalt not be a coward” (Lawrence 1971: 63). The only positive commandment is “Thou shalt acknowledge the wonder” (Lawrence 1971: 63). He praised the primitive and regenerative powers of Indians, the beauty of their deserts and mountains as well as their traditional life, which looked like a promising alternative if compared to mechanised Europe and America.

Lawrence’s quest culminated in *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, in which he glorified Etruscan culture, very distant in time. The older Lawrence was, the farther he went – in space or time – thus constantly satisfying his never-ending quest for a place or culture untouched by the disappointing civilisation.

The elements of modernist travel writing can be found in George Orwell’s memoirs or reportage. *The Road to Wigan Pier* shows that he strongly disliked big cities, noise and the accomplishments of modern civilisation, such as: motor vehicles, radio, tinned food, central heating or “modern” furniture. He tried to escape from his own class – lower upper middle – at least for a while, and live among those from the lower levels. In other words, he did not escape to faraway countries (spatially, horizontally and then downwards, towards the primal features of a different culture) or to bygone cultures (downwards in time) – his escape line was oriented downwards, but within the contemporary society. As a bourgeois observer, he was astonished by

the almost exotic otherness of the working class. He worked as a plongeur in Paris and wandered around with London tramps pretending to be one of them (*Down and Out in Paris and London*); he spent some time among the poor and the unemployed in the industrial parts of England (*The Road to Wigan Pier*) and fought in the Spanish Civil War together with the courageous men full of ideals and different from his peers at home (*Homage to Catalonia*). His descriptions of such experiences deserve to be classified as the escape feature of English modernist travel writing.

In his purely modernist travel book *Journey Without Maps*, Graham Greene clarified his urge to travel to Liberia. Simply, there occurs a period of impatience when a man does not feel like remaining in the urban stage and is “willing to suffer some discomfort for the chance of finding [...] ‘the heart of darkness’ ” or “one’s own place in time” (Greene 2010: 7). It seems that his travelling through the “lawless” Mexico produced a similar result. There he gained “consciousness of something simple and strange and uncomplicated, a way of life we have hopelessly lost but can never quite forget” (Greene 2002: 170).

To find the moment at which man went astray and opted for negative sides of civilisation was Greene’s goal. For the African natives, he wrote the following: “If they had taken the wrong road, they had only to retrace their steps a very little distance in space and not in time” (Greene 2010: 235). Although he succeeded in boldly facing primal fears and reached the point of the collective unconscious which represented the early phase of Western civilisation, he did not show any wish to stay in Africa and remain in that innocent phase.

Lawrence Durrell, more famous for travel writing than the previously mentioned novelists, adhered to his decision to stay away from the Pudding Island forever. His dissatisfaction with modern civilisation can be traced through his descriptions of the Mediterranean world, which still kept its ancient aura and traditional identity, compared to the chaotic life in Europe. Durrell’s description of the resistance of olives to modern mechanisation can be taken as a symbol of resistance of ancient civilisations to modernisation.

In *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, Durrell described the influence of modern accomplishments, e.g. the radio and the press, which could shape the public opinion and manipulate the villagers on the island. On another island, Sicily, urbanisation and petrol engines, “that scourge of our age” (Durrell 1978: 45) devoured the suburbs. Their dirt reminded Durrell not of the Middle East, but of the Middle Class (Durrell 1978: 45). The same progress of civilisation also affected Provence, to which the writer retreated in his last years. Durrell writes about old villages now less reachable due to the construction of modern roads, which did expand the old ones, but at the expense of charm and intimacy. Speaking about the negative role of man as “the real predator and

despoiler of nature” (Durrell 1990: 157), Durrell states that “it seems highly probable that the rate of destruction of our natural resources has outrun the capacity for natural repair” (Durrell 1990: 157).

4. Modernist nostalgia

In English modernist travel writing, a creative dialogue between the past and the present was allowed by modernist nostalgia as another feature or “one of the most productive and even most progressive forces in modernist literature” (Spender 1963: 212). Modernist nostalgia emphasised the temporal dimension and indicated something internal. The past was not evoked in order to be restored, but in order to challenge the present.

Thus, D. H. Lawrence praised old roads in Italy and negatively commented on new and desolate ones, deprived of soul. In his opinion, the animistic religion of the Navajo Indians is alive, and “ours is a corpse of a religion” (Meyers 1993: 309). Lawrence laments over the lost art of living and admires the enjoyment and playfulness of Etruscan people. This bygone culture did not seek to impress others or “force the mind or the soul in any direction” (Lawrence 1971: 109). Simplicity, naturality, delicacy, sensitivity, spontaneity and an abundance of life were its predominant characteristics. Etruscan life did not impose fatigue, boredom or obstacles. Lawrence admired both the houses of Mexican Indians, which resembled mud pies, and the fragile wooden temples made by the Etruscans, which lasted through centuries. On the opposite side of the timeline there stood huge stone buildings made by modern man, as a burden on the earth.

Nostalgia animated Orwell to write and haunted Greene when he was alone, bored or exhausted during his journeys. Durrell often nostalgically spoke of the time he had spent on the island of Corfu, his first destination in Greece.

An obvious example of modernist nostalgia in Durrell’s travel writing is his obsession by the statue of Marine Venus on the island of Rhodes. It helped him to see Greece “with the inner eyes – not as a collection of battered vestiges left over from cultures long since abandoned – but as something ever-present and ever-renewed” (Durrell 2012). The statue, as Durrell said, offered “a vicarious sense of continuity not only with the past – but also with the future” (Durrell 2012).

This author also nostalgically laments over beautiful Mediterranean beaches and states that tourist organisations will be forced to print the maps of those beaches to attract tourists. The beaches will, consequently, be destroyed by oil slicks and modern innovations. As it is known that maps were warmly welcomed when they served imperialist purposes, the negative role of maps mentioned in Durrell’s text could be further elaborated within the context of “imperialist nostalgia” (Rosaldo 1993: 69).

5. Drawing attention to social and political problems

Social and political unrest manifested itself in modernist travel literature and permeated the intellectual atmosphere of that time. Modernist travel writers could not solve social or political problems, but they tended to identify them and draw attention to the necessary action.

D. H. Lawrence skilfully presented the negative tendencies of modern Italy – materialism, money, emigration, machines, nationalism, war. In *Twilight in Italy*, he wrote about disintegration and dehumanisation, about the conflict between mechanical and natural ways of existence. He stated that the mechanised society was deprived of humanity and foresaw that Italy would be as industrialised as England, which was conquering the whole world with its machines and awful destruction of natural life.

In the Italy he described, money was becoming the master, and machine workers were replacing peasants. Land was getting abandoned more and more. Roads and railways were being constructed, mines and quarries were being excavated, but the social organism was slowly “crumbling and caving in” (Lawrence 2002: 224).

After the Great War, Italy was affected by large national debt, increasing inflation, high unemployment rate, economic collapse and a mass of dissatisfied war veterans. In *Sea and Sardinia*, Lawrence proposed guidelines for a mass society. His visionary contemplations about two options – “the workman’s International or the centripetal movement into national isolation” (Lawrence 2002: 89) – ended in a conclusion that both were probable. He did not approve of uniformity and argued for diversity. “Hasten the day, and save us from proletarian homogeneity and khaki all-likeness” (Lawrence 2002: 89).

Lawrence correlated the ancient Romans with modern fascists, the Etruscans with peasants. He wisely noticed that the fascist regime was doomed to fail because the party members did not believe their leaders. He himself would not “put even his little finger in any political pie. [...] Let those rule who can rule” (Lawrence 1971: 200).

George Orwell “carefully pruned his writing, cutting out the trappings of conventional travel books [...] in order to emphasize the social relevance of his journey” (Schweizer 2001: 25). “We are living in a world in which nobody is free, in which hardly anybody is secure, in which it is almost impossible to be honest and to remain alive” (Orwell 1983: 149).

For him, extremely sensitive to social issues, poverty was to become an obsessive subject. In *Down and Out in Paris and London*, he attempted to draw attention of the middle class to those who they refused to see. He explained why beggars were despised. Namely, he thought that beggars would be an esteemed profession if they could earn more. He also described the life of tramps and suggested some ideas for improving their situation.

In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell documented his investigation in the industrial north of England. As Wigan Pier did not exist any more, it served as a metaphor for the decay of British society. Industrialisation, in Orwell's opinion, is to blame even for the physical degeneration of modern England. "The tendency of mechanical progress, then, is to frustrate the human need for effort and creation [...] to reduce the human being to something resembling a brain in a bottle" (Orwell 1983: 176). Orwell, therefore, fears that the development of civilisation is out of control.

He combines his observations on the effects of the economic crisis on the working-class people, attitudes toward socialism and his own conclusions and suggestions. While contemplating on the British occupation of India, which he personally witnessed during his work in Burma, he concludes that "people usually govern foreigners better than they govern themselves" (Orwell 1983: 126). Still, it is not possible to be part of such a system without recognizing its tyranny. He adds that there was no need to go so far away as to Burma to witness tyranny and exploitation. His experience in Burma, as he confesses, is the reason why he had to run away not only from imperialism, but from "every form of man's dominion over man" (Orwell 1983: 130), and turn toward the oppressed.

However, Orwell was disappointed by the working class around the world as well as by the British government for staying reserved regarding their involvement in the Spanish Civil War.

In the 1930s, i.e. the period of increasing political awareness, Graham Greene "observed how any human being is part of a larger whole, and cannot be blind to the social struggle and its consequences all around him" (Liebregts 2013: 36).

In *The Lawless Roads*, he seems deeply concerned about social division, extreme poverty, political corruption and undemocratic education in Mexico. Religion was outlawed, churches were burned, and priests were executed. The President signed a decree on the expropriation of foreign oil companies, which Greene considered a stupid action. The negative results were seen immediately, and rumours about a revolution spread among people.

He doubts the left-wing rhetoric in Liberia and their slogan "Workers of the World Unite" – "why should we pretend to talk in terms of the world when we mean only Europe or the white races?" (Greene 2010: 49). In his opinion, "noble savage" did not exist any more because civilisation meant exploitation in Africa. Greene explicitly criticises economic interventions in Liberia which create neocolonial dependence. "England and France in the last century robbed them of territory; America has done worse, for she has lent them money" (Greene 2010: 219).

Lawrence Durrell, by the very nature of his engagements, was not immune to the social and political circumstances of his time. The necessity to act and the lack

of trust in the efficiency of political institutions was clearly expressed in his *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*. Although the book criticises British politics, Durrell's Greek critics like to present the proofs of his colonial perspective in it.

6. Reference to science

The travel books written after the First World War did not stay away from the contemporary accomplishments in the field of science. This paper will briefly present their interest in psychoanalysis and the theory of relativity.

According to D. H. Lawrence, writing autobiographical works (modernist travel writing surely implies autobiographical elements) has a therapeutic effect – similarly to psychoanalysis which allows experts to see the pattern of somebody's life (Meyers 1993: 113).

Graham Greene had personal experiences with psychoanalysis in his teenage years; hence, he was aware of the role of dreams and described them very often in his travel books. Greene explained that Africa had always been a very important image to him. His first associations to that continent were an unusual shape, a lot of words, strangeness, wonder, witches or death – not a concrete place. His first association to Kenya was aristocracy in exile and gentleman farmers, and Rhodesia for him meant tobacco and failure. He did not look for the parts of Africa where colonisers reproduced their own culture. He searched for a dark, primitive and inexplicable side of Africa.

Lawrence Durrell, fascinated by both psychoanalysis and Einstein's theory of relativity, tended to seize a moment and repeat it as he himself wished. He believed that nothing is fixed or stable, but depends on the eye of the observer. In his homage to Provence, Durrell explicitly expresses his attitude regarding fragmentarity, which is regarded as one of the features of modernism. "An ant may imagine a sugar lump as a whole but can only carry it away grain by grain" (Durrell 1990: 200). Similarly, D. H. Lawrence was fascinated by the idea of the powerful and unified personality, but he was also interested in the view that every personality is fragmentary and ephemeral (Clewell 2013: 27).

7. Utopia which turns into dystopia

Subjectivity and pessimism in English modernist travel books did not exclude writing passages with a breath of utopia. However, utopia as just a temporary expression sooner or later turned into dystopia.

D. H. Lawrence's travel writing reflected his hopes and disappointments. He headed toward Italy looking for a better place to live and then fled from it because of the increasing fascism. The poetic Italy from his visions disappeared under the rule

of *lire, lire*, which the writer saw as disgusting banknotes which darkened and milled spiritual life.

Lawrence also gladly rushed to intact Sardinia, but his return from the island was rather claustrophobic. His journeys to Mexico and Etruscan places did not make a difference in this context.

Orwell's enthusiasm in Catalonia in the middle of the Spanish Civil War was caused by his witnessing the Spanish model of classless society, brotherhood, equality and solidarity. Unfortunately, only several months later, the Spanish utopia resulted in the writer's feeling of strong political anxiety, betrayal of political idealism, alienation and even less trust in social values than before. "Orwell's Spanish experience left him deeply scarred, both literally and mentally" (Schweizer 2001: 35).

Durrell's belief that the conflicts on Cyprus could be solved peacefully and sensibly was utopistic, too. When the first bombs were heard, dystopia replaced utopia.

Dystopia, as an expression, prevails when Greene comes back from the childhood of civilisation to the level he negatively designates as *seedy*, no matter whether he writes about Liberia or Mexico. "This journey, if it had done nothing else, had reinforced a sense of disappointment with what man had made out of the primitive, what he had made out of childhood" (Greene 2010: 212), concludes Greene upon reaching the coast of Liberia. Deep inside the African continent, the sense of taste was finer and fears were more profound. When the journey ended, Greene was "back in the hands of adolescence" (Greene 2010: 214), but, like any other adolescent, he welcomed cold beer, news from the empire, the comfort of home. Similarly, when his exhausting journey through Mexico was completed, "all the cares and irritations and responsibilities of everyday life hurriedly came back" (Greene 2002: 205).

Unfortunately, travelling did not offer a permanent solution, i.e. permanent escape from the social-economic and political awareness of the crisis of civilisation, and the dualism utopia-dystopia was not easily separable.

8. A pinch of Englishness

As this paper is devoted to English modernist travel writing, the authors' country of origin must be taken into account in the analysis of their books. Occasional pro-English or pro-colonialist comments occur in these texts despite an open rebellion of the writers against the Western values.

Regardless of his resentment toward England, D. H. Lawrence sometimes admits that he, as an Englishman, surely knows what is unnatural or out of standards in a foreign country. Travelling strengthened his sense of Englishness, especially when strangers had negative remarks about his fellow countrymen. He shivered at the

impression that a Sunday morning in Italy looked like a Sunday morning in England and that mountain villages in the Alps reminded him of old English villages.

The first person plural in Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico* – “But we don't belong to the ruling race for nothing” (Lawrence 1971: 28) or “It goes, perhaps, with the complete absence of what we call ‘spirit’” (Lawrence 1971: 31) or “To us and to the Orientals” (Lawrence 1971: 89) may appear superior or indicate the author's awareness of the power of his homeland.

George Orwell did undertake some expeditions to the lower levels of society or to less comfortable environments, but was well aware of the possibility to get back to his class and his England. He did not reject the kindness of bank officers expressed to him as a gentleman even when his bank account was sometimes exhausted and admitted that it was “very difficult to escape, culturally, from the class into which you have been born” (Orwell 1983: 198).

Graham Greene's imperialist voice may be heard in *The Lawless Roads* when he finally praises some Mexican products – arts and crafts “were civilized in a Victorian, European way” (Greene 2002: 201). Although stressing that the following attitude is unreasonable, he still writes it down in *Journey Without Maps*: “Everywhere in the north I found myself welcomed because I was a white, because they hoped all the time that a white nation would take the country over” (Greene 2010: 95). Greene did not hesitate to declare “I was very Imperialist” (Greene 2010: 176) in the situation when he did not dare to allow disobedience of the natives – carriers during his Liberian trek.

In *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, Lawrence Durrell spoke in favour of traditionally good Greek-English relations and expected an appropriate framework for the right solution regarding the increasing dissatisfaction on the mentioned island. He listed numerous virtues of his nation, but feared the lack of tact, skill and intelligence necessary for solving the problem. As he officially represented England on Cyprus, either as a writer or as a teacher, he easily identified with his country and used the first person plural in his travel book. He had already known Greece very well, understood that Enosis was a very sensitive issue, balanced between Cypriot and English statements, but he did not deny his conservative point of view: “If you have an Empire, you just can't give away bits of it as soon as asked” (Durrell 2011).

9. Enrichment of the travel genre

The Great War changed both the external world and the world of individuals. External or physical travel intermingled with internal or psychological journeys and produced “one of the chief features of modernist literature” (Farley 2010: 10). This enrichment of the travel genre deeply connected with subjectivity, introspection and exploration of the questions of identity can be called self-discovery.

D. H. Lawrence used foreign places and people to gain a better understanding of himself. His travel books can be regarded as modernist texts on self-exile and metamorphosis. Protruding through the temporal layers in Italy, Lawrence approaches the deepest layers of his own self. Indians and Etruscans from his travel writing connected him with depths, instincts, nature and fate.

Orwell's destinations were close to his home if compared to the destinations of other modernist travel writers. He emphasised the ideological component of his cathartic travels and intended to test his ideological prejudices. Travel, i.e. a short exposure to another milieu, is not enough for self-transformation, and he was aware of that.

"For Orwell there was always a general lesson to be learned in any specific experience" (Rodden and Rossi 2012: 13). He was intellectually honest enough to admit his mistakes. "Instead of shaping facts to fit his opinions, he was willing to let facts change his opinions" (Ricks 2017: 265). In *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell perceives his participation in the Spanish Civil War as a kind of transitional interregnum in his life, which taught him things he could not have learned in any other way (Orwell 1989: 86). "This period which then seemed so futile and eventless is now of great importance to me. It is so different from the rest of my life that already it has taken on the magic quality which, as a rule, belongs only to memories that are years old. It was beastly while it was happening, but it is a good patch for my mind to browse upon" (Orwell 1989: 89).

Graham Greene's travel books are the most representative examples of modernist travel writing. Their self-discovery feature surely deserves a separate and longer analysis.

Faraway and unexplored regions, such as Mexico or Liberia, incited Greene's flashbacks, reminiscences, recollections of childhood. "It is not so much a case of going back physically *to* Africa but going back mentally *by* Africa" (Greene 2010: ix). The risky and truly exhausting four-week trek required both physical and mental strength. Liberia was not important as a destination, but as a tool for unlocking the hidden territories of mind. The deeper he went into the unmapped Liberian hinterland, the more layers of his own *terra incognita* he uncovered. He travelled backwards to his unmapped consciousness, to his deeply suppressed ideas; he faced his childhood fears; he did not know what to expect – both Liberia and his self were unknown. Going village by village through Liberia and topographically collecting fragment by fragment through his disintegrated self, he assigned them the right names and filled both blank maps. This healing and therapeutic journey changed Greene's attitude to mortality. Almost dying of physical exhaustion, boredom and the vertical African sun, he discovered in himself a thing he thought he had never possessed, "a love of life". "I had discovered in myself a passionate interest in living. I had always assumed before,

as a matter of course, that death was desirable. [...] It was like a conversion, and I had never experienced a conversion before” (Greene 2010: 201).

Lawrence Durrell’s quest for identity took place simultaneously with his investigations of the spirit of place. Its indications can be found even in his travel books dedicated to Sicily or Provence, which were written in the latter part of his life. But, his Greece offered a specific form of self-discovery. What was tangible already on Corfu, which was described in the first book of his island trilogy, was his self-discovery as a writer. “Other countries may offer you discoveries in manners or lore or landscape; Greece offers you something harder – the discovery of yourself” (Durrell 1962: 11).

10. Conclusion

English modernist travel writing significantly strengthened the travel genre. The famous novelists whose travel books are presented in this paper strongly responded to the features of their time. They could not solve the increasing social and political problems, but at least they attempted to draw attention to them. Nostalgia and dystopia pervade their travel writing. Being opposed to the accomplishments of Western civilisation, these writers tended to retreat to the cultures distant in space or time and reveal the point at which modern man went astray. They combined the exploration of the world with self-exploration. The resulting self-discovery feature is surely their outstanding literary contribution to the travel genre.

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