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**Physical and Psychical Spaces in Modern
English Literature**

Fyzický a psychický prostor v literatuře
anglického modernismu

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The main goal of the thesis is to explore ideas of the “Self” in relation to the spatial structures, patterns and arrangements of space and matter in selected works of Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis. All of these authors were active in a period which was marked by a drastic reevaluation and resulting crisis of these traditional concepts. The main subject of the following discussion is the diverse reaction of these authors on this “crisis”. The studied period is first of all focused on years 1910–1930, however, a large number of earlier texts are subjected to detailed consideration and play an important role in the argument. In its method, the argument relies on an analysis of primary texts, secondary literature and relevant philosophical, aesthetic and theoretical sources.

In case of Virginia Woolf, the backbone of the argument consists of a detailed discussion of a number of her short stories from the *Monday or Tuesday* (1921) and the later reprints of her earlier, unpublished stories in *A Haunted House and Other Stories* (1944). In addition to this, the argument brings in a number of relevant passages from Woolf’s longer fiction and classical essays, in particular the “Modern Fiction” essays (1921) and “Street Haunting” (1930). In case of D. H. Lawrence, the argument builds up on a detailed analysis of Lawrence’s shorter fiction in my M.A. thesis and, using it as a vital background, applies the outcome of this discussion as a support for a detailed reading of a number of key passages from Lawrence’s canonical novels such as *The Trespasser* (1912), *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920). In addition to this, the argument relies on a number of non-fictional texts, studies, essays and an occasional reference to Lawrence’s poems. Among Lawrence’s essays, there are two texts that are of particular importance to the presented argument: Lawrence’s writings on Etruscan painting and culture in a travelogue-collection *Sketches of Etruscan Places and other Italian Essays* (1932), which were written during Lawrence’s stay in Italy, mostly in the 1920’s and published posthumously, and Lawrence’s late essay “Introduction to These Paintings” (1928).

The third chapter introduces the complete opposite to Woolf and Lawrence – the classicist reactionary Wyndham Lewis. Starting with Lewis’ fiction, the argument draws on a detailed reading of a number of Lewis’ short stories, published either in various magazines in years 1908 to late 1920’s or reprinted in revised form in *The Wild Body* (1927) collection. In addition to this, the argument works with a number of Lewis’ critical essays and studies, especially of the 1920’s period, in particular *Essay on the Objective of Plastic Arts in Our Time* (1922), published in the second volume of Lewis’ *Tyro*, and a book-length study *Time and the Western Man* (1928).

In its method the argument first of all relies on philosophical and aesthetic texts that are relevant to the studied period and that were either used and quoted by individual authors or most likely known by these. In case of Virginia Woolf, it is first of all Henri Bergson, whose fluid philosophy of consciousness and theories of heterogeneous time and homogeneous space, are generally acknowledged to play a seminal role in interpretations of Woolf's texts.¹ The discussion in the first chapter examines an essentially Bergsonian "instability" and fluidity of consciousness in opposition to the solidity of material objects in Woolf's treatment of the Self, showing the way Woolf's texts rearticulate Cartesian dualism.² This Bergsonian argument is expanded to a critical discussion of other relevant sources of Woolf's method: radical pragmatism and empiricisms of William James and "direct" realism of G. E. Moore's philosophy. Adhering to the aesthetic orientation of the discussion, the first chapter often alludes to theoretical principles that are connected with visual aesthetics of Impressionism as a generally acknowledged influence of Woolf's method.³ All of these impulses represent a vital source of comparison to the visual strategies of Wyndham Lewis which are treated in the third chapter.

In addition to the relevance for Woolf's writing, Bergson's philosophy is also essential to the discussion of D. H. Lawrence and his relation to Italian Futurism. Of particular importance are F. T. Marinetti's and Umberto Boccioni's manifestos and works of art which, especially in case of Boccioni, explicitly refer to Bergson's philosophy.⁴ Finally, Bergson's "Time-Philosophy" is the primary target of Wyndham Lewis' critique of the so called "Time Cult", in particular in his *Time and Western Man* (1927). This critique is also implicitly present in

¹ Woolf herself does not recognise Bergson's philosophy as an important source of her thought and Leonard Woolf explicitly denies it. Despite this, the relevance of Bergson's philosophy to Woolf's writing is acknowledged by a number of commentators, see for example: Martin Hilský, *Modernist* (Brno: Torst, 1995), M. A. Gillies, *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* (New York: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), especially chapter 5; or S. P. Rosenbaum, ed. *English Literature and British Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

² Despite Leonard Woolf's claim that Virginia Woolf was acquainted with Bergson's philosophy and though there is no direct evidence to be found in Woolf's texts to confirm her knowledge of Bergson's philosophy, the thought of the French philosopher is a generally accepted tool for interpretation of Woolf's work. For further discussion of this see: Martin Hilský, *Modernist* (Praha: Torst, 1995) 22, Rosenbaum, or a complex discussion of the critical history of Bergsonian interpretation of Woolf's work in Marry Ann Gillies, *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* (Montreal, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) 79–107.

³ See for example: Jesse Matz, *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) or Dianne F. Gillespie, *The Sisters' Arts: The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988).

⁴ See for example: Christine Poggi, "Introduction to Part Two", *Futurism: An Antology*, ed. L. Rainey, C. Poggi, L. Wittman (Yale: University Press: New Haven and London: 2009) 305–331; R. W. Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985) 48– 50.

his anti-romantic critique of Futurism and Impressionism in the Vorticist period and post-war period. Bergson's philosophy is also systematically treated in T. E. Hulme's thought,⁵ which serves in the argument as a support to Lewis' philosophy and aesthetics.

Besides Bergson, the argument especially in the second and third chapter relies on philosophy and aesthetics of Arthur Schopenhauer. Lawrence's debt to Schopenhauer's (and Hardy's) principles of inhuman Will and the aesthetic principles of Sublime and Beautiful is the subject of discussion of spatial structures in the first part of the second chapter. Schopenhauer's aesthetics further connects two vital sources that can be found in the background of the argument especially in the second part of the essay. First of these is the classical distinction between empathy and abstraction as it is found in Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy* (1908), which on a number of occasions refers to Schopenhauer's work, and is more than relevant to T. E. Hulme's interpretation of Worringer's thought in essays like "Modern Art and its Philosophy" (1914) and "Romanticism and Classicism" (1910). Second, Schopenhauer's aesthetics is highly relevant to Wyndham Lewis' formalist and anti-vitalist aesthetics, which is at length discussed and quoted in his *Essay on the Objectives of Plastic Arts in Our Time* (1922) and again in his *Time and Western Man*.

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The main argument demonstrates that Woolf's treatment of space is at least as dynamic as that of the human consciousness. Woolf's techniques such as the use of dynamic description ("Kew Gardens"), punning on the linear perspective and changes of focus ("Mark on the Wall", "The Lady in the Looking-Glass", or "The Searchlight"), application of the qualitative heteronomy of space and use of heterotopias⁶ ("Kew Gardens", "A Simple Melody", "The Fascination of the Pool"), concentration and localisation of psychical states in objects or the externalisation of thoughts ("Kew Gardens", "Solid Objects"), all contribute to the innovative representation of reality in which space is at least as important as time, if not more.

The chapter on D. H. Lawrence follows an analogical methodological approach and examines the spatial organisation of Lawrence's fiction in connection to the structures of human psyche

⁵ Hulme, originally ardent supporter of Bergson's philosophy, who even translated Bergson's *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1912), underwent a typical development in his attitude to the French thinker whom he eventually started to approach much more critically. This development may be finely illustrated on the intellectual development of his essays, starting with pro-Bergsonian "Cinders" to more classicist, conservative and religious essays such as "Humanism and Religious Attitude" or "Modern Art and Its Philosophy", all collected in an anti-chronological order in a posthumous collection *Speculations* (1924).

⁶ Woolf here goes beyond the Bergsonian understanding of space as homogeneous dis-continuity.

that constitute the foundation of human psychology. The thesis relies on Lawrence's dual structure of human psychology, which comes into existence as a result of a struggle between two main psychological drives, or wills: 1) conscious will of individual intellect, whose aim is the achievement of the maximum of individuality, independence, creativity and domination of others and 2) unconscious, instinctive will to death, dissolution and subjugation of one's personality and individuality and desire to merge or re-unite with greater wholes. According to this model, the life of human individual comes into an existence through a mythological gesture of separation from Nature or the Cosmological One.

These psychological impulses are in Lawrence's fiction reflected in his relationship to other individuals but also, very often more importantly, represented through the human relation to space, environment or Cosmos. Following this psychological model, Lawrence's fiction presents two "orders of space": 1) homogeneous, life-threatening *space* that represents the trans-individual force of Immanent will of nature and 2) life-supporting *place*, understood as a region which an individual creates "on the face of the earth" in an attempt to sustain his individual, unrelated and independent existence.

The analysis further examines primordial images of water, watery spaces and water surfaces for their psychological effects in Lawrence's texts such as *The Rainbow*, "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" or *Women in Love*. A close connection is established between the in-humanness of the homogeneity of the water spaces and the death of an individual, understood in terms of the psychological-myth of return and re-unification with the great One of the Natural Whole. The element of water re-introduced a number of spatial images which were established as central already in Woolf's fiction, namely the image of dissolution, continuity and discontinuity, the opposition between solid and fluid and the question of opened and closed structures, borders, edges and outlines and deformation of space. A natural continuation of this discussion was conceptualised in the analysis of the space of dance.

The fluid and deformed space of water and the circular swirl of dancing bodies brought us to the contemplation of Lawrence's *Etruscan* essays. The role of art as a reminder of our essentially connected nature is mirrored in the structural composition of the work of art which cannot suffice with "juxtaposition of surfaces" and "clever compositions" but should aim to portrait the "soft flow" which connects man and material reality. The essential connectivity of the human subject, and in particular of his instinctive body, is based on a subtle sympathy

between man and corresponding structures of the living Cosmos that transcends the idea of human as an enclosed, autonomous and self-contained whole.

The externalisation of “humanity” outside the control of “the human” accomplished by its delegation to the inhuman forces of nature or instinct can in this sense be understood as a by-product of the anti-traditionalism and anti-conventionalism of Woolf’s and anti-intellectualism of Lawrence’s fiction. The problematic results of what might be called Woolf’s and Lawrence’s “inhuman humanism” are fully articulated in the third chapter which enriches the argument with the thought and work of Wyndham Lewis. The philosophy and philosophy of Wyndham Lewis and by extension also of T. E. Hulme serves in the argument as a counterweight to the “innovative” representation of human psychology and space in Lawrence’s and Woolf’s texts. Lewis’ idea of human existence in general is a much more pessimistic one in comparison to Woolf’s and Lawrence’s ideas. The cornerstone of Lewis’ work in the Vorticist period as well as in the post-war decade, is Lewis’ firm belief in the essential duality of our existence as human beings, which can be described as a genuinely Cartesian duality and opposition of mind and body. As a part of his adherence to this duality, Lewis develops and maintains the traditional description of the human body as fallen, fallible, animal-like and in constant antagonism with what is designed to be the true essence of the classical idea of “the human” that Lewis advocates, i.e. the idea of human as non-extended intellectual substance.

Lewis’ view of human existence can be seen as very pessimistic, not much different from the classical view of the “fallen” nature of man which was advocated by Lewis’ colleague, art critic and occasional poet, T. E. Hulme. From this pessimism and the mind-body duality results Lewis’ theory of the comic, the principle of detachment and Lewis’ masque - the laughing observer. Lewis’ focus on the satire of the so called “wild body”, i.e. a body that takes control over the intellect and performs involuntarily, habitually and without reflection and free choice, is at the heart of Lewis’ short stories as well as of his longer social satires of the period such as *Tarr* or *Apes of God*. The almost fixed patten of Lewis’ fiction can be best seen in his short stories which very often display a schematic and stereotypical plot and, imagery and content.

The “comic” scheme of an overwhelming majority of Lewis’ stories relies on a pair observer - observed. The narrator, Lewis’ alter ego, observes “a wild body”, i.e. another character that lives the bodily, instinctive or habitual life that is in conflict with Lewis’ intellectualised

model of human behaviour. Coherently with the pessimism of Lewis' idea of "the human", the only difference between the observer and the observed is the fact that the observer is able to "transcend" the limitations of his human existence by stepping aside and reflecting these limitations in a gesture of laughter, i.e. creating a comic situation. According to Lewis, the fallen, which means essentially limited and bodily character of our existence, cannot be changed or actively fought against but "only" reflected in a gesture of a stoic detachment of the laughing observer.

The structure "observer-observed" is in some of Lewis' stories relatively complex and depicts a whole chain of observations. Typical examples of this approach are stories like "Beau Sojourn" or "The Cornac and His Wife". These stories usually rely on scenes of dance, musical or circus performances. Structurally, Lewis' stories usually depict a relatively limited set of characters in a closed environment that only stresses their habitual and mechanic way of life and bodily existence. The circular life of Breton kitchens, hotel rooms, hostels, quays and inns, contributes to the picture of the habitual, machine-like life of the wild body and as such is one of the main topics of Lewis' fiction. It is important to note that Lewis' fiction depicts the degenerated and downgraded forms of life as a part of a "didactic purpose of his fiction", i.e. in order to enable a detached observation of these forms to the reader, who should, together with the narrator, be able to "educate himself" by reflecting on the situation and be able to apply these observations to his life.

Lewis' position is further expanded by a commented reading of a number of important passages from his theoretical and aesthetic texts, in particular of the post-war period which we found most relevant to the revisions of his texts from the late 1920's. Generally speaking, the critical edge of Lewis' philosophy is pointed against all theories that compromise the idea of human as a self-contained, free-thinking, intellect-based being. Lewis' Cartesian legacy is here clearly visible. As a part of this reactionary, pro-classical revisionism, Lewis not only rejects the "life of the wild bodies" but all tendencies that disseminate, dissolve or externalize the centre of human agency outside of the control of the human intellect. For example in "Cantleman's Spring Mate" we have observed the self-observation of the main hero in which he analysed how the Dionysian effects of spring that forced his bodily instincts to procreate and mingle with other "Nature's agents". According to Lewis, instinct, representing an essentially mechanical impulse which is contrary to the free choice provided by the intellect, turns the human subject to the same type of machine as the petrifying effects of habit and

schematic existence in machine-like living environment such as in the hotels and kitchens of “A Soldier of Humour”, in “Franciscan Adventures” or in “Brotcotnaz” and “Bestre”.

From this results the fundamental proposition of Lewis’ original metaphysics: the organic and the mechanic are the same, and the life of an animal (or a body) is essentially in no way different to the life of a machine. The argumentation behind this seemingly illogical proposition is again Lewis’ emphasis on the power of human intellect and the freedom of choice it gives to the human. This freedom might be limited both by the habitual existence, entrapped in the machine-like cycles of one’s environment, one’s behaviour as well as by the numbing instincts of one’s body. Closely connected with Lewis’ anthropology and the “didactic” character of his fiction is Lewis’ method of “clear and distinct” representation that is based on surface description and juxtaposition of places, sharp outlines and volumes of matter rather than on organic and “biomorphic” motives.

Lewis’ artistic conception based on a systematic rejection of the “outside” presents art that is based on a Schopenhauerian gesture which reduces the chaos of human relations the essential deadness of the work of art. Paradoxically, this deadness relies on representation of wild bodies that are “alive” in the common sense of the word but not according to the high “aristocratic” standards of what Lewis calls Life. Life (capitalized) is for Lewis again the “free” Life of human intellect that transcends the instinctive, mechanical and communal. In moments like this Lewis’ classicism clearly appears in its most crystal-clear form in his stress on the surface, clear lines and fixed boundaries, set hierarchy of mind and body, appreciation of order and worship of individuality.

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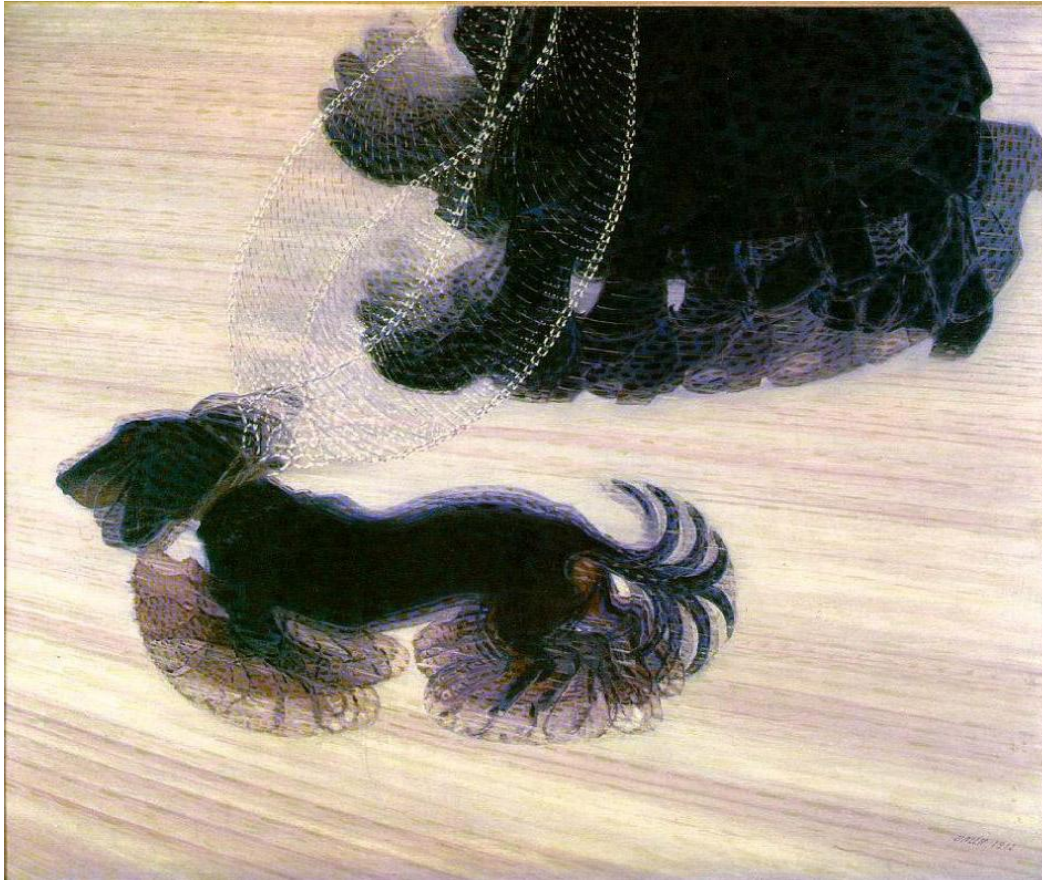
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Giacomo Balla, *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (Dinamismo di un cane al guinzaglio); 1912, oil on canvas, 91 x 110 cm.



Henri Gaudier-Brzeska , *Dog (Dachshund)*; bronze with a black patina, 13 7/8 in. (35.2 cm.) long.